

QLH S4E11_ Possession

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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 possession. 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. A couple starts exhibiting increasingly disturbing behavior after one of them asked for a divorce. The fracturing of the marriage causes everyone to descend into madness.

J Jessi Chartier 00:49

I woke up this morning with a cold. And I was like, I'm not missing this, because Possession is so bizarre and so weird. We have to talk about it. I am not missing this recording.

J Jen Myers 00:59

Yeah, yes. We when we were talking about doing this? And and I think I think I had seen it before, right. And this was your first

J Jessi Chartier 01:07

This was my first time.

J Jen Myers 01:08

Yeah. And so I was just trying to think of the right ways to prepare you or even just like describe, and then we were trying to like figure out okay, what pairs with this? And I'm like, Well, I don't know, man. Like, there's this film is just so wild. And don't get me wrong, I love it. And there's going to be a lot to talk about, but it is really hard to pin down or, you know, put in any sort of box whatsoever.

J Jessi Chartier 01:39

I don't even think there's a shape that this fits into, you know, because so I was trying to I was trying to understand the plot as we went. And you and I were talking earlier about like, that's just useless. Like, yeah, it's not about the plot, but we're going to try as hard as we can to give a quick overview like we do in our, our episodes here. Okay, so let me see if I can do this. And, yeah, of course, correct me as I go, this is going to be a hot mess

J Jen Myers 02:06

God go with you.

J Jessi Chartier 02:07

Yes.

J Jen Myers 02:09

I will help if I can. There is a sequence of events that happened. So we can try to cover that first. And then we can dive into, you know, what it means.

J Jessi Chartier 02:16

That's perfect. Okay, so the sequence of events are a husband, who is we think is a spy, he's doing some guy anyway, he's a businessman on on, not around, he's returns from one of his trips, takes place in in West Berlin. And before the wall comes down, and he returns home and is suspicious of his wife thinking that she's had an affair. She doesn't deny it. And so she says, I want a divorce. So that's how things start is like, he comes home, there's suspicion of infidelity, she says, I want a divorce. And then from there, it is a love triangle of events is the best way to explain it. Like she disappears for a couple days on end, the husband is left taking care of their child, she returns to rush in and try and take care of the child. And we get the impression that she's been out with her lover. The husband goes to confront the lover, the lovers like why can't we be friends? This is just how things are. And, you know, so things start out okay there. But then the lover and the husband both discovered that the wife is disappearing for both of them. And so they start to both question Is there yet another man that is involved. And so the husband hires a detective, a private eye, to follow his wife. And he follows and discovers that she has an apartment in a separate area that's right up against the wall, which I don't know if

that's important or not, but it feels like it is. It's right up against the wall. And there's no evidence of anyone else living in the house, but there is a creature living in the house. And so the husband confronts the wife. She basically tells him to bugger off the lover goes kind of insane. And then the husband uses this information to kind of put the lover and her his ex wife or current wife in kind of a conflict. And eventually the husband has to confront the wife and what she has living in this apartment. And the thing I mean, we'll we'll talk about spoilers, but I'm not going to spoil it quite yet. But there's a monster live in her apartment that she has been tending to or fostering and it has been growing and evolving. And at the end of the movie, the end of the movie is very strange. The end of the movie is the husband. You get the impression that he is like suicide by police. Like he runs into some of his colleagues who work for the security office. You And there's a chase scene and they end up shooting him. And the wife suddenly shows up with her monster, and the husband and wife end up dying. There's a lot more to it. But that's like, the main string of events, and everything else around it is very weird. We have a lot of strange things like the teacher looks just like the mother, we have this very strange miscarriage scene in the subway, like, so the, as Jen mentioned, like, these are just the events that happen, but it is not the movie. Those are just the those are just like the plot points. That's it?

J Jen Myers 05:40

Yes. And, you know, everyone's mileage may vary. But I think that the way to experience this film is to kind of just let go of the plot from the very beginning. You know, if you can roll like that, I feel like that's how you're gonna get the most out of this. Because yeah, it's these, these things are all happening. But if you were trying to connect to them all into a coherent narrative, well, first of all, you're not going to succeed, because I'm pretty sure that's impossible. And then, you know, just like, it's just not going to happen. And then secondly, like, yeah, I don't think that's what the film is about. It's, it's about these moments, these symbols, these I don't know, I don't even know, I don't even know what exactly it was about. I just know that it's very compelling.

J Jessi Chartier 06:28

I agree. And I think if you can let yourself go and watch this in a way that you just accept that it's highly allegorical, and that you might not actually know what the metaphor is for, it does become easier to watch. So like, there's so many theories out there that the most common theory is that this is an allegory for the director and writers divorce, that it is an allegory of divorce, what does divorce do to the family structure? How does it fracture it? What happens to each individual within that triangle? And I think that once I, for me, once I read that I was like, oh, right, this is highly allegorical. Okay, I can just sit back and enjoy the ride, versus trying to pick it apart. Other people like you were saying, Jen, that some some also are saying it's an allegory for the fracturing of the country, given that it's in place in East Berlin, or West Berlin?

J Jen Myers 07:24

Yeah. And I do think that, I think that both of those things are strong elements of this film, honestly. But yeah, it's not necessarily constructed in a way to make points like that, you know, that's just not, that's just not what this is doing this. This is much more of kind of like, you're

going to enter a dream state. And these images are going to bubble up from the subconscious. And yes, they probably have a connection to real world things like a lot of things and your dreams do. But you're not going to make rational sense out of the dream, you're just going to be having these these images coming up. And there is something very, you know, in that in that way, essential in that way, to me about what you see in this film that it does feel like it is coming straight out of a subconscious.

J Jessi Chartier 08:16

Yeah, and I want to emphasize that I highly recommend watching this film with the closed captioning on because even the dialogue comes out of a dream. Like even the dialogue is almost nonsensical, or highly metaphorical. It's very highbrow, and sometimes it's almost difficult to understand.

J Jen Myers 08:36

Yeah. And I do think it's appropriate that we take this time to kind of talk about like, how to come to this film, because this is a film that has this huge reputation and I you know, if you go on Letterboxd you will find people who are like, oh, you know, this is a talkâ€”well talked about film, and I need to see it and then are just like, you know, one star, this didn't make any sense and things like that, you know, again, if you don't like it great, but I do think there is an element, you'll have a better chance of liking it, if you kind of meet it on its own terms, as opposed to terms that might be imposed on it. And I know for me, this is a film that I wanted because it does have this big reputation. I could not get a hold of this for a while for a long time. I think that the only way that I could figure out how to see it is to order a DVD online for like 100 bucks. It was really hard to get a hold of several years ago even and then I know that Metrograph had got a hold of it. And they actually did a in-theater series which I almost went to go see this in the theater. It was like they're in Chicago and I just didn't get there. I just for some reason I just get there but Metrograph was also showing it online where you basically you bought a ticket so I think it was like five bucks and then you would be able to stream it online. And I like, set aside, like I made an event out of this for myself, you know, it was a time when I there was a night that I had alone. I made plans. I bought it online, I sat down, you know, and was like, immersed in this film. And I'm really glad that I did that. But I'm also glad that I had the sense of, you know, the well, yeah, I keep saying reputation. But yeah, every the the context of this film, everything that comes along with it had kind of told me to do that. And I'm really glad it did. Because I think that you, you need to, again, meet this film in its own space and make a space for it to be what it is.

J Jessi Chartier 10:41

Yeah this is definitely not one of those films that we've recommended, where you can just like, pop it in and sit down and be like, Alright, I'm just gonna watch a movie, it's like, no, make a mental event of it. Because it is it's intense.

J Jen Myers 10:53

And it is just to kind of close the loop on availability so I think a lot of people are seeing it now

and it is, just to kind of close the loop on availability, so I think a lot of people are seeing it now, which is great, because it is streaming on Shudder. And again, that's fantastic. It's available. But I agree, I think like what you said, a lot of people are just kind of like, Okay, I'll do this, because it's right here. And if you're not properly prepared for this, or willing to open, open yourself up to it, you might not have a great time with it. Even if you are willing to open yourself up with it, like, like, you're gonna have an experience, you're gonna you're not gonna have a great time because this film is so intense. Yeah.

J Jessi Chartier 11:27

And it's intense in a different way than like, say something like Schindler's List list, which is like, heavy and almost like a witness bearing type of movie, right? Like those those type of movies are very heavy. This is I mean, you are it is, in my in my sense, you are witnessing, but you're witnessing the subconscious of what's happening, you're not actually witnessing the events, you're witnessing something beyond that.

J Jen Myers 11:51

That's a good way of putting it, I really like that.

J Jessi Chartier 11:53

And way of seeing, I do also think that this movie would have been much more I don't want to say accepted. But I think much more I think the medium that this movie could actually plant itself in and have everyone go, that's phenomenal, is actually the stage, I think that this would make a really good stage play.

J Jen Myers 12:13

That makes a lot of sense. There is something about the way that it is presented, how you especially when you were talking earlier about like the dialogue which Yeah, again, nothing in this film is realistic. It is, you know, exaggerated and heightened and styled to make particular impacts. And I think that does lend itself very well to the stage.

J Jessi Chartier 12:37

That's what I think so too.

J Jen Myers 12:39

This should be a musical. Possession: The Musical.

J Jessi Chartier 12:42

First off, I could not imagine putting any actor through or any group of actors through the intensity of *Possession* on a nightly basis. So I would never recommend it actually become a stage play.

J Jen Myers 12:55

Yeah, that's a good point. And we probably shouldn't mention that that like, there. Yeah. There's some potentially problematic stuff that went on just in terms of how they filmed this, that it's just a thing. I don't know a lot of details. The impression that I have is that the director really pushed I think both actors, but particularly Isabella Adjani, who plays the the wife in this, Anna, but I have seen recently that even Sam Neill was just like, yeah, that was the most extreme thing I've ever done. It was just, we I think he even almost verbatim says like, we would never do that today. So this is one of those things like, we can appreciate what we got out of it by acknowledging it probably didn't come in the most healthy way for everybody involved.

J Jessi Chartier 13:49

Exactly. Oh, that's. I feel like you can feel that too. In the film. There's because of, So let's talk about some of the scenes because we're talking in broad strokes. Let's get kind of specific. So there's a great example of just the intensity. I'll talk about one that's probably not on our list at this point. But there's a scene where Anna comes home for one of the times that she's coming home. And her husband is there I don't even remember what her husband's name is. Mark, Mark this right so Anna, Anna and Mark. So Anna comes home. And by the way, the costuming in this movie is so low budget is so good because Anna has two outfits throughout the entire film. And she comes home and she is just her dress is like open in the back. It's She's full of sweat. It's dirty. She's like, clearly not okay. And she's running around the kit or she's like running around the house, which is in disarray, by the way. And Vargas like what are you doing? Like, like, what like what are you doing? Why are you here and she's like, I have to do laundry. And she takes Sam's clothes and puts them in the refrigerator. And she's like, because that's what I can do, I can do that well, and then she starts like emptying out all of the cabinets and carrying stuff around and dropping it. And it's just talking about laundry. And this, this does not faze Mark. Mark, on the other hand is like, when you're here. You know, when you're gone, I can forget about you. But when you're here, everything just goes away, and everything will be okay, we'll be together again, then just tell me what you want, because I want to make you happy. And it's just like this crate it's almost a sense of crazed conversation between them. The action is so maddening, because it's just nonsensical. And it's like, it's, it's, it's exhausting just to watch it, I think is the way that I felt.

J Jen Myers 15:48

Oh, that's it. Yeah, no, that's a good word. This movie is exhausting. And I think one of the things that I get out of it, and I think it's a good example, that scene is a good example of this is that every character is so completely dialed into what they are thinking and feeling. And that's it. Like none of them really have empathy, or even sympathy with anybody else. I'd like to the point where I feel like they're all on different tracks, and yet trying to connect. And but

they're all just like lost in their own heads, basically. And yeah, like, you're right, there's such a disconnect between what Anna is doing in front of Mark and what he is talking about. Like they don't connect at all. It's so strange.

J Jessi Chartier 16:39

It is very strange. And there's also a scene where her lover Heinrich, who is ironically the only German because Anna's French, Mark is Australian, right? I think.

J Jen Myers 16:52

I mean, Sam Neill is a Kiwi. He's New Zealand.

J Jessi Chartier 16:56

Oh my god, I'm so sorry.

J Jen Myers 16:57

Yeah, they hate that.

J Jessi Chartier 16:59

Sorry. Yes. Sorry. So sorry. So Sam Neill is I don't think so. I think he carries his New Zealand accent. So I think he's meant to sound like he's from New Zealand. And then Heinrich is I think the only German and Heinrich starts to have his own delusions of grandeur. Like he's he comes to the house. And like, where's Anna? And Marcus like, she's not here. And he discovers that this really disturbs Heinrich and like, goats him a little bit, too. He's just like, goats him, not ghosts. I'm sick. It's good. Forgive me, but like goats and a little bit. And he's like, oh, yeah, she's not here. She hasn't been here for a few days. And Heinrich goes into this physical manifestation of just like, oh my god, like arms flailing and like almost this dance routine, up a stairwell of like, I can't handle it. She mean, I love her so much. We did whatever she wanted to do, why would she leave. And it's just very, very overt. And I feel like that is. This is not a subtle film, it's almost the exact opposite of that everything is in your face. So if you are an empath, and you watch this film, you will be exhausted by the end, because everything is so forward, and so strange. And so hyper realized, that is worrying.

J Jen Myers 18:19

I haven't thought about this before. But I think that you're absolutely right about that, that if you are the type that emphasizes with with movie characters. I mean, I think everybody does to a certain extent. I know, I do it to almost an unhealthy extent. Like, yeah, yeah. And and also, I think it's, it's heightened by the fact that nobody in the movie is able to have empathy with each other. So I feel like if, again, if you are somebody who does who does that, you know, on a

regular basis, like you almost feel compelled to have more, and to try to understand what everybody's going through, because everybody is going through so much. And it's all completely separate from what everybody else is going through.

J Jessi Chartier 18:58

Yeah, it's very strange. And I do like the boomerang effect. That mark Mark has empathy with his kid. Yeah. And even with his kid's teacher until Anna shows up. It's like, the moment the idea of the relationship returns into their purview. It's like they lose all sense of reality again. And I think that one of the the, well, I shouldn't say that, because there is no real sense of reality. Well, no, it's fine. It's a sense of reality. But what I think is, if we go with the allegory of possession, meaning the relationship and it's this, like third party thing, because that's kind of how everybody talks, is like, whatever you want so that we can have this relationship back or that I can have what I want. It's like everybody has that level of possession to them or that desire for possession Heinrich wants Anna. Mark wants Anna Anna wants Something that's non tangible. There's a great line that Mark has that says, I finally understand, when you're here, you want to be there. And when you're there, you want to be here. So like, she wants something that is just not that it's just not. And I think that if you look at that it is really interesting on how the, the world of madness tends to blend. Like, if Mark really wants Anna, he starts to project her into the face of other women that are close to him and his son like his teacher. So his teacher is played by the same actress. And he calls her out on it. There's a great scene where he first mysteries, like, why are you in a wig? And she's like, What are you talking about? He's like, Oh, my God, I'm so sorry. I thought that you were someone else. And he wants to start a relationship with this new woman who looks just like his wife. It's like he can't even get away from the, the, They're all caught in this web that they can't even escape.

J Jen Myers 21:03

And I believe that the creature that Anna is well having an affair with or, like you mentioned, kind of raising both don't know, at the end that doesn't that creature become like a doppelganger of Mark? Yep. becomes a clone. So you've got that going on to where? That's, you know, that's a whole nother series of metaphor. But yeah, the doppelgangers are interesting in this film. And I think it's an interesting reflection of the fact that people like you said, you said it before. There's so much projection in this in the characters of this film, like everybody is projecting every time they turn around. And that's what I think the doppelgangers are most closely aligned to is, you know, what you project upon people or what you want people to be, you know, and things like that.

J Jessi Chartier 21:04

Yeah. Yeah, it's like, I got the impression that the monster that you're right, she has an affair, but she's having an affair with and it eventually evolves into looking exactly like Mark, I think, I think is the projection of what she wants. But doesn't have it's almost like, she wants to leave mark, but she can't. And so she pursued, it's almost like the pristine version of it. And it's true with Mark. And the teacher, too, is that she is the personification of what Mark was out of Anna, and then whatever he you know, it's just it's very, very, very, very strange. And there's this, I want to talk about the love scene, because it's very weird. And it got, it's what caused

possession to get banned across the space. Okay, yeah. So towards the end of the evolution of the monster mark, does go to the apartment that's up against the wall, and walks in on Anna and this monster, this monster is making love to her. And it is a very graphic scene. But what is more interesting, and I like to kind of like parse out is that she looks over at mark, and she sees him standing there. And she repeats the word almost. And at first, I thought, Oh, is she telling the monster that she's almost there? Like she's almost climaxing? Yeah. But I don't think that's the case. i The the terminology because she's watching mark. I want to, I want to say that her term of almost came across to me as I'm repeating it, of saying, we almost fixed it. We were almost there. It was almost it was almost enough.

J Jen Myers 23:59

Yeah. Or you could say in if you look at it in the sense of what we were just talking about how the monster will eventually become a doppelganger of Mark. It'd be like, it's it's almost right. Almost ready. Yeah, it's almost there. Yeah. Yeah. I don't even know what else to say about that. Exactly. Yeah,

J Jessi Chartier 24:16

it's such an interesting. It's just an interesting scene. And again, if it's if you're talking about it being highly allegorical, you know, she's making love to this monster and the monster is what? It's her daydream of what reality should be. Well, and we'll

J Jen Myers 24:32

Also just real quick, we should get into the monster itself. And also, I think a little bit of the fact that like, we haven't got into it enough, but there is some disturbing violence in this film early on, like work about that.

J Jessi Chartier 24:46

Let's talk about that. Let's talk about the violence

J Jen Myers 24:49

Well, first of all, finish the thing like it's like the monster itself is not like violent necessarily, but like that when we use the term monster. If you have not seen this film, we're not just saying Like, Oh, she's having an affair with, you know, with some dude that was a little weird around the edges or something like that. It's like no this is like a full on. Like, I don't even know how to describe it. It's huge. It's it. I think it has kind of some zenomorph vibes.

J Jessi Chartier 25:20

I agree with that.



Jen Myers 25:21

Yeah, it's it's just like this huge, gigantic straight up, you know like and I think it is like like a black exoskeleton or like maybe I'm thinking now I'm just totally down this zenomorph path but like, it is a straight up creature. Right?



Jessi Chartier 25:40

It's like we take a squid at a human and mash it.



Jen Myers 25:44

There's tentacles involved. I forgot about the tentacles, too. I forgot to mention the time that was I did not forget about them. I forgot to mention them because there's yeah, there's so much going on with with this thing. It this is not a subtle, like you mentioned nothing in this movie is subtle. The monster is also not subtle. But yeah, I think that that it fits into that there's some just and when I mentioned the violence, there are some just like straight up violence. I mean, there's everything from the characters like shoving each other around, or, or you know, just kind of like Isabella Adjani at various points is just like throwing stuff all over the place. Just like flailing you mentioned, there's flailing, there's just like, all of that going on. And then there's isn't there's also a scene with the there's a knife, right.



Jessi Chartier 26:33

So yeah, and it's interesting, because by the way, the monster is never violent.



Jen Myers 26:38

That's a good point. Yeah, that's kind of what I would maybe separate those I think, you know, when I when I mentioned violence, when I think I'm trying to talk about really is just the graphic nature of a lot of the elements. Okay, I think it's more about that. So you have there's a there's a graphic creature, there's some graphic sexual situations, there's some graphic violence. And it's not so much that it's all it's all violent. It's just like there is a very visceral element to all of these things.



Jessi Chartier 27:07

Yes, that is a great way to describe it. I mean, so Anna, kills anybody that comes in between her and her monster. And those are very graphic scenes of violence. The knife scene is a great scene, let's it's a great how, again, a great metaphor for kind of the pain of whatever is going on of this fracturing of this relationship.

J Jen Myers 27:33
And how hurting each other because they literally do it, right.

J Jessi Chartier 27:36
But they don't hurt each other. They hurt themselves. Well,

J Jen Myers 27:39
Yes, that's true, but they're doing it. Like in response to each other. You Oh, for sure. Like,

J Jessi Chartier 27:46
the scene is that they're arguing in the kitchen, which happens a lot in this movie. And Anna has an electric knife and she's slicing meat that. I mean, it's very, it's like the smoking gun. You're like, Oh, she's got an electric knife. Someone's gonna check off the electric knife exasperated, so it's a so we, we know something's gonna happen. But what she ends up doing is she can't handle the pain of the conversation anymore. So she takes the electric knife to her neck. Yeah. And Mark slaps it out of her head, like what are you doing? And then takes care of it. It takes care of her like, patches her up and says whatever you want, Anna. I mean, it's so it is like you take the idea of codependency and throttle it to one side where it is like true codependent. That's a great example. Like, she's got she hurts. She's She can't handle the conversation. she hurts herself. So then mark acquiesces to whatever she wants, right? But he patches her up. And then he goes back into the kitchen, and he looks at the electric knife, and he starts to like, cut his own arm. And it's typically like not typical, but like, we know, cutting is a real thing now. And so he cuts himself a couple times. And she comes in and she sees him and she says, it doesn't hurt, does it? And he goes, No. And it's just such a that is such a tender scene for me, because it's like, they are so emotionally traumatized. That that is just a great representation of like, how numb you become when you are going through trauma.

J Jen Myers 29:23
Yeah, and when you're always living in that sort of extremity.

J Jessi Chartier 29:26
Exactly, exactly.

J Jen Myers 29:28
Yeah. Because they are everybody in this film is in emotional extremity. And the things that they do to each other and to themselves are like trying to release the pressure valve, I think in many ways, but instead of just makes it worse.

J Jessi Chartier 29:45
Oh, yes. 100%.

J Jen Myers 29:46
Should we use that as a way to slide into probably the most visceral scene of the movie?

J Jessi Chartier 29:54
So there's so much talk around the subway scene. We have to talk about the subway scene.


J Jen Myers 29:58
Yeah, you can't have a conversation otherwise we without the is it. Okay, so we'll start out by just describing this. Yeah, yeah. Well, and I mean, this is another one of those things to where I'm like, Well, okay, so this is just Anna, no other characters she is in a corridor of a subway in Berlin. And so I think the thing is, and I don't think I really put this together until I was thinking about it afterwards, so she has a miscarriage. Yes, this is the plot point that's happening?

J Jessi Chartier 30:31
That is the plot point that happens is she has a miscarriage but when she miscarries it's blood and milk that come out of her.


J Jen Myers 30:42
And she just is completely out of her mind for and this goes, how long does the scene go on? It goes on for a long time. Several minutes. There is screaming, there is wailing, there is rolling around, getting up and falling down again, and just her, It's a continuous shot, by the way A continuous shot. You know, it's one of those things to where even as much as you're into it when you think like I think about this after the fact that I'm like that she's in a subway corridor, people at the other ends must have heard that. What the hell was going on? Like, it is just Yeah, and like all the time, yeah, she's vomit is she vomiting things and it's that milky.

J Jessi Chartier 31:25
It's just fluid. And I can't remember. I do know that. So when I was watching this, all I could think of was, this is a dance sequence. Like that's what I felt like, I'm like, please tell me that this actress is a dancer because she is contorting herself in so many ways. And her. I mean, the acting in this scene alone is just absolutely mind boggling. And I'm sure that it did her mental damage because it is such a visceral, visceral scene. And like you were saying like she's

carrying groceries around, and initially she starts to stumble. And then she starts throwing stuff against the wall including herself. And she falls to the floor and is like contorting and flailing and almost in like seizure mode. But it's almost like a seizure trance. Like yes, it's like she's in a trance just and it You're right. It goes on for like, three minutes. And it's not until the very end of the scene that she starts to exude milk and blood from herself. And so you have no idea what is going on.

 Jen Myers 32:41

That's a really good point. And it's one of those things that it's hard to keep in my mind when I'm looking back on this in retrospect, but you're right because she just seems to come it is very trancelike she just seems to kind of go into some sort of state like she just snaps out of nowhere. I am actually I so I had a bit about this that I had pulled up earlier so the director Oh no, she said, the actress said that it took her years to recover from this, I can imagine and and the director so said to answer my question, the director said they filmed this at five in the morning and the subway was closed, which is a good thing. And that they only did two takes because there's no way they could repeat this and most of what is in the film is the first take they only did the second one just as like some having a little bit of safety. But basically what we see on film that's what happened. And it is just this it really I'm not even using this when I say this as a as a metaphor, but it's like it almost literally makes you think that some sort of demon entered her. And like the actress like you know what I mean? You're almost thinking like what else could explain this? This is demonic possession to you know pull in our title in a clever way. But it's like this is so far outside what we have seen in films or in life or anything it is just I don't even I don't even have any more words Yeah, it's just completely be it's beyond what I can put into words, honestly.

 Jessi Chartier 34:24

It really is, it's very unhinged. Like I watch it and I think so, I don't act I don't know acting very well.

 Jen Myers 34:32

Oh, God, me neither, I know nothing about the craft.

 Jessi Chartier 34:36

Exactly, me neither. That's that's a great way to put it. I don't know anything about the craft but like, I get the impression that this is a scene where you had the the actors had to totally open up to 100% vulnerability. Like there was zero allowance for control. It was just let everything and kind of come out of your life into the scene and like, I can see how traumatic that is like, first off, it is very uncomfortable to watch. It is very uncomfortable to watch. Yeah. I don't know if that's true for everybody. But it was for me because I was like, oh my god, this is

 Jen Myers 35:15

Jen Myers 35:22

If somebody is not uncomfortable watching this, I would be a little skeptical of them.

J Jessi Chartier 35:24

Yes, this is this true. They might be, you know, psychotic. But what I found interesting, as well, like you're talking about how unhinged it is. Like once you realize that she's having a miscarriage, you're like, Oh, interesting, but then and like the next scene, here's what I want to talk about. She talks occasionally about, I feel like there are two sisters in me, faith and chance. And they are like, basically vying for control. It's not, it's not stated as eloquently as that it's or succinctly is that it's a little bit more circuitous and how she saw talks about it. But then after that scene, she talked about how faith is gone, and only chance has remained. So does that mean that? Like, you know, what, has she miscarried? Yes, exactly. Yeah. Has she miscarried faith? Has she miscarried, natural baby? Like the fact that there was, it's just it's very, you're left to not really know. But she does shift after that. Like, there's a slight shift in her.

J Jen Myers 36:26

I felt like when I was watching this, I didn't quite interpret it as a literal miscarriage as much just because everything even though she does talk about that, like, I, it seemed to me much more of a loss of some sort of barrier or containment.

J Jessi Chartier 36:48

Oh, interesting.

J Jen Myers 36:49

Like, and I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing, but just it was kind of like, well, yeah, I mean, I think that maybe the faith has something to or, yeah, I don't know. Because I also feel like, you know, when we were just talking about this performance itself, the phrase that comes to mind is that I think the actress almost like literally lost herself. But I also feel like that kind of works for the character in the circumstance we're talking about right now where it's, I feel like she lost herself. But in a way that ended up being kind of, it was both sad and liberating.

J Jessi Chartier 37:27

I was just gonna say it's liberating, because I feel like that, I mean, any kind of pregnancy is demonstrated and like, we'll talk about metaphors for a minute, or almost always metaphors for hope of something new have something together about her. And the fact that she miscarried, is that, you know, it's it's almost like she no longer has whatever that miscarriage represented, which whether it was relationship with her husband, whether it was the relationship with herself, or whatever, is, is no longer there, it is gone. And in that regard, you're right, she does have some kind of liberation with you know, and we always talk about

freedom being like, yeah, you're free to home, I get to do whatever I want. But sometimes that's not always good. Right. So it's, the liberation is a better term, because it's like, she's no longer shackled to something.

J Jen Myers 38:20

Yeah. And sometimes, even if it doesn't necessarily have to be a negative thing, even if it isn't good, either, which is right, exactly, it just is. And that's what yeah, that's what I get out of the scene that there is a loss or a dissolving. Of, and I do think it is significant, that this is a scene centered on a woman. You know, we've talked a lot before, and we can do some more about, you know, about the mad woman, in cinema, it's one of our favorite topics. And I do think that there is something in this film, and I think there's a reason that I mean, I know a lot of women talk about this film, who like, you know, talking about these sorts of themes in film is that the liberation here is, it is kind of like she's, she's like, now severed from these relationships. She's got these two men that she's bouncing back and forth of and they're both also kind of unhinged. And then you know, she's got all of her responsibilities as a wife, as a mother, there's all these things and I not that these things are bad, but it is something that is harder to navigate, I think for a lot of women and I think typically throughout lots of art, mad women are kind of liberated from that, again, not always in a good way but there is a liberation, whether that is put upon them because their behavior separates them from other people or you know, they're being judged for their behavior not conforming, but that's, that's what I get out of this is that there is a subconscious liberation from conforming, and being attached to the men that she's attached to, for better or for worse. And that is a very uncomfortable, difficult, messy thing. But that's what that's what's happening here. She is coming loose.

J Jessi Chartier 40:23

Oh, that's a great way to put it. She's coming loose. Yeah. And I think she just gives herself over to it, you know? And yes, exactly. I what I do like about this film is that it gives space for that to happen. Like it gives space for I mean, I do think that this is still a male gaze film, because I mean, the main protagonist is not gonna It's Mark, not saying that that's going to, I don't know how I'm going to say this. But regardless, I think that it still is male gaze. But I think that there's enough here that gives space to Anna to have her own empathy against it. Like she's not evil, like we don't, she's not portrayed as evil. She's, she's just portrayed as a woman trying to figure out what she wants to do. And she just gets caught in this world. And the men react poorly to, like, Mark freaks out and hits her. And also is super possessive. Like, he gets super creep factor possessive. And so just Heinrich, you know? Yeah, totally. Because they're both so afraid of losing her.

J Jen Myers 41:36

Yeah. And so that makes me think of two things. And the first thing I want to say really quickly is I think that this is also what you're what you're talking about in the space that it creates for the character of Anna reminds me of our conversation about *The Brood*, which is another film that is I think, inspired by the director's divorce. And that we talked about in that to where that is also pretty much from the from the perspective of the ex-husband in that situation, but that it's at the same time, like creates space for us to take women's emotion seriously. And I feel

like that is also kind of happening in Possession and kind of a weird or more messed up way. But is still happening. Like I mean, we do spend a lot of time with Anna in this movie. And she like we spend those minutes with her in the subway, where she is just completely like, like that is just her. And we spend that time with her and it is completely focused on. Yes, there's dissolving of her boundary. And you're right, like just the fact it doesn't have to give necessarily a statement or a message one way or the other. Just the act of creating that space, I think is powerful in itself.

J Jessi Chartier 42:53

Yeah, I think so too. And I think that it's good that every character has is given a moment for that regard. Like even Heinrich has given a moment of that when he loses it slightly in the hallway scene, where he's just like, oh my god, I can't handle myself without Hana or Anna. And Mark descends into more control.

J Jen Myers 43:14

Yes. And I think that was the second I said I had two things. And then I completely forgot to mention the second one. But no, was it when we talked about this a little bit earlier before we started recording? Is that like Mark is also unhinged in this movie. You know, this this movie I think when people talk about it, you know, especially because of scenes like that subway scene really focuses on on Anna as being unhinged but Mark is also very unhinged in this movie. And we should probably talk about that a little bit too.

J Jessi Chartier 43:41

Yeah, let's talk about that. So like, it is I do like how there's this boomerang effect where it's when Anna's around, he feels and acts totally different. And when Anna's not around, he goes through withdrawal. Like that's clearly one of the scenes early on is that he lives in a different apartment. Because she's Kate, she basically says I'm gonna divorce and he it's it's a withdrawal seen, like he's sweating and night terrors and all that stuff. And whenever Anna's around, he's, he's a totally different guy. And when she's not, he returns to like a normal Dad. Do you know what I mean? Like, yeah, he's a little bit more put together. He's a little bit more recovered, if you will. But the moment she comes around again, it's like he loses it.

J Jen Myers 44:27

Yeah. And he really loses it. Like, like you mentioned before, like he hits her. The scene that I think of a lot is, remember, they meet in the cafe. And it's just, it's the two of them. And they're like they're out in the public at a cafe and I'm trying to remember exactly, but I think she gets up and starts to leave. And he is very aggressively pursuing her and then they end up like throwing chairs around and things like this. It's just kind of like this is happening full on in public as well. Not behind closed doors, not their apartment. So they both just lose it completely. And Mark is also, you know, we mentioned before the setting of this, like, I do think it is interesting that it takes place when and where it takes place. But we also like, we didn't really get into the fact that Mark is a spy, right? Like there's this whole espionage subplot,

basically, that explains where he is and where he's going and things like that. And so it's very strange that somebody with that sort of profession would be so emotionally unhinged. But he definitely is in this film.

J Jessi Chartier 45:40

He definitely is in this film. But yeah, he's just it's like, I want to watch it again, just so that I can see, because like, the first time you watch it does, it's very much like a slap across the face. You're like, Wait, what just happened? Did I did that actually just happen. And it's like, there's so much more to it than I think that that's why it's such a long standing movie where people will want to watch it again. And again, it is hard to watch though, like you say it's intense. It's very intense. Let's talk about the ending the few ending scenes. So Mark runs up. So he basically, I don't know why he does this. But he antagonizes a group of security professionals, and they chase him up in a building up a flight of stairs, and they end up shooting him and he ends up dying. But then Anna appears with her fully materialized monster, who is a doppelganger for Mark. And somehow Anna gets shot too. So both Anna and Mark are shot. Mark is dead. Anna takes a takes the gun and finally just kills herself. So they're both dead. And somehow Mark Walker walks up the stairs, hands the gun over to another woman and says shoot them or not mark the monster mark. And she does and then Mark leaves. So that's all kind of weird, but no, it fits in with the movie. But the the part that I really want to talk about is the ending ending. So what you discover is that the boy Bob, their son is

J Jen Myers 47:21

which literally, no, it is hilarious that the kid's named Bob in this home,

J Jessi Chartier 47:25

I know, so great. So Bob is living with his teacher or staying with his teacher who ironically looks just like his mother. And there's a knock at the door. And he says don't answer it. And like screams don't answer it. Don't answer it. Don't answer it. And this woman goes to open the door. And it's clear that so she has a frosted glass front door. And it's clear that it's mark the monster on the other side. And this little boy is so terrified of that, that he runs upstairs and he jumps into the bathtub. And I don't know, are we meant to believe that he drunk himself? I think he does. Okay, yeah. Yeah. And he drowns himself. And then before Anna can even open or not Anna, but before the teacher can even open the door. Bombing starts in the city. And so there's this final scene of the actress who looks like Anna Hosanna. But as the teacher the scene with a shadowy monster behind her and sounds of bombing of West Berlin, and that's how it ends.

J Jen Myers 48:29

Yep. Good night, everyone! Sleep well.

J Jessi Chartier 48:34

Jessi Chartier 40:15

And it's like, is this the perpetual cycle? is like, it's just kind of like I watched it. I went well, that's great. I have no idea what that meant. Yeah, other than Bob recognize something horrible was going to happen?

J Jen Myers 48:49

Yeah, I think that's the main thing that I took away from this is that Bob recognizes that, that something is off that something is bad. And that it's bad. You know, it's it's like not that we were ever in reality. But I feel like the reality that the film has woven now starts to unweave itself. And, you know, blow itself apart. And I feel like Bob is taking himself out of the cycle. You mentioned a cycle earlier. I think that's something else that's in this film, is destructive cycles. And the thing about destructive cycles is that it's if they keep going at some point, the destruction itself ends the cycle because it gets too big to be contained. Right. And that's what I feel kind of is happening at the end of this where the restructured is taking over. Right. If another cycle does manage to start, it's going to be so much more destructive and so much worse than what happened before. I mean, as much as you can take anything rationally away from the end of this movie. That's kind of What would I take away from it? I think this would also be a good time to, especially thinking about like what's happening outside. We've mentioned this a couple times, but the fact that this is taking place in Cold War-era Berlin, a Berlin that is split in two literally by a wall, and who, you know, we talked about this a little bit beforehand that I know. So I was born the same year, this movie came out in 1981. And so when I was a kid, I, I remember the Berlin Wall coming down, I remember the fall of the Soviet Union, I remember the end of the Cold War, I didn't understand exactly what it meant, or what it was necessarily like beforehand. But I knew it was important. And I knew that like, this was a very big deal. And I remember that, I was remembering this, I went to Berlin several years ago on a on a vacation. And, you know, I went to the Berlin Wall Museum, and I saw, I saw tourists getting their picture taken with people in soldier uniforms at Checkpoint Charlie, which is a thing that happens. And it was very bizarre. And you can go to the Berlin Wall Memorial that has a section of the wall still standing. And under the double walls, there's a little bit of space in between them, so they can patrol it. And, you know, it was it was interesting for me as a grown up to be like, Okay, I can, you know, put this in a context now and understand it, although I'm with with my own kid, who, you know, through no fault of their own it just the fact that this is how generations work, you know, no, this as this is ancient history to them, you know, it's it doesn't have the same a meaning. And I wasn't like immediate to it, I was just close enough to know that it existed and it was important. It was as an adult coming back to this and seeing where it is now. It was a very, it was very strange experience, honestly. But I also feel that yeah, there's there's a fragmentation of the setting in this film. Like, I do think it is important that this takes place when and where it takes place. Because yeah, everything's fractured, everything is kind of unstable. Everything could just blow up at any moment. And I think that that's something that if you even if you caught the tail end of the Cold War, like, like we did, has a bit of a significance that it might not for people who don't have that same frame of reference.

J Jessi Chartier 52:31

Yeah, I think that's a good point, the history of it, does create, almost like a subtext to it. And if you don't know that history, it doesn't, it doesn't land. Yeah.

J Jen Myers 52:43

And I can only imagine what it was like for people who are watching it in the time when they didn't know it was going to end in a few years.

J Jessi Chartier 52:52

Really good point.

J Jen Myers 52:53

There was probably even more of a threat of you know, what is this destruction going to lead to? Is this going to lead to greater destruction? Because in 1981, even though, you know, it wasn't like the 60s or where I feel like things were a lot worse, but there was still a sense of we don't know how this is going to end, whereas the now now, in retrospect, we do know how that specific situation is going to end.

J Jessi Chartier 53:17

You will the threat of Soviet Russia taking over any parts of the world. I mean, that was it was such a real threat that that was like the stereotype villain for Hollywood films. Right. Yeah. And that was that was taken that way. Because at the time, you know, Russia was very much a threat. I mean, I guess it still is, but like,

J Jen Myers 53:40

Well, but in a different way, in a different way, in a different way. Yeah. Right.

J Jessi Chartier 53:44

Because, well, because it wasn't Russia. At that point. It was the USSR.

J Jen Myers 53:47

Exactly. It's it's specifically the Cold War thing. Whereas with the Cold War, yeah. And so yeah, you know, it's just it. Is it just as interesting that this film takes place? And when and where it does I do? I don't think it's something that again, nothing in this film is an overt, deliberate metaphor, at least in my opinion. But there's so like I said, there's so much of this that is just bubbling up from a deep source. And I think that where it takes place when it takes place is part of that. It's it's, it's it aligns so perfectly with everything up everything else that is bubbling up.

J

Jessi Chartier 54:27

Hmm. Yeah, I mean, it's just, I didn't think I was gonna like the film as much as I did. But it had a latency effect for me. Because I think the more I thought about it, the more it started to make sense in my brain. You know, how there are movies where like, you watch it, you're like, Oh, that was a great movie. And then you start to think about it, and you're like, Wait, that didn't make any sense. I feel like this was the opposite where I was like, this movie didn't make any sense. And then, now that I have like, recollections of it, and they're thinking about it, like it's all weaving itself together after the show.

J

Jen Myers 55:00

That means I think that that is good, though that a film can do that. And I think that that's this type of film. That's what it's supposed to do.

J

Jessi Chartier 55:07

I think so too. I felt the same way. When we when we watched Skinamarink. Like, during the movie, I was like, Oh, this is fun. But then afterwards like now that I think about it, it was almost like told as a memory. Yeah. Like Skinamarink was told as a memory, or like just an impression. It wasn't really a plot, it was an impression. And that's how memory works. So like, it makes more sense in retrospect, and I think that this movie is a movie in emotion. It's, it's not, yeah, you have a little bit of plot throughout, but like, it really is a story of emotion. Right. And that's what memories are, too. So I think that that's why I resonate with it retro actively more than during, yeah. And part of that is because of that cold war undertone, where it's like, right, that was a constant threat. And I, I'm old enough to remember what that was like. And have that percolate throughout. And that constant, existential fear of something, always potentially being a threat? I mean, it's kind of like, I mean, people nowadays understand it because of COVID. Like, there, there was a shared existential threat that was very real. And if you take that and multiply it into nuclear war, like, that was what it was, like you were constantly living in the fear of potential nuclear war. Yeah.

J

Jen Myers 56:31

Yeah, I think that, you know, the older I get, the more I like films that work like this, that, that bring in those elements that you were just listing, you know, that are operating on things like memory, and impression, and emotion. And to me, those tie in very closely to, you know, dreams and subconscious. And then if you want to get all Carl Jungian about it, that ties into mythology. And all of that fascinates me. And that is all of that resonates with me. That's what I'm really drawn to. And so, more and more, those are the types of stories and specifically the types of films that mean, the most to me are the ones that operate on this, this deep level, this really profound, you know, almost subconscious level, where you can connect with these essential elements of how human mind and emotion works. And it's just so powerful when you can get down to that level. And this film lives in that level. You got to dig down, to get to it. And it's a, you know, it's not a comfortable experience. It's not a pleasant experience. But you get valuable things out of that process. And that's why I liked this film so much is because it leads you through that process and what you get in the end, like I think what people take away from

this film may, you know, resemble it, but it's going to be different. And that's the point. And I think that's the point of this type of film is maybe not to get too grandiose, because maybe that's the point of art, you know, is to bring us to the point where we can get to these really deep things and then take away our own narratives that like you said, you construct after

J Jessi Chartier 58:25

the fact I think that's a good film, a good film is one that lingers with you and gets better with age. Yep, in your head. Not necessarily age, like across the ages. Sure. But like, once that when you reflect on it, you're like, you have you have a reaction, right?

J Jen Myers 58:41

And Possession is going to be inspiring reactions. Oh, you're like forever, you know, I the here's the thing, like, I don't think you could be if you were genuinely engaging with this film, I don't think you can be indifferent to it. You may hate it. But if you even if you're not genuinely engaging with it, it's gonna provoke reactions, you know, so that, but I think that's an that's evidence of something powerful.

J Jessi Chartier 59:08

I agree. Well, this has been one of our longest episodes, which I think demonstrates how important and powerful we felt this movie was, yeah,

J Jen Myers 59:16

I think it's worth it. I knew we were gonna run long, but I it's, it's worth it. And I think that, especially for the scope of our podcast, this is feels like this is would be in our Hall of Fame. You know, in terms of movies we've covered like, this is this is what we talked about. This is why we do this, this type of film.

J Jessi Chartier 59:33

100% 100%. Well, I'm going to ask you a question that I asked at the end of every episode, and I don't know what our answers are going to be at this time around. But if you'd like Possession what would you recommend? Yeah, if

J Jen Myers 59:48

If you like Possession, I would recommend slowly losing your mind and just see how that goes for, you know,

J Jessi Chartier 59:50

J Jessi Chartier 59:56

Not in a movie.

J Jen Myers 59:59

Just in a real life. Well, I would say I mean, the first thing that comes to mind is a film we've already talked about, and I mentioned it earlier is *The Brood*, which is another one that is, you know, ostensibly about divorce that brings in a lot of things. And you know, we did talk about this relatively recently on an episode, if you if you missed it, I actually recommend going back, I think that was one of my favorite episodes we've done. I really liked discussing *The Brood*. And I think a lot of the things that I liked in the brood, especially as I was talking to you about earlier in terms of making space for women's emotions, I also like about *Possession*. So I would say that, I would also say, and this is another film we covered, it's hard to recommend a film that we haven't covered already, because like I said, this is so in our wheelhouse. But I think there's also elements of *Repulsion* from Roman Polanski in it just in the sense of really being in the center of a woman breaking down. Psychologically speaking, I think that *Repulsion* does a really great job of doing that. And there there are very few as visceral depictions on film of, of women breaking down, that I think that probably *Repulsion* or *Possession*. So this is the things that come to my mind first.

J Jessi Chartier 1:01:17

Yeah, I was, I also agree with *Repulsion*. I think that that is definitely a good one. I don't even know what I would pair with this. You know, I think it's just such a standalone film that it is. I think you nailed it with those two, I don't even I can't add to it,

J Jen Myers 1:01:34

I would say and I'm just gonna throw this out. This is a very tenuous link, but if you like Sam Neill losing his mind, he also kind of does that in John Carpenter's, *In the Mouth of Madness*, which is, in my mind is somewhat overlooked carburetor film, and I like it very much. And he's also very good in that. So I would also recommend *In the Mouth of Madness*.


J Jessi Chartier 1:01:55

that is a great one, too. I agree. That it's a good one, too. Awesome. All right. Well, next up, we're going to talk about *Jennifer's Body*. So if you haven't watched that lovely gem, make sure you look at that one that one you can find on I think HBO Max, I believe, and totally different than *Possession*. In my opinion. I know that we originally talked about, you know, having these crazy women back to back as good pairings, but I feel like session just stands on its own.

J Jen Myers 1:02:27

That's true. I do I can't even explain it. Maybe in when we do the episode on *Jennifer's Body* we can I feel like they do complement each other in some very strange way on a very deep level because not on kind of the surface. They are so different films, but I can't even describe it


because not on kind of the surface. They are so different films, but I can't even describe it. Exactly. I feel like there's some sort of connecting thread. Maybe I'll manage to unravel that for the next episode.

 Jessi Chartier 1:02:54

That sounds great. We'll have to figure it out. We'll figure it out. All right. Well, if you have movies that you want to watch her we'd love to hear your thoughts on Possession even if you hated it so you can reach out to us at Hello at quietlittlehorror.com You can find us on Instagram at [quietlittlehorror](https://www.instagram.com/quietlittlehorror). And of course on Twitter at [quiethorror](https://twitter.com/quiethorror). And you can always find us in case of doubt our website quietlittlehorror.com Jen, thanks so much for introducing me to Possession What a ride.

 Jen Myers 1:03:25

I mean, I am thrilled to be able to introduce more people to Possession, it is one of my callings. And yes we should just release free copies of this everywhere.

 Jessi Chartier 1:03:39

Amazing. All right. Well, thank you so much for joining us all we will see you next time when we talk about Jennifer's Body. Bye