**THE FILMS OF MARTIN SCORSESE**

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In contrast to James Cameron, Martin Scorsese has been one of most prolific film directors over his very long career of more than 50 years. He so far has directed 58 feature films and documentaries. (Cameron has only directed 17, and only 7 of those were feature films)

This body of work both makes it easier to see which themes stand out in his films, as well as presenting a challenge to condense this information into just one module in this course.

Scorsese is the son of Sicilian immigrants and he grew up in the Little Italy section of New York City. Two common themes in his films are his Catholic heritage and his New York City heritage --- many of his films are set in that city.

Another common element is the excessive and almost gratuitous violence in many of his films. This is something we also see in the films of Francis Ford Coppola, like in *The Godfather* and *The Godfather 2,* and it seems to as much a part of the Italian-American heritage as the wonderful pasta, the ricotta cheese cannolis, and the Catholic Church (remember that the Vatican is in Rome, the largest city in Italy).

Many of the protagonists operate on the fringes of “normal society”; they often are sociopaths, predators, or some combination of the two.

Many of the characters in his film have relationships with older men who seem like surrogate fathers, but these older men invariably betray those who are younger.

Scorsese has almost always worked with the same film editor, Thelma Schoonmaker. He also likes to work with many of the same actors, particularly Robert de Niro and Leonardo di Caprio. Harvey Keitel, Joe Pesci, and Barbara Hershey have also appeared in a number of his films.

His films rarely use any noticeable CGI or other obvious technical effects. What he does like to use is a moving camera, either on a dolly track or using a steadicam rig.

For the purposes of this module, let’s examine 4 of his films and see how many of these common elements we can find in each of the films. This mirrors what I am asking you to do in your final paper for this class.

**TAXI DRIVER:** 1976, Directed by Martin Scorsese



One of Scorsese’s earliest films was *Taxi Driver,* made in 1976. Robert de Niro plays Travis Bickle, a Vietnam Vet with a severe case of PTSD. Unable to sleep at night, he drives a taxi in what feels like a dirty and dangerous environment.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_768914&feature=iv&src_vid=SWTv8toR3Ug&v=AbvWoruvf5c>

*Opening Scene* (click on the link that says Go to HD version)

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Loneliness has followed me my whole life, everywhere. In bars, in cars, sidewalks, stores, everywhere. There's no escape. I'm God's lonely man.*

Bickle has a crush on Betsy (Cybill Shepard), a campaign volunteer for the vacuous Senator Charles Palentine; his campaign slogan of “We are the People” reminds us that politicians in the television age are almost all these generic clones who all want power a lot more than they want to really do anything for the average person. A startlingly young Albert Brooks has a straightforward role as Tom, another volunteer for Palentine; Tom tries to protect Betsy from the oddball cab driver who seems to be stalking her. Here is where Travis goes into Palentine Headquarters, determined to ask Betsy out:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l2hwkqmHxU>

Travis meets Betsy on a late afternoon break, and she admits to being curious enough to get to know him better:

[*Betsy*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001732/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: You know what you remind me of?*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: What?*

[*Betsy*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001732/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: That song by Kris Kristofferson.*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Who's that?*

[*Betsy*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001732/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: A songwriter. 'He's a prophet... he's a prophet and a pusher, partly truth, partly fiction. A walking contradiction.'*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: [uneasily] You sayin' that about me?*

[*Betsy*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001732/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Who else would I be talkin' about?*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: I'm no pusher. I never have pushed.*

[*Betsy*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001732/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: No, no. Just the part about the contradictions. You are that.*

Travis then persuades Betsy to go on a date with him, but makes the socially bizarre choice of taking her to see a Swedish porn film!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDKaiXRE9cw>

After this, Betsy understandably refuses to see Travis again or even talk to him on the phone. Discouraged with the direction of his life, Travis talks to fellow cabbie Wizard (Peter Boyle):

[*Wizard*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001967/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Look at it this way. A man takes a job, you know? And that job - I mean, like that - That becomes what he is. You know, like - You do a thing and that's what you are. Like I've been a cabbie for thirteen years. Ten years at night. I still don't own my own cab. You know why? Because I don't want to. That must be what I want. To be on the night shift drivin' somebody else's cab. You understand? I mean, you become - You get a job, you become the job. One guy lives in Brooklyn. One guy lives in Sutton Place. You got a lawyer. Another guy's a doctor. Another guy dies. Another guy gets well. People are born, y'know? I envy you, your youth. Go on, get laid, get drunk. Do anything. You got no choice, anyway. I mean, we're all fucked. More or less, ya know.*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: I don't know. That's about the dumbest thing I ever heard.*

[*Wizard*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001967/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: It's not Bertrand Russell. But what do you want? I'm a cabbie. What do I know? I don't even know what the f\*ck you're talking about.*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Maybe I don't know either.*

Their conversation leaves Travis unsatisfied, so he embarks on a program to get in better physical shape and also purchases an arsenal from gun dealer Easy Andy. He seeks out Iris, the young prostitute played by Foster, but the only way to talk to her is to buy her services from her pimp.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD9_Sil8CDU>

Travis decides he wants to help her escape the sordid life she is leading, and asks her to join him for breakfast the next day; their dialogue in this scene is classic.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKQkAaSEPu8>

[*Iris*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000149/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: God, you're square.*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Hey, I'm not square, you're the one that's square. You're full of sh\*t, man. What are you talking about? You walk out with those f\*ckin' creeps and low-lifes and degenerates out on the streets and you sell your little p\*\*\*y for peanuts? For some low-life pimp who stands in the hall? And I'm square? You're the one that's square, man. I don't go screwing f\*\*k with a bunch of killers and junkies like you do. You call that bein' hip? What world are you from?*

[*Travis Bickle*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: You're a young girl, you should be at home. You should be dressed up, going out with boys, going to school, you know, that kind of stuff.*

Travis then decides go out in a blaze of glory, and leave whatever money he has to Iris to help her escape. The first part of his plan is to assassinate Palentine; Travis shaves his head into a Mohawk, conceals his weapons inside his army jacket and clothes, but is spotted by the Secret Service agents protecting Palentine and flees the scene. His backup plan is to kill Iris’s pimp Sport (Harvey Keitel), along with a mobster and the sleazebag who rents out the hotel rooms to the prostitutes, and he does all of this in what can only be described as a true bloodbath.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBXk3zTji3M>

Ironically, Travis not only survives, but is crowned a hero by the media for taking out all of the other lowlifes. In the epilogue six months later, Travis goes back to driving his cab and happens to pick up Betsy as a fare. She has heard about his exploits and tries to discuss them with him, but he merely takes her home and drops her off, free of charge, and the movie ends.

This film unfortunately was a favorite of John Hinckley, the disturbed young man who shaved his head into a Mohawk like Travis and tried to assassinate President Reagan in 1981. He stated at his trial that part of his motivation was that he wanted to impress Jodie Foster, which is just disturbingly creepy.

Finally, there is this description from Roger Ebert, which I think is very accurate and fitting:

*"Taxi Driver" is a hell, from the opening shot of a cab emerging from stygian clouds of steam to the climactic killing scene in which the camera finally looks straight down. Scorsese wanted to look away from Travis's rejection; we almost want to look away from his life. But he's there, all right, and he's suffering.”*

LIST OF OUR COMMON ELEMENTS:

New York City: yes, this film is set in New York City. The city is integral to the theme of Travis feeling both isolated and inconsequential, as it is easy to get lost in the hordes of people on the street.

Catholic themes: Travis has a crisis of faith after his disastrous date with Betsy; he thinks God has condemned him to be lonely. This is even mirrored by his occupation as a cab driver, where he drives people who never look at him as another human being. Travis seems to blame this on fate, and his violence at the end of the film is a desperate attempt to find redemption, by using it as a way to give Iriis back her freedom.

Excessive Violence: The bloodbath at the end is very violent. Scorsese lingers on the effects of the gun shots, rather than quickly cutting away.

Cursing: The choice of language in that scene with Travis and Iris is typical of many Scorsese films

Character on the fringe on society: Travis is a very damaged man, trying to survive in an urban jungle where it is easy for people not to notice you. One disturbing fact about this film was that it definitely inspired John Hinckley to try and assassinate President Reagan in 1981; Hinckley got a Mohawk haircuts just like the one Travis had, and Hinckley also was obsessed with Jodie Foster, and claimed that he shot Reagan mostly to try and impress her.

Same Actors: De Niro, in the 2nd of 8 Scorsese films he has been featured in. Harvey Keitel appeared as Sport; he was in 3 early Scorsese films.

Surrogate Father: yes, Travis becomes a surrogate father to Iris, the 14 year old prostitute, and is determined to try to get her off the streets so that she can get a fresh start

Example of a Tracking Shot <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rq4ucbgrV6U&list=PLJQ0mBVrSQ6N4bh4to8mxu1ZuTFIslDqz&index=25> This is a shot near the end of the film, after Travis has unwittingly become a hero. The way the camera moves across the clippings on the wall is reminiscent of a similar shot in Hitchcock’s *Rear Window.*

**GOODFELLAS**: 1990, Martin Scorsese



This 1990 film from Martin Scorsese is mostly a hilarious look inside a New York Mob group; there is a considerable amount of violence of course, but these wise guys don’t let any of that get in the way of having a good time….they even seem to think the murder and violence is all in a day’s work and completely normal.

Based on a true story, the best part of the film is definitely the beginning. Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) is a young teenager who “always wanted to be a gangster” for the Lucchese Crime Family in Brooklyn, so he skips school to do errands for these guys. His Dad is not amused --- after receiving a letter from the Truant Officer telling him his son hasn’t been to school in months, he beats young Henry. So then Henry’s mob friends beat the postman for the neighborhood within an inch of his life, and tell him to never again deliver any letters from the school district to Henry’s family mailbox.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6846CQWZbVg>

*Opening Monologue*

Henry works for Paulie Cicero (Paul Sorvino); at a family wedding of his, we learn that every nephew in the family is named either Petey or Paulie, and all of the girls are named Marie. Henry also meets some of Paulie’s “associates”: Jimmy Conway (De Niro) and Tommy DeVito (Joe Pesci).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JG3mhtojm8Y>

*Young Henry meets Jimmy Conway*

These guys love a good heist, and graduate from hijacking trucks to stealing major shipments at Idlewild Airport. They spend their free time at the Copacabana Club with either their girlfriends on Friday Night or their wives on Saturday night, and most of these guys have at least one of each. These guys are living the good life. As Henry explains:

[*Henry Hill*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*:* *For us to live any other way was nuts. Uh, to us, those goody-good people who worked shitty jobs for bum paychecks and took the subway to work every day, and worried about their bills, were dead. I mean they were suckers. They had no balls. If we wanted something we just took it. If anyone complained twice they got hit so bad, believe me, they never complained again*

In another great scene from the film, Henry takes his new girlfriend Karen (Lorainne Bracco) to the Copacabana --- but of course they don’t wait in line, they enter through the service entrance and then the Maitre D literally has an extra table brought out and set up for them in the front row of the club.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Sr-vxVaY_M>

*Steadicam scene of Henry and Karen walking into the Copacabana*

[*Karen*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000966/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: [narrating] After awhile, it got to be all normal. None of it seemed like crime. It was more like Henry was enterprising, and that he and the guys were making a few bucks hustling, while all the other guys were sitting on their asses, waiting for handouts. Our husbands weren't brain surgeons, they were blue-collar guys. The only way they could make extra money, real extra money, was to go out and cut a few corners.*

*[Cuts to Henry and Tommy hijacking a truck]*

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A number of years later, Tommy and Jimmy run into Billy Batts (Frank Vincent) in one of their hangouts; Batts is a member of the rival Gambino crime family and a “made” man, which means he basic is untouchable without their being some major repercussions and retaliation. But Batts insults Tommy three times, busting his chops over Tommy’s having been a shoe shine boy much earlier in his life. Tommy gets really ticked off and shoots the guy; he and Jimmy think he’s dead and put him in the trunk, to take him upstate and dispose of the body. But once there, they realize he is still alive, so Tommy stabs him another ten times and Jimmy shoots him at least 4-5 times.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pQ6fd6iO_c>

*Never Bust a Wise Guy’s Balls (same dialogue used in the Simpsons scene below)*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RyqtrGnicc>

*The Simpsons characters, using the above original dialogue from Goodfellas (just for fun!)*

Six months later, the guys have to dig up and move the body because the property is about to be developed; this dialogue is typical of the morbid humor found throughout this film.

[*Tommy DeVito*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: [Henry, Jimmy and Tommy are digging up Billy Batts' decomposed corpse. Henry is coughing from the stench, while the others don't appear to be bothered] Hey, Henry, Henry, hurry up, will ya? My mother's gonna make some fried peppers and sausage for us.*

*[Jimmy and Tommy laugh while Henry coughs]*

[*Jimmy Conway*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Oh, hey, Henry, Henry! Here's an arm!*

[*Henry Hill*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Very funny, guys.*

[*Jimmy Conway*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000134/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Here's a leg!*

[*Tommy DeVito*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Here's a wing!*

*[laughs]*

[*Tommy DeVito*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: Hey, what do you like, the leg or the wing, Henry? Or ya still go for the old hearts and lungs?*

[*Henry Hill*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)*: [Vomiting] Oh, that's so bad!*

Paulie sends Jimmy and Henry to collect a debt from a deadbeat gambler; the boys are successful, but the gambler’s sister rats them all out and they all end up in prison for a stretch. One of my favorite scenes shows you how these guys managed to still live pretty well and eat extremely well despite being in prison:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQhBfRDd6GM>

*Dinner in Prison*

Once out of prison, Henry starts selling drugs to support his family, despite being directly told by Paulie not to get involved with this. The old gang also commits the infamous Lufthansa Heist at JFK International Airport, making off with millions, but Jimmy ends up executing most of the old gang because they all start spending the money on expensive cars and furs after he told them to lay low and not do this. Tommy is eventually taken out in reprisal for having murdered the guy in the Gambino family, and Henry ends up in the Witness Protection Program after concluding that he too is going to be whacked by his longtime buddies. As he puts it:

[Henry Hill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *"I'm an average nobody. I get to live the rest of my life like a schnook."*

LIST OF OUR COMMON ELEMENTS:

New York City: Yes

Catholic themes: This is mostly an amoral film; it’s a film about Henry’s journey that can best be summed up in two quotes.

The first is at the beginning of the film, as Henry regards the mob guys as almost rock stars.

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*narrating*] For us to live any other way was nuts. Uh, to us, those goody-good people who worked shitty jobs for bum paychecks and took the subway to work every day, and worried about their bills, were dead. I mean, they were suckers. They had no balls. If we wanted something, we just took it. If anyone complained twice they got hit so bad, believe me, they never complained again.

At the end of the film, Henry has gone into the Witness Protection Program after testifying against his fellow mobsters, and laments his new life, where he lacks any hint of status and privilege.

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*narrating*] Anything I wanted was a phone call away. Free cars. The keys to a dozen hideout flats all over the city. I bet twenty, thirty grand over a weekend and then I'd either blow the winnings in a week or go to the sharks to pay back the bookies.

[*Henry leaves the witness stand and speaks directly to the camera*]

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Didn't matter. It didn't mean anything. When I was broke, I'd go out and rob some more. We ran everything. We paid off cops. We paid off lawyers. We paid off judges. Everybody had their hands out. Everything was for the taking. And now it's all over.

[*narrating*]

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): And that's the hardest part. Today everything is different; there's no action... have to wait around like everyone else. Can't even get decent food - right after I got here, I ordered some spaghetti with marinara sauce, and I got egg noodles and ketchup. I'm an average nobody... get to live the rest of my life like a schnook.

Excessive Violence: The film is full of excessive violence. The scene where Tommy and Jimmy murder Billy Batts is one of the best examples, but there are plenty of others.

Cursing: Yes, constantly. This is a sample of the dialogue where Tommy goes off on Henry, who was just amused by Tommy telling the story of how they whacked Billy:

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): It's funny, you know. It's a good story, it's funny, you're a funny guy.

[*laughs*]

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): What do you mean, you mean the way I talk? What?

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): It's just, you know. You're just funny, it's... funny, you know the way you tell the story and everything.

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*it becomes quiet*] Funny how? What's funny about it?

[**Anthony Stabile**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0012376/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Tommy no, you got it all wrong.

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Oh, oh, Anthony. He's a big boy, he knows what he said. What did ya say? Funny how?

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Jus...

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): What?

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Just... ya know... you're funny.

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): You mean, let me understand this cause, ya know maybe it's me, I'm a little fucked up maybe, but I'm funny how, I mean funny like I'm a clown, I amuse you? I make you laugh, I'm here to fuckin' amuse you? What do you mean funny, funny how? How am I funny?

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Just... you know, how you tell the story, what?

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): No, no, I don't know, you said it. How do I know? You said I'm funny. How the fuck am I funny, what the fuck is so funny about me? Tell me, tell me what's funny!

[**Henry Hill**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*long pause*] Get the fuck out of here, Tommy!

[**Tommy DeVito**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000582/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*everyone laughs*] Ya motherfucker! I almost had him, I almost had him. Ya stuttering prick ya. Frankie, was he shaking? I wonder about you sometimes, Henry. You may fold under questioning.

Character on the fringe on society: Henry makes a choice very early in his life to be part of the mob gang, which by definition operates on the fringe of society. You have to be amoral to do the kinds of things these guys do. One debate about the film is how attractive Scorsese makes the mob life appear, and whether that would inspire any viewers to emulate this behavior.

Same Actors: Robert de Niro and Joe Pesci have roles in this film. Pesci also had roles in *Raging Bull* and *Casino.*

Surrogate Father: Henry obviously has a lot of issues with his own father, so the older men in the Mob all take him under their wing and groom him for a life of crime

Tracking or Steadicam Shot: the shot of Henry taking Karen on a first date to the Copacabana Club is considered to be one of the greatest steadicam shots ever in a film.

**THE DEPARTED**: 2007, Martin Scorsese



This film won 4 Academy Awards in 2007, including Best Picture and Best Director. It features an all-star cast, including Matt Damon, Jack Nicholson, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg, Alec Baldwin, and Martin Sheen.

The action takes place in Boston, home of the largest Irish American community in the country. Nicholson plays Frank Costello, a local Southie Mob boss somewhat based on the infamous Whitey Bulger.

[first lines]



[Frank Costello](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000197/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *I don't want to be a product of my environment. I want my environment to be a product of me. Years ago we had the church. That was only a way of saying - we had each other. The Knights of Columbus were real head-breakers; true guineas. They took over their piece of the city. Twenty years after an Irishman couldn't get a f\*cking job, we had the presidency. May he rest in peace. That's what the ni\*\*ers don't realize. If I got one thing against the black chappies, it's this - no one gives it to you. You have to take it.*

Costello’s nephew, Colin (Matt Damon), becomes a policeman to be an informant for his Uncle. Another young South Boston guy with known family ties to the Mob, Billy Costigan (Leonardo di Caprio), drops out of the Police Academy, but secretly becomes a member of a Special Investigations Unit (SIU) that focuses on dealing with Mob cases. After a short stint in jail to enhance his credibility, Billy infiltrates Costello’s gang. There are only 2 cops who know of his identify: Captain Queenan (Martin Sheen) and Staff Sergeant Dignam (Mark Wahlberg). Both Costello’s gang and the police realize that they each have a mole, and much of the drama and tension in this film is centered on their attempts to figure out who they are. Billy does a good job for Costello, but Costello is instinctively distrustful. In this awful scene, he even re-breaks Billy’s arm to make sure Billy is not wearing a wire:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwmCbh5yjbM>

*Scene where Costello breaks Billy’s arm again*

At one point, Costello wonders whether Billy even has the ambition to replace him:

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Frank, how many of these guys have been with you long enough to be disgruntled, huh? Think about it. You don't pay much, you know. It's almost a fuckin' feudal enterprise. The question is, and this is the only question, who thinks that they can do what you do better than you?*

[Frank Costello](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000197/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *The only one that can do what I do is me. Lot of people had to die for me to be me. You wanna be me?*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *I probably could be you, yeah. Yeah, I know that much. But I don't wanna be you, Frank. I don't wanna be you*

[Frank Costello](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000197/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Heavy lies the crown... sort of thing*

Any policeman involved in a shooting is mandated to meet with the Police Psychiatrist Madolyn Madden (Vera Farmiga). Colin meets her first, and ends up dating her for four months before she moves in with him. But Billy gets referred to her as well, because of the stress he is under working for Costello. When he first meets her, all he really wants is for her to prescribe some Valium for him, to help him sleep.

Despite that inauspicious beginning, Madolyn ends up sleeping with Billy, even as she is living with Colin. This plot twist also adds another element of suspense to this film, as neither Billy nor Colin know who “the other man” is.

The twists and turns in the plot predictably result in a lot of carnage, as both groups try to stay a step ahead of each other and to identify their rat first. These tensions create suspicions, as in this dialogue between Frank and Billy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDTRyjMnDOk> I Got this Rat

[Frank Costello](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000197/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *I got this rat, this gnawing, cheese eating f\*ckin' rat and it brings up questions... You know, see, Bill, like you're the new guy. Girlfriend... Why don't you stay in the bar that night I got your numbers. Social Security numbers. Everybody's f\*ckin' numbers.*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Is there something that you just wanna go ahead and ask me? 'Cause I'll give you the f\*ckin' answer, all right? Frank, look at me. Look at me. I'm not the f\*ckin' rat. Okay? I'm not the f\*ckin' rat.*

Costello’s group tails Queenan to a meeting he has on a rooftop with Billy; Billy escapes, but Queenan is thrown off the roof and killed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsGm2Ohl7x8> Thrown off the rooftop

Colin is then promoted to Queenan’s job and demands that Dignam give him the list of undercover officers, which he knows will reveal who had infiltrated Costello’s gang. Dignam refuses to give him the list, and is consequently suspended for two weeks and sent home.

Billy tips off and helps the SIU follow Costello to a drug deal going down with some Chinese gangsters; the resulting shootout leaves most of the group dead including Costello, who Billy kills because he has learned that Costello was actually an FBI informant who had ratted out lots of both his friends and his enemies. Billy and Colin finally meet afterwards at police headquarters, but while in Colin’s office, Billy sees a piece of evidence that lets him know that Colin is the inside mole. Colin, when he realizes what Billy now knows, erases all evidence of Billy as an employee from the police computers.

Madolyn finds herself pregnant and unsure of who the father is. Billy fears for his life, and leaves her with an envelope of information only to be opened if he dies. It turns out that he has tape recorded evidence of the conversations between Uncle Frank and Nephew Colin. Billy and Colin meet on the rooftop where Queenan met his demise; Billy “arrests” Colin, but ends up being gunned down by some of Colin’s men.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6VTgKjYgDU>

*Billy’s Death*

After attending Billy’s funeral, Colin returns to his own apartment, where he is shot dead by Dignam.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DgrCRmCCHw>

*Colin’s death*

This is a taut, tense, exciting film. I felt drained after watching it, and can only imagine the stress that those involved in either crime or police work must feel. “Goodfellas” made it all seem like fun and games, but I strongly suspect that “The Departed” gives a truer picture of how people actually cope with the drama and the violence.

LIST OF COMMON ELEMENTS

New York City: No. This one is set in Boston. But it centers on the kinds of mob violence and police corruption that could just as easily be seen in New York City. The very urban environment and mix of people from cultures all over the world is also very similar to that of New York City.

Catholic themes: <http://www.beliefnet.com/entertainment/movies/2006/10/morality-of-the-departed.aspx>

This opening scene contains direct references to Costello’s negative opinions about the Catholic Church; Costello believes that you should take what you want, rather than asking God to help you or to give it to you.

Costello thinks of himself as a God, and that he rules his underworld gang with an iron fist. He is never satisfied, and revealed as both totally selfish as well as amoral. Captain Quillian is actually a good Catholic, who truly wants to use his position to do right and facilitate justice. But it does him no good in the end, as he is thrown off a rooftop to his death in the street below.

Excessive Violence: Many examples. Just the sickening sound of Quillian’s body hitting the pavement is enough to send a chill down your spine.

Cursing: Here is an example from the dialogue where Billy meets Madolyn the first time:

[Madolyn](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0267812/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *I just think we should have a few more meetings before we even talk about prescriptions.*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Look... look, I'm having panic attacks, alright? The other night I thought I was having a f\*cking heart attack. I puked in a trash barrel on the way over here. I haven't slept for f\*cking weeks*.

[Madolyn](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0267812/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Is that true?*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Yeah, that's true. Alright? I said it was f\*cking true. I want some f\*cking pills and you're gonna what? You're gonna close my file? Is that what you're going to do?*

[Madolyn](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0267812/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *No, I didn't close your file. I...*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [angry] *I thought I was supposed to tell the truth here, if only f\*cking here!*

[Madolyn](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0267812/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *You are! You are!*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *Christ. I mean, a guy comes in here against every, every instinct of privacy and self-reliance he has and what do you do? What do you do, huh? You send him off on the street to score smack, is that what you do? You're f\*cking ridiculous!*

[Madolyn hands Costigan some Valium]

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [picking up the pills] *Two pills? Great. Why don't you just give me a bottle of scotch and a handgun to blow my f\*cking head off! Are we done here with this psychiatry bullsh\*t?*

[Madolyn](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0267812/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *You know what? You can leave!*

[Billy Costigan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000138/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): *What the f\*ck did I just put myself through? I'm f\*cking out of here. And what if that was a legitimate threat? Think about it, f\*cking hotshot.*

Same Actors: Dicaprio has been in 5 Scorsese films.

Surrogate Father: Costello acts as a surrogate father to both Billy and Colin, but both of them are murdered because of their relationship to him.

Example of a Tracking Shot: <http://www.beliefnet.com/entertainment/movies/2006/10/morality-of-the-departed.aspx>

The opening scene contains a great steadicam about one minute in, as the camera goes follows Costello into the ice cream store.

Sources:

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**THE WOLF OF WALL STREET**

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The mostly legal white collar crime depicted in *Wolf of Wall Street* makes for an interesting comparison to the blue collar thuggery in films like *Goodfellas* and *The Departed.* One startling aspect of the comparison is that these Wall Street rip off artists rarely go to jail, despite the fact that their tactics almost completely caused the collapse of the entire American economy in 2008, and did cause more than 20% of Americans to lose their jobs in the collateral damage (including me).

The film showcases Jordan Belfort (Leonardo di Caprio). It’s 1987, during the heyday of one of the first wave of the infamous leveraged buyouts set in motion by Ronald Reagan and capital fund managers like Mitt Romney.

Belfort is mentored by Mark Hanna (Matthey McConaughay), who confides that his only reasons for working are the cocaine and hookers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wM6exo00T5I> Cocaine and Hookers

Belfort loses his job after the Black Monday Meltdown on Wall Street, when stocks fell 508 points and lost 23% of their value.

Desperate for a job, he ends up selling penny stocks for a company operating out of a storefront on Long Island --- the kind of place where the guys don’t wear ties. None of these guys know how to sell like Belfort, so he quickly moves up the ranks and even trains the rest of them in how to talk widows and other elderly people out of their savings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJzo5TDfamk> Phone Sales: Jordan shows how it’s done

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OocKgpiZEHY> The Key to Making Money (Sales Training)

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Belfort and his neighbor Donnie form a new company, Stratton Oakmont, and they make a fortune by training hundreds of other amoral young people on how to sell to these unsuspecting middle class Americans, most of whom just want to try and get a better return on their money than they can get with a bank savings account.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpnhfq6Q2b0> Motivational Speech: There is no Nobility in Poverty

The success is further fueled by Belfort promoting a wild and excessive party culture at his firm, lavishly rewarding those who have done well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2J5fzM0DOM> Office Party Scene

They also spend a lot of money entertaining their clients. In this scene, their Accountant (Rob Reiner) goes ballistic after they run up over $400,000 in charges in one month on the company American Express account, including $26,000 on one dinner alone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC9uDbq6WWE> $26,000 for One Dinner?

The company then expands into setting up Initial Public Offerings (IPO’s) for private firms that want to go public; this was a big deal in the financial markets in the late 1990’s, when even new technology tech firms that had never made a profit were bringing in billions of dollars in these deals.

Belfort makes 22 million in 3 hours on one deal, but this attracts the attention of both the FBI and the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), particularly after Belfort launders the money into Swiss bank accounts.



Eventually this entire scheme comes crashing down; Belfort makes a deal with the feds, and ends up serving 3 years in prison, which as I said earlier is very rare. Very, very few of these criminals ever actually do any jail time. At the end of the film, Belfort is giving Sales Seminars, since he is banned from ever working in the financial markets again.

Scorsese got some heat for how he portrayed the lifestyle of Jordan Belfort and the people he recruited to work for him. Here is how the daughter of one of these people described her feelings in an article for The Guardian:

“The daughter of a man linked to the discredited financial schemes depicted in Oscar-tipped drama The Wolf of Wall Street has attacked the film's director, Martin Scorsese, and its star [Leonardo DiCaprio](https://www.theguardian.com/film/leonardodicaprio), for glamorizing a lifestyle of "fun sexcapades and coke binges".

Christina McDowell, whose father, Tom Prousalis, was a business associate of Jordan Belfort, the titular crooked stockbroker portrayed by DiCaprio in the film, accused her targets of "exacerbating our national obsession with wealth and status and glorifying greed and psychopathic behavior" in [an open letter published in LA Weekly](http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/2013/12/wolf_of_wall_street_prousalis.php). McDowell, who says she was forced to change her name after discovering her father had stolen her identity to launder money prior to his eventual incarceration for financial fraud, says *The Wolf of Wall Street* amounts to a "reckless attempt at continuing to pretend that these sorts of schemes are entertaining, even as the country is reeling from yet another round of Wall Street scandals".

She continues: "Did you think about the cultural message you'd be sending when you decided to make this film? You have successfully aligned yourself with an accomplished criminal, a guy [Belfort] who still hasn't made full restitution to his victims … And don't even get me started on the incomprehensible way in which your film degrades women, the misogynistic, ass-backwards message you endorse to younger generations of men."

**LIST OF OUR COMMON ELEMENTS:**

New York City: yes, this film is set in New York City.

Catholic themes: the only thing being worshipped in this film is Money. The values of almost everyone in this film are repulsive, exploitative, and disgusting. One of the great ironies of recent American culture is that it is Wall Street that has attracted many of the best and brightest minds of those graduating from college, rather than our corporations. It’s all about greed, and getting rich quick, no matter who gets hurt from these activities. *The Big Short* was another great film about how these hucksters brought the American economy to its knees.

Excessive Violence: there’s not the typical blood and gore violence in this film that there is in so many Scorsese films. There is some violence in the divorce scene, where Jordan and his wife both land blows. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltyfnY9VoZw> The Divorce Scene

Cursing: “The word "[fuck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuck)" and its numerous conjugations are said between 506 and 569 times, making this [the film with the most uses of the word](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_that_most_frequently_use_the_word_%22fuck%22) in a mainstream, non-documentary film” (Wikipedia)

Character on the fringe on society: Travis is a very damaged man, trying to survive in an urban jungle where it is easy for people not to notice you. One disturbing fact about this film was that it definitely inspired John Hinckley to try and assassinate President Reagan in 1981; Hinckley got a Mohawk haircuts just like the one Travis had, and Hinckley also was obsessed with Jodie Foster, and claimed that he shot Reagan mostly to try and impress her.

Same Actors: Leonardo di Caprio in the lead role; he has been in five Scorsese films.

Surrogate Father: Mark Hanna (McConnaughey) mentors Belfort in a manner similar to how Gordon Gekko mentors Bud in the film *Wall Street.*  In both films, this mentorship seems like a perversion of the father-son relationship, where the father teaches some values to his son. Here, it seems more like these Wall Street firms are like corporate fraternities, and where everyone behaves like drunken bohemians.

Example of a Tracking Shot*. T*his steadicam shot from this film ranks right up there with the great one from *Goodfellas* as one of the best ones Scorsese has ever done:[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfY\_kUpmaEg*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfY_kUpmaEg)

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