



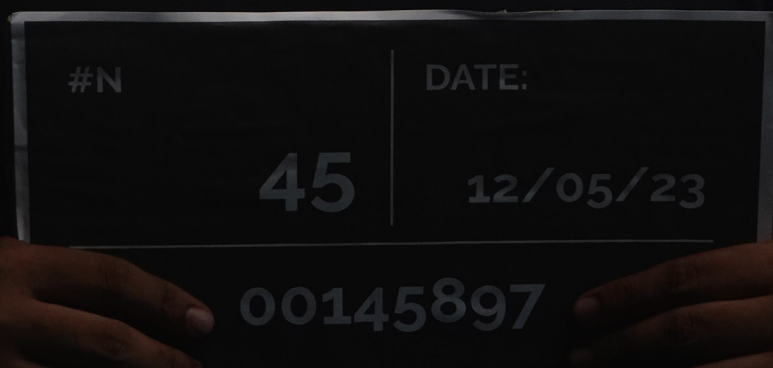
# Xpression

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# CRIME ON SCREEN

# Glorification of Villains on Screen

Chandrasekhar Chatterjee, BA Sem 2

Throughout the history of cinema, we have seen a number of characters who have captured our imaginations with their evil and villainous ways. From Darth Vader to Hannibal Lecter, they have become some of the most iconic characters in film history. However, in recent years, we have seen the emergence of a worrying trend: the glorification of villains on-screen.

In many ways, this glorification of villains

can be traced back to the rise of anti-heroes in the late 20th century. Characters like Tony Soprano in "The Sopranos" and Walter White in "Breaking Bad" captured the public's attention by being morally ambiguous and sometimes, downright evil.

However, these characters were never intended to be celebrated or idolized; they were meant to be complex and challenging, forcing viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about the human condition. In contrast, many of the villains we see on-screen today are glorified to the point where they become anti-heroes themselves.

Take, for example, the Joker in 'The Dark Knight'. While

he is undoubtedly evil and commits heinous acts throughout the film, he is also charismatic and captivating, drawing viewers in with his wit and charm. Similarly, characters like Thanos in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Killmonger in "Black Panther" are portrayed as sympathetic figures with understandable motivations, despite their violent actions.

The problem with this trend of glorifying villains is that it can have a negative impact on society as a whole. When we celebrate characters who commit acts of violence and are evil, we run the risk of normalizing those behaviours. We may begin to see them as acceptable or even desirable, leading to a culture where they are readily received by viewers and sometimes even celebrated by them.

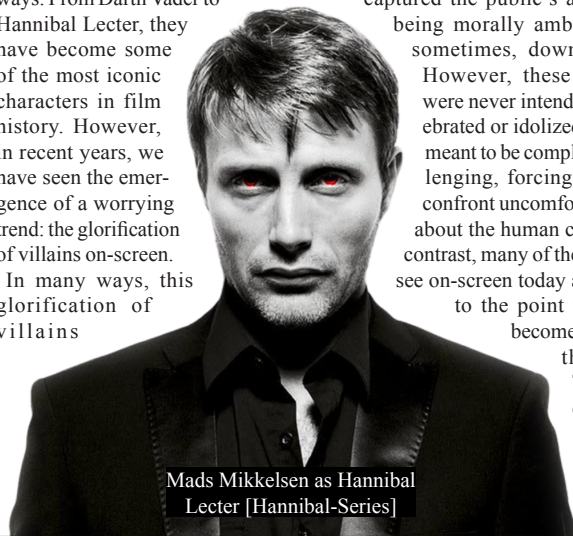
Moreover, the glorification of villains can also have a negative impact on our own personal values and morality. When we watch a film or television show that glorifies a character who

commits evil acts, we may begin to empathize with that character and even root for them. This can be dangerous as it blurs the lines between right and wrong, good and evil.

Of course, it is important to note that not all villains are glorified on-screen. There are still plenty of films and television shows that depict villains as truly evil and despicable characters. However, the impact that the glorification of villains can have on our culture and our values, is worth considering.

In conclusion, while the glorification of villains on-screen can make for compelling storytelling, it is important to be aware of the potential negative impacts. We need to be mindful of the messages we are sending to the audience and the impact those messages can have on our society.

As viewers, it is up to us to be critical of the media we consume and to consider the values and messages that are being presented to us.



Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal Lecter [Hannibal-Series]

# Underdog Underwood

Armaan Agarwal, BA Sem 4

"If you don't like how the table is set, turn over the table." This quote perfectly summarises Francis J. Underwood, a Democrat from Gaffney, South Carolina, in the first Netflix original series, 'House of Cards.'

The show starts after the results of the 2012 US General Election, where Frank is betrayed by his party and is forced to remain the Majority Whip instead of getting the promised position of Secretary of State. Underwood decides to act content with the party's decision. However, he begins plotting the downfall of the President from that moment on. The Majority Whip manages to create chaos as he exposes the main candidate for Secretary of State in favour of his ally, Catherine Durant. This sets the tone for the entire series, as Frank Underwood goes on to do whatever it takes to secure power. He breaks the fourth wall and often discloses his thoughts to the viewers, allowing us to understand his ruthless mindset.

Frank takes us on a journey marked by merciless decisions as he makes his way to the White House.

Despite making some morally ambiguous moves that go against the party line, he manages to persuade the viewers to root for his success as he subtly defines his evil plans. Frank and Claire

Underwood make a powerful couple who do not shy away from making the most gruesome decisions on their path to victory. The two are tied in a marriage of convenience with the aim of achieving maximum power and they allow each other to take any path necessary, including adultery. The couple felt indifferent after taking the lives of journalist Zoe Barnes and Congressman Peter Russo, once they were of no use to the Underwoods. Frank mentions the need to let go of people once they become more of a problem, justifying the means to an end.

This is continued throughout the show as Frank makes his way to become the Vice President and later the President of the United States of America. **The viewers are influenced to abandon their moral compass and even ignore the evil moves made by the Underwoods.** Claire even manages to sway Frank into becoming the US Ambassador to the UN despite her inexperience. Even after she was unsuccessful in her efforts as a US diplomat, she continued to intervene in foreign policy discussions despite the opposition. Even when Frank ensures the resignation of President Garret Walker, we simply witness the way Walker was found guilty of actions he wasn't even aware of. The

then-President was kept in the dark by Frank, who managed to isolate Walker from everyone.

Subsequently, Garret realized Underwood's ambition to knock him out of the White House, but by then it was a little too late.

Heather Dunbar became a Democrat candidate against Frank Underwood for the next election after investigating the Walker administration. Frank even tried to coerce a Supreme Court judge into early retirement to get Dunbar in the court rather than the White House. However, Heather stood by her morals and tried to give the country the President it deserved, so much so that Frank's allies soon jumped ship to Dunbar as they could separate the good from the evil. Yet things again went in the favor of the Underwoods as Claire and Chief of Staff Doug Stamper laid down a trap for Heather to fall into. Yet, the fall of perhaps the most promising candidate for the

Presidency is not met with sorrow by the viewers. Rather, the audience celebrates this as a victory for the Underwoods as they are too far down the lane to care about righteousness. Claire even became the running mate without ever contesting an election before. Things go further as the Underwoods decide to do mass surveillance before the 2016 General Election against Republican Mike Conway. Luckily for the Underwoods, their efforts pay off as they come out victorious and form the first husband-wife pairing to win the US general elections.

These are just a few instances in the story of Frank Underwood. The Democrat did whatever it took to get higher up in the food chain in Washington DC.



Kevin Spacey as Francis J. Underwood [House of Cards]

# A Case Against Crime On-Screen

Diya Shah MA Sem 2

## "She's a beast, I call her Karma She eat your heart out like Jeffrey Dahmer"

These lines are from my favourite song. Only the almighty is aware of how often I've hummed the song "Dark Horse," which has always held a special place in my heart. Katy Perry gained a lot of my respect post the release of this particular song.

It was simply so addictive, but looking back on it now, I see things quite differently.

If you read these lyrics carefully, the visuals that come to mind are horrific, but unfortunately, television, Netflix, and other OTT platforms have made us fantasize about crimes and criminals, and even look up to them.

These, along with other factors, have made crime acceptable in our society and led to the glorification of villains in movies. Netflix successfully provides murderers and those who wish to be like their favourite fictional characters with what they seek: media coverage and attention, whether it does so by dramatizing depictions of real-life murders

or by showing fictional storylines that incorporate crime and sexualize the criminal embedded in them. What else? This cruelty is desensitized by Netflix's marketing of these tragic occurrences, which is a deadly mix. It somehow manages to manipulate the human mind and invoke a rush of emotions.

People can't get enough of what goes inside the heads of handsome serial killers like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer. As a matter of fact, all the killers are portrayed with good physical attributes, which is actually not the case in reality. There are countless shows on Netflix about serial killers, especially those based on actual occurrences. In the movie 'Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil, and Vile', Zac Efron portrayed Bundy, and Evan Peters portrayed Dahmer in the television series "Dahmer." Beyond appearances, the central focus of both dramatized real-life killer series and fictitious killer series is the murderer's journey.

**Many of them go into great detail about the killers' origins, family, and childhood, which unnecessarily humanises them.**

The killer is also shown in everyday situations, such as a flashback of the killer in class or as a romantic partner, which helps them come off as likeable personalities.

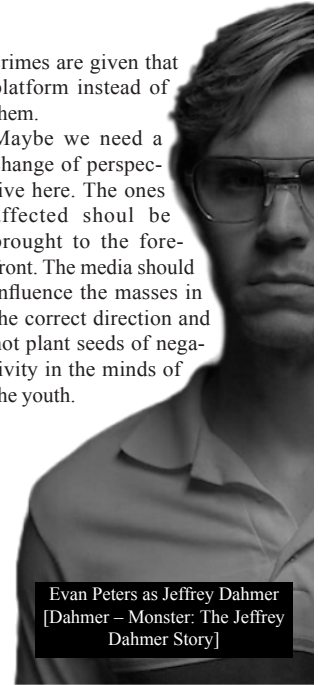
The Jeffrey Dahmer Story, a recent Netflix series, has generated controversy due to its apparent glamorization of a serial killer and perceived lack of consideration for the families of Dahmer's victims.

The topic of who profits from depictions of real-life crimes is crucial since major studios and streaming services make millions of dollars while victims and their families frequently end up bearing the brunt of the negative publicity.

There are so many groups of people whose voices remain unheard, and it can be disheartening and very painful when people who commit horrific

crimes are given that platform instead of them.

Maybe we need a change of perspective here. The ones affected should be brought to the forefront. The media should influence the masses in the correct direction and not plant seeds of negativity in the minds of the youth.



Evan Peters as Jeffrey Dahmer [Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story]

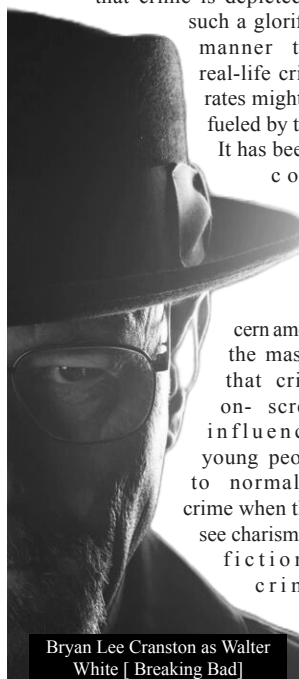
# A Case For Crime On-Screen

Aneek Bhattacharya, BA Sem 4

The depiction of crime and violence in the media has been a staple element for a long time. Whether in classic movies like Coppola's Godfather and Scorsese's Taxi Driver or in recent fan favourites like Breaking Bad and Money Heist, it has been widely felt

that crime is depicted in such a glorified manner that real-life crime rates might be fueled by this.

It has been a



Bryan Lee Cranston as Walter White [Breaking Bad]

concern among the masses that crime on-screen influences young people to normalize crime when they see charismatic fictional criminals such as Patrick Bateman, and that they might be more likely to commit crimes themselves in an attempt to imitate what they see on-screen, but this hypothesis has been proven false over the years. While research has shown that the increase in consumption of crime-related media on-screen has led to heightened paranoia and fear of crime in the general consumer demographic, crime in youth itself is fueled by a spectrum of factors that cannot be pinned down to just one aspect, and media portrayal of crime does not contribute much to the practical impacts of crime and crime rates.

In recent pieces of media, films have gravitated towards making people more aware of crime rather than glorifying it. Films such as 'Joker' help modern audiences explore and understand why and how society's structural flaws and a pattern of systematic institutionalism contribute to individuals becoming more susceptible to getting involved in crimes. This shows a shift in how the perception of crime has changed as it is reflected in popular media, and it also helps people get a more informed and sociological perspective on real-life crime so that people can acknowledge **crimes not as isolated incidents but as systematic issues that can be fixed**

**through collective and structural amendments.** Though contemplative depictions of crime in fiction have existed for a long time, from the works of Dostoyevsky to Kafka, it is a fairly recent venture when it comes to the contemplative depiction of crime on screen. Where it has historically been used purely to deliver a cheap thrill to the audience, modern-day filmmakers and visual storytellers seek to educate the audience rather than just create a wow aspect.

When it comes to the representation of crime in news, the compass has moved the other way, where the depiction of crime on-screen has exponentially increased since it has been noticed that news relating to crime is more likely to draw audiences. News channels are inclined to show crime in order to increase TRP, and although in reality crime rates have dropped, a news narrative has been created that makes the audience believe that the crime rates are actually rising and that they are in more danger than they actually are. This creates fear among the audience, and it has been noticed that an audience base that has an instilled sense of fear is more likely to watch news and that the consumption of negative news is much higher than the consumption of

positive news. This, once again, is an institutional issue that can be solved through structural amendments. In countries like the US and India, where media houses are under private ownership, the media houses rely on revenue from private advertisements which gives them an incentive to sensationalize crime on the news to draw in more viewers. In countries like the UK, where media houses are government-owned, they don't have to rely on revenue from advertisements so there is simply no incentive to sensationalize crime, and the news is much more positively depicted.

Despite all this, over the years, the ethics and guidelines that the news media follow when depicting crime have become better over the years, as the approach to it becomes more and more sensitive towards both the victims and the audiences. **Crime-based content, despite being perceived as a negative influence on audiences, is actually an integral part of visual media culture,** which keeps audiences aware and informed about the various aspects of crime. Hence, crime isn't something that we should deter various mediums from portraying it on-screen.

# Romanticizing Mafia: An Offer You Can Refuse

Anne Cynthia Gomes MA Sem 2

'The Godfather' movie trilogy exposed us to the mafia world, and since then it has occupied a very strong position in pop culture. Movies centred around the mafia and gangsters have been highly praised by the public for decades, which kind of startles me because crime is their topmost priority when it comes to entertainment, even though there is nothing positive about it.

Though the trilogy served its purpose and won quite a few Academy Awards, the genre in which the movie was set had driven numerous authors as well as filmmakers to replicate such problematic fascinations, and the results were not so pleasant. One of the most common examples is '365 Days', which instilled this unhealthy obsession with the mafia and dominant men among girls, especially teenagers.

It staggers me to see how the male lead is praised by the audience, who justifies all his wrongdoings like kidnapping, even though they know how this gruesome crime can affect people's minds and the victims experience depression because of the trauma that they had to go through. Still, movies like this continue to portray an unhealthy obsession with such characters.

The crime genre has risen in popularity among the public, and the fascination it holds among young women is baffling.

Apart from promoting crime, such movies misrepresent and mislead the viewers regarding the cultures and traditions of other countries. Needless to say, most of the mafia fiction is based on Italian, Russian, and Mexican cultures; the writers distinctly misinterpret their customs, and we tend to believe them. No, you will not be kidnapped immediately after you exit the airport. Every man in the aforementioned countries is not a flag-bearer of toxic masculinity. Adding to this subject, during my initial years of reading, Wattpad was the only affordable means through which I could immerse myself in the world of thrillers or horror stories. But slowly, I noticed that the outline of this app was changing as authors who were posting their stories were increasingly engaged in writing mafia-gangster or dominant-submissive narratives.

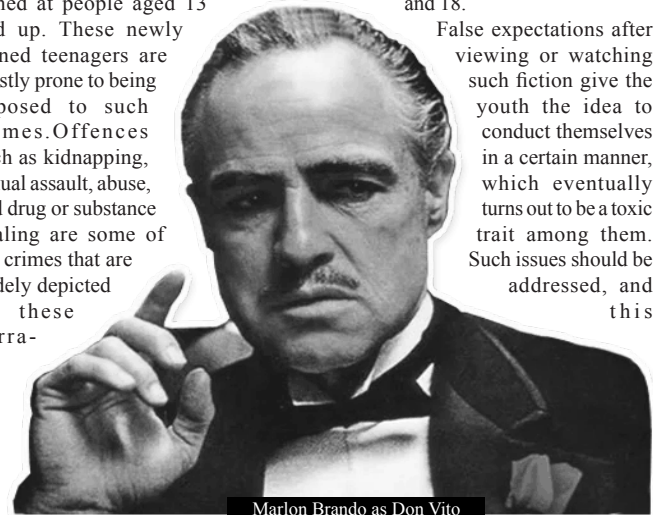
The authors knew what their readers wanted, so they gave them that. This, in turn, normalised dominant-submissive relationships for the readers. Watching such narratives on the screen or reading about them should not give us the idea of romanticizing such situations. As soon as the male lead starts the 'romance' sequence in these narratives, the audiences start to swoon over them, and the **crimes are turned into positive affirmations for them**. Due

to such content, youths are ignoring something popularly known as 'red flags' in their partners. Situations based on it give rise to crimes, which we see every other day on the internet.

Netflix and Wattpad are both aimed at people aged 13 and up. These newly turned teenagers are mostly prone to being exposed to such crimes. Offences such as kidnapping, sexual assault, abuse, and drug or substance dealing are some of the crimes that are widely depicted in these narra-

about offence and is commonly prevalent among teens. According to released figures from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), almost 60% of crimes against minors are committed by youngsters between the ages of 16 and 18.

False expectations after viewing or watching such fiction give the youth the idea to conduct themselves in a certain manner, which eventually turns out to be a toxic trait among them. Such issues should be addressed, and this



Marlon Brando as Don Vito Corleone [The Godfather]

tions. In this age range, most of them are naive and believe such depictions. Girls, especially, think that it's fine to be mistreated by the opposite gender, and they believe in a form of love that is abusive. Cybercrime is the most talked

kind of content needs to be replaced with shows, books, etc. through which the youth can cultivate rational perceptions.

# He Who Should Not Be Famed

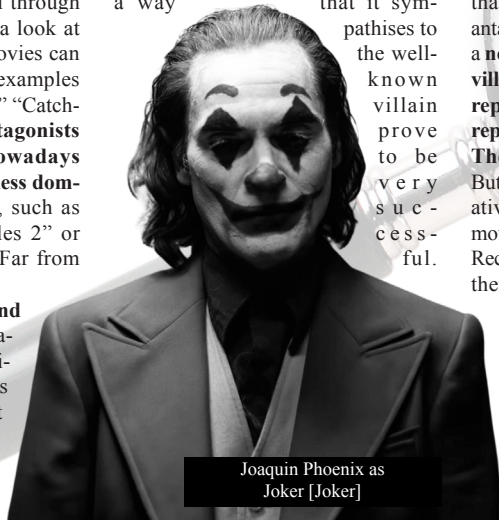
## The Rise of Villain and Anti-Hero Movies:

Eshita Shukla, BA Sem 2

In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in Hollywood's point of view. While good protagonists are still present, villain and anti-hero movies are on the rise. A simple scroll through your Netflix homepage or a look at the list of top box office movies can tell you that. Some prime examples in 2019: are "The Irishman," "Catch-22," and "Joker." **Even antagonists in superhero movies nowadays sound more articular and less dominate-the-world-ahahaha**, such as Screenslaver in "Incredibles 2" or Mysterio in "Spider-man: Far from Home."

**The Allure of Antiheroes and Villains:** There's a long tradition in pop culture of audiences embracing antiheroes and, in many cases, outright villains. In the present turbulent and hyper-aware social climate, it seems like morally ambiguous

and thematically provocative titles are even trendier than before. Even simple, anti-traditional rewrites such as "Maleficent" that turn stories in a way that it sympathises to the well-known villain prove to be very successful.



Joaquin Phoenix as Joker [Joker]

Bad guys are alluring. They stir the imagination. We want to know just how and why they are bad, and what had society done to them that made them that way. No more Voldemort-type antagonists that were born evil. This is a **new age of two-sided stories where villains and anti-heroes, rather than representing the menace of society, represent its byproduct.**

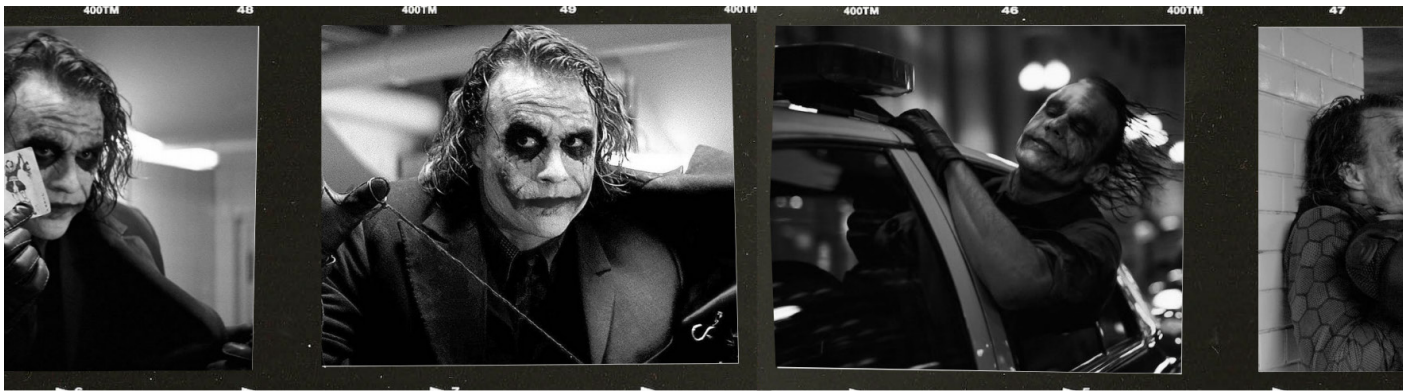
**The Responsibility of Filmmakers:** But precisely because they are provocative and ambiguous, these types of movies need to be executed with care. Recognize the villain. Sympathize with them. But don't glorify them. This becomes even more problematic when it comes to historical pieces and real-life villains, especially those from the near past.

It feels like sometimes people forget that to make a villain the protagonist, your movie would have to tolerate and condone the villain to a certain degree. Take

the famous "The Wolf of Wall Street" for example Jordan Belfort is a horrible person who the audience loves and wants to see succeed. However, the way that the movie portrays his life is recognized and didn't glorify its problems. This is the trick that many villain movies seem to miss. Recognize the villain. Sympathize with them. But don't glorify them.

Filmmakers should be mindful of their responsibility and care while portraying villains and antiheroes, even though audiences are drawn to such characters. **It is one thing to sympathize with and recognize villains, but it is quite another to glorify them.**

Creating compelling characters while keeping in mind the messages the film may convey is a filmmaker's responsibility. Moviemakers can create thought-provoking content without promoting harmful behavior when they acknowledge villains for who they are and do not glorify their actions.



# The Classic Brute

Romit Datta, Sem 4

“Madness is like gravity; all it takes is a little push.” These are the perfect set of words to describe one of the most prolific villains of all time, the Joker. In 2008, Christopher Nolan, one of the world’s finest and most visionary film directors, created a sensation when he gave Heath Ledger, an Australian artist who had featured in several Australian film and television productions during the 1990s, the chance to play the ultimate menace of Gotham City. Tragically, he passed away before the film’s premiere, but his performance still lives on in the audience’s hearts.

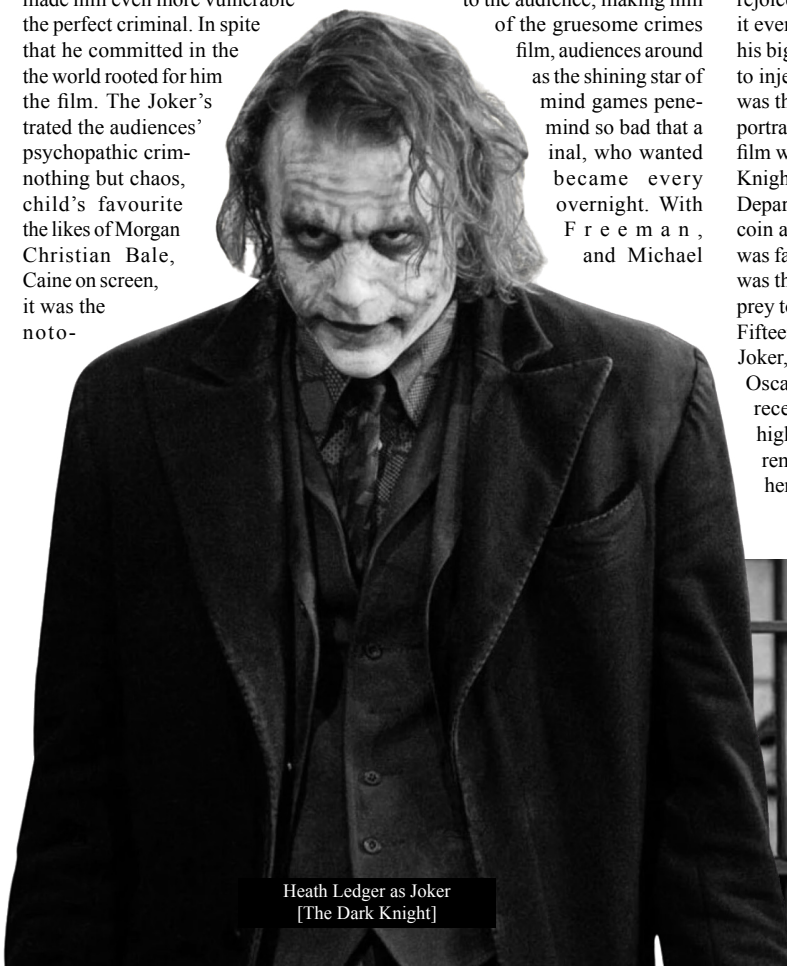
The film is considered to be a masterpiece by Nolan because superhero movies generally portray the hero as the superior one in the film. However, it was something completely different in this case.

Till the very end, **it was the villain of the story who kept the audience on the edge of their seats.** His various narrations of having a traumatic personal life made him even more vulnerable to the audience, making him the perfect criminal. In spite of the gruesome crimes he committed in the film, audiences around the world rooted for him as the shining star of mind games. The Joker’s portrayal of the villain became every-thing so bad that a child’s favourite criminal, who wanted to become a superhero, became a villain overnight. With **F r e e m a n**, and Michael

rious antagonist who stole the show and stood tall amongst all the others. In fact, the Joker could not be defeated until the very end of the film. Whether it was the efforts of the Gotham Police, Harvey Dent, or Batman himself, it was his brains and sheer planning that got him out of every possible situation and always kept him a step ahead of all his foes. The sheer class and subtlety with which he executed all his plans left everyone around him awestruck. The use of gasoline on the huge pile of money was a standout move of his in the entire film. He was a guy who left no trail of his work, thus successfully committing the perfect crime repeatedly. His masterstroke was to have moles in every possible nook and corner of the city who kept him well-informed about the entire city’s activities, making him the mastermind of crime.

In a world of fancy ammunition, we met a guy who used knives to kill people. He rejoiced in seeing his victims endure the pain in their last moments, which made it even more pleasurable for him and more disconcerting for the audience. And his biggest weapon was nothing but the power of manipulation. The way he used to inject his thought processes into the minds of others was his biggest win. He was the kind of villain we had never seen before, and Nolan’s vision towards the portrayal of it just added the cherry on top. His influence on the characters in the film was just as spectacular as it was on his audience. He turned Gotham’s White Knight, Harvey Dent, whose name everyone looked up to in the Gotham Police Department, against the law of the land while making him believe that flipping a coin and leaving everything up to luck and chance would rightfully decide what was fair or unfair in life. His death was something that left the city shattered as he was the people’s hero, a hero who did not wear a mask. But in the end, he too fell prey to the white-faced maniac.

Fifteen years down the line, many actors have come and gone trying to play the Joker, but none of them quite succeeded like him. His performance received the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in ‘The Dark Knight’ and even in death, he received a standing ovation by the world’s finest, which is an honour of the highest nature. Without a doubt, till date, the Joker, played by Heath Ledger, remains one of the most powerfully portrayed villains of all time in the superhero movie genre.



Heath Ledger as Joker  
[The Dark Knight]



# Shades of Crime On-Screen

Krish Saini, BA Sem 4

Crime has long been a captivating subject in the world of entertainment, offering a canvas for storytelling that delves into the complexities of human behavior. Portraying crime and criminals on-screen is never an easy task. But when creators do get all the ingredients right, they create memorable villains that stay with audiences for a long time and leave a lasting impact on pop-culture discourse. It is therefore not surprising that some of the most popular movies and shows are related to crime.

However, the portrayal of crime on-screen does not have a fixed recipe, and it differs in every show and movie based on context and the message the creators want to deliver.

**Crime as Liberation:** We love movies like 'Dhoom' and 'Ocean's Eleven' despite their thematic glorification of outright criminal activities. We adore characters like Alvaro Morte's The Professor and Heath Ledger's Joker despite their actions going against our intrinsic moral compass. The simple explanation for us liking these things, besides the excellent creativity of the creators and actors, is that they treat crime as a liberating act. **All of us crave for an extraordinary adventure, an unbelievable sequence of events, that releases us from the mundaneness of life. In many ways, crime is a manifestation of this desire;** it represents everything that we believe is against societal concepts of morality that, for some of us, often hold us back from indulging in our desires. The glorification of the sheer audacity of crimes and criminals in some productions offers a liberating experience to a large section of the audience. The criminal activities these characters engage in go beyond being just morally questionable acts and are perceived as their attempts to break societal shackles and indulge in their desires. These productions play on our fascination with liberating ourselves through unconventional means.

**Crime as Rebellion:** Most of us are familiar with the plot of the popular Spanish series Money Heist, in which a group of criminals come together to rob the Royal Mint of Spain. Those who have watched the show will know how, right from the first episode, the robbers were portrayed as rebels—people who were fed up with the existing hierarchy of power and wanted to voice out their displeasure with the same. The concept of a heist, which, by the very definition of the word, is an immoral

and anti-social act, was shown as a rebellion against the established order of the state and society. The fact that 'Bella Ciao' (the Partisans' anthem during their fight against the fascists ruling over Italy) is a recurring song in the show, is testament to how makers often brazenly associate outright criminal activities with rebellion. This is not a rare occurrence on-screen, though. **For decades, several movies and shows have portrayed criminal acts as a way of rebelling against the system, as a way for people who have been wronged by society to voice out their displeasure and forge a new path for themselves.** Criminals are often portrayed as anti-heroes, and audiences empathize with them. The boundaries between right and wrong are blurred as audiences are forced to question the very nature of authority.

**State Crimes as Patriotic Acts:** The polar opposite of crime being portrayed as an act of rebellion against the authorities is the justification of crimes conducted by the authorities themselves. Movies like 'Gangajal' and 'Singham' absolve the state of any wrongdoing when it comes to taking extrajudicial action against people who are perceived as a threat to society. Then, there are the blockbuster Bond movies that show an agent of the state indulging in violent and often illegal acts in order to protect his country. **Such depictions of state-sanctioned criminality blur the limits of the state's authority over individuals.** National interests are deemed superior to the rights of individuals. And often, the 'national interest' portrayed is one of a fictitious nature that simply fits the mould of the current social context. These movies and shows influence audiences to accept the subversion of someone's rights if doing so is important for national interest, thus giving rise to more state-sponsored criminality and the public's apathetic attitude towards the same.

**Sympathy for Criminals and Societal**



[Money Heist]



Ray Liotta as Henry Hill  
[Goodfellas]

**Reflection:** There is no doubt that societal structures play a huge role in pushing someone towards a life of criminal activity. **Imbalances in income and opportunities, injustice meted out by the state, and so forth are among the several factors that may lead to someone engaging in criminal acts.** There are scores of movies and shows that portray the same. Productions like 'Khalnayak', 'Goodfellas', and 'Breaking Bad' humanize the bad guys to a great extent. In these productions, criminals aren't just soulless monsters who choose to live on the wrong side of morality; they are as human as us, and circumstances have pushed them into doing the wrong things. While the existence of such portrayals is imperative to facilitate discourses about societal injustices, they are very hard to pull off

because there is an extremely fine line between examining the circumstances that lead people astray and justifying criminal acts by putting the entire blame on society.

The depiction of crime on reel has a massive impact on the perception of crime in real life. Movies and shows centered around crime shape social discourse about the various factors that lead to criminal activities. It is hard to say which of the above portrayals is the 'right' one. It largely depends on the context of the story and the message that the creators want to send across to the audience. However, they offer us multiple perspectives through which we can understand the complexities of human behaviour and the social structure that influences and shapes our notions of criminality.

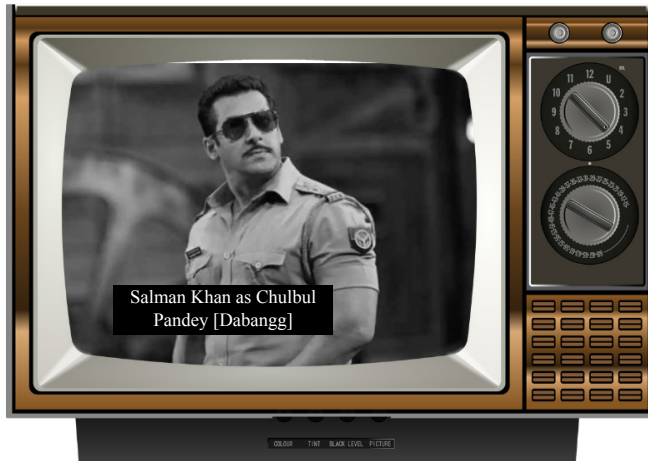
# Desensitisation of Masses Through Increased Exposure to Crime

Debdyuti Sarkar, BA Sem2

Have you ever wondered why people gather around in groups when a fight breaks out? Why is it so entertaining and amusing to watch someone get beaten up or beat someone? Why don't people feel empathetic or try to stop it? Why are we so used to seeing violence and crime in the streets? Why exactly are we so 'desensitised' to crime? Today's new media has increasingly normalised crime. In recent years, a large chunk of all films are crime movies.

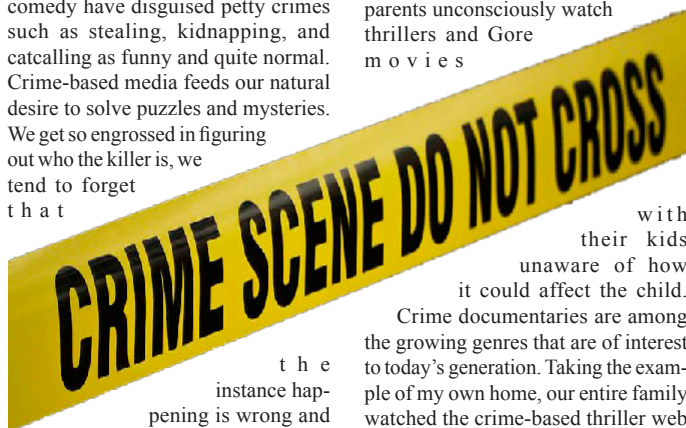
Even films of other genres such as comedy have disguised petty crimes such as stealing, kidnapping, and catcalling as funny and quite normal. Crime-based media feeds our natural desire to solve puzzles and mysteries.

We get so engrossed in figuring out who the killer is, we tend to forget that



Salman Khan as Chulbul Pandey [Dabangg]

eyes if they see their parents watching an action film. A child of this generation is automatically desensitised to violence and crime by birth. Often parents unconsciously watch thrillers and Gore movies



the instance happening is wrong and is illegal in the real world. The masses are increasingly losing their empathy towards victims.

Why does seeing a police officer make us feel nervous rather than feeling safe? Police officers are normalised using violence to punish even greater violence. **Taking bribes, using muscle power, channeling contacts, and threatening people to get things done are considered normal and easily accepted by the masses.** Police officers, the epitome of protection and safety have been portrayed as and have turned into symbols of betrayal and dishonesty.

Let's take 'Dabangg' for example, Chulbul Pandey the protagonist, literally breaks the bones of the villains in the movie trilogy without thinking twice about the possible consequences of the law or the legal pathway for the same in spite of being a senior inspector. A child today doesn't close his/her

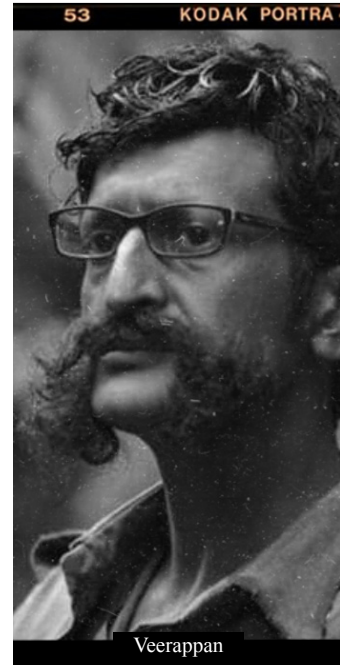
with their kids unaware of how it could affect the child.

Crime documentaries are among the growing genres that are of interest to today's generation. Taking the example of my own home, our entire family watched the crime-based thriller web series 'Khakee' together including my 12-year-old brother. **Criminals who have not yet been caught have been glorified through these crime documentaries and are portrayed as brave at heart and courageous.** Gangsters have been historically known to give interviews to journalists before turning themselves in, in order to maintain their 'reign of terror'. In his first interview, India's most elusive fugitive Veerappan with a price of Rs 40 lakh on his head, spoke without remorse about how he most ermined the killings of over 60 people, including 21 policemen. Veerappan also revealed how he and his gang waged war with the special task forces formed to capture him. **Crime on screen is glorified in its rawest form when news channels receive live footage of a crime taking place.** We truly identify the desensitisation to crime when we see journalists running helter-skelter to produce the live

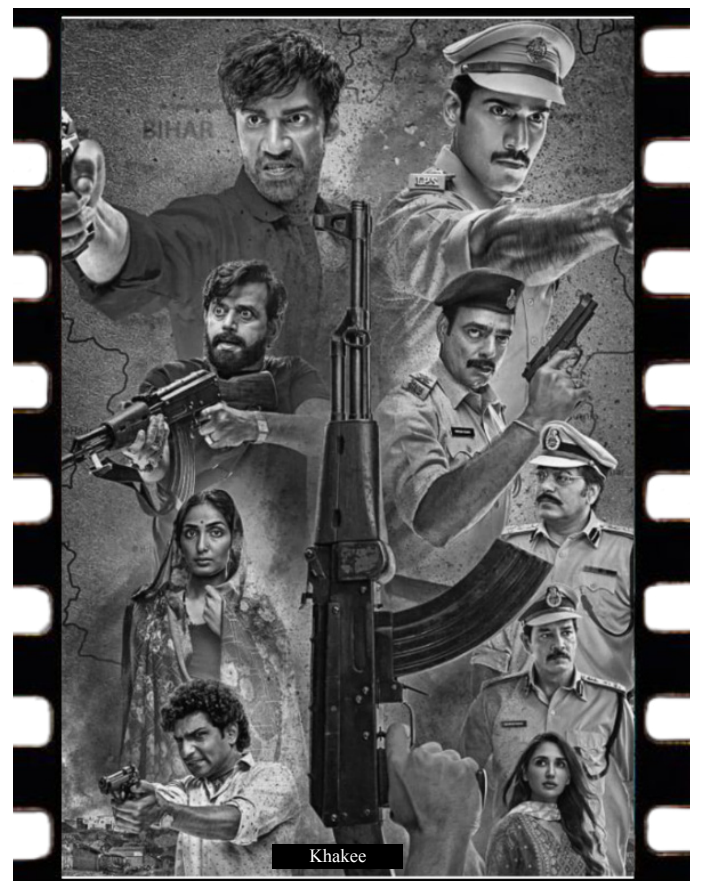
footage first on their respective channels. How insensitive are we towards communal riots every day around us now? Media has resorted to reporting such hate crimes so lightly around us nowadays that we, as masses, have come up with perceived geographical boundaries of places prone to communal violence. A very

insightful example of this from my daily life was how casually my father asked me to avoid Kidderpore because there was a communal riot going on and he did not bother talking or exchanging information about it. He just said, "These things happen quite often, never mind".

The next time you put on a status or a story about a crime, ask yourself, are we



really thinking about the victims and the offender once our story reaches the desired views on social media?! Question yourself!



# Mean World Syndrome:

## An In-depth Analysis

Madhura Bhattacharjee, BA Sem2

place. Overall, media use, socialisation, and personal experience are just a few of the variables that can have an impact on mean world syndrome. To be attentive to the information we consume and how it might be influencing our attitudes and views, it is necessary to be aware that media can have a significant impact on how we perceive the world.

### Here are a few examples from actual life:

Study participants who watched a lot of TV crime dramas were more prone to overestimate the occurrence of crime in the real world, according to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania. This suggests that viewing violent media may cause reality distortion and increase dread and anxiety in viewers. Following the September 11th attacks, many people had an increased dread of terrorism and thought that the world was a more dangerous place. The media's heavy emphasis on the threat of terrorism and portrayal of it as an all-pervasive peril increased this concern.

Public opinion surveys conducted in the United States frequently reveal that individuals overestimate the crime rate and think that crime is increasing, even when the crime rate is actually dropping. The media's tendency to sensationalize crime and focus on startling and violent episodes is regarded to be at least partially to blame for this disparity between perception and reality. The fear of crime may enhance support for stricter criminal justice legislation like three-strikes statutes and mandatory minimum terms in some regions. These laws may have major repercussions for anyone involved with the criminal justice system and may feed a vicious cycle of incarceration and poverty. By offering a more fair-minded and complex view of the world, the media can contribute significantly to the fight against mean world syndrome. Here are a

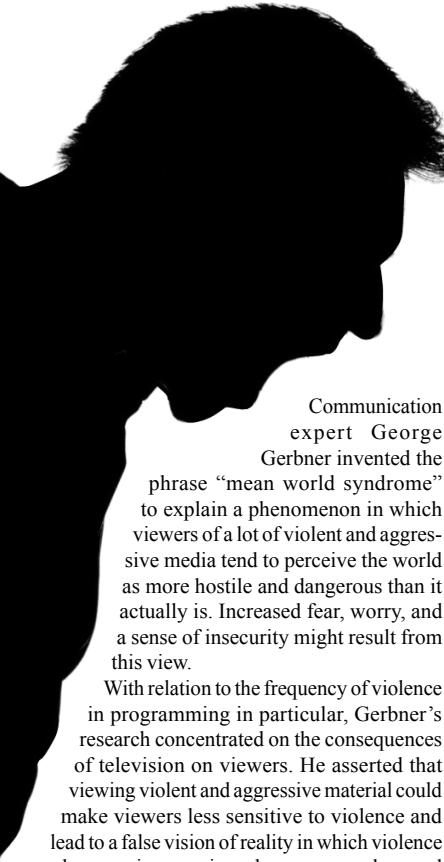
few ways that media might be beneficial:

**Accurate and thorough reporting:** By providing accurate and thorough reporting on crime and other concerns, the media can aid in the fight against the "mean world syndrome." Reporting on both the positive advancements and remedies to various problems, as well as their negative effects, can fall under this category. **Putting news stories in context:** The media can provide additional context and background information to viewers and readers so they can understand the bigger picture of a particular issue rather than only concentrating on sensational or worrisome tales. **Promoting critical thinking:** By offering a variety of perspectives and contesting presumptions, the media may promote critical thinking. This can aid viewers and readers in developing more critical media consumption skills as well as a more accurate and nuanced perspective of the world.

By promoting inspiring stories and instances of people changing the world for the better, the media can also assist fighting the "mean world" stereotype. This can assist in balancing out the pessimistic and frightening themes that are frequently emphasized in news coverage.

**Content diversification:** The media can expand the scope of their coverage by covering a variety of subjects and points of view. This can aid in giving a more complete image of the world and preventing tunnel vision that can lead to mean world syndrome.

Overall, more accurate, fair, and diversified coverage of the globe in the media can help fight the "mean world syndrome." By doing this, they can counteract the detrimental impacts of exposure to violent and sensationalized media and aid viewers and readers in gaining a more realistic and nuanced picture of the world.



Communication expert George Gerbner invented the phrase "mean world syndrome" to explain a phenomenon in which viewers of a lot of violent and aggressive media tend to perceive the world as more hostile and dangerous than it actually is. Increased fear, worry, and a sense of insecurity might result from this view.

With relation to the frequency of violence in programming in particular, Gerbner's research concentrated on the consequences of television on viewers. He asserted that viewing violent and aggressive material could make viewers less sensitive to violence and lead to a false vision of reality in which violence and aggression are viewed as commonplace and prevalent.

Given that news coverage frequently focuses on unpleasant and gore incidents, such as crimes, violence, and natural catastrophes, mean world syndrome is thought to be particularly prominent among people who watch a lot of news. In spite of the fact that crime rates may actually be dropping, this might lead to the feeling that the world is a dangerous and unpredictable

## Rest easy, our Braveheart

"You wanted to shine gutsy, you wanted to live 2 weeks  
You kept hope Nirbhaya, 2 weeks you lived  
You didn't lose the battle rather punished the sinners  
We raised your hands and result came after 7 years.  
Some raised voice, some kept silent  
You smiled stilly, watched the sinners to be violent.  
The nation stood by your side  
They longed for the pain of sinners, which you had to abide  
You, your truth stood lastly  
Proudly, surely, happily  
7 long years of wait  
The ache, the state  
You flew then in the high sky,  
When the truth took it's side  
At the end you said,  
"You go to sleep, I also sleep"  
Before leaving, you could assure if you peacefully fell asleep.

নারী তুমি সইলে ব্যাথা নীরব,  
নীরবতা জবাব দলি সাত বর্ষ পরে  
উন্নত তুমি, ছলি উন্নত ভোমার ধী  
মাঝপথে হারালে, রখে উজ্জ্বল সত্যটি।"

Subarna Chongder, MA Sem 2





# Editorial

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## Predisposition And Consequence

Aparajita Roy, MA Sem 2

"I know there is a big bad world out there, but I rarely come across it. - Al Stewart

How often have we heard people say, "Be careful; it is a big bad world!"? How often do we hear that the world is no longer safe? And how often do we hear that there is no place for good people around the globe? A gazillion times, I am sure. I heard the same while growing up. My dad, who has been dealing with disaster management, time and again, reminded me of how cruel the world is. I would neglect it and pass it on as a general statement until I realised the predisposition of his thoughts. Having worked in this field for over 24 years, he has seen more cruelty than I can imagine, especially in terms of man-made disasters. He tells me to not be afraid of anything other than the cruel human mind; there is nothing more dangerous than that.

From a man slitting his throat after his son was shot by an opponent soldier to a wife slipping into depression after her husband passed away in a Naxalite attack, he has seen it all as his work begins at the edge of these individuals' vulnerabilities while he conducts relief and rehabilitation for them.

He often curses man for even natural disasters, as he feels it is we who have exploited nature, the results of which are these calamities. As the years have gone by and his promotions have taken him a step ahead, his cynical outlook on the world has also gradually faded. I have never asked him the reason for it, but Maa and I are relieved for sure! I came across this concept of the Mean World Syndrome, unaware of the fact that it was occurring in my home as well. A concept that we shove off our shoulders but get to observe in our daily lives. With increased responsibilities,

his junior colleagues took over the field work, and my father visited only for special cases, limiting his direct exposure to the surrounding cruelty. It is now that I understand what facilitated the change in his views. People do not consider the world to be bad or cruel without reason; it is an underlying predisposition that leads a person to have such thoughts.

Unfortunately, with access to a pool of information at our fingertips in the 21st century, exposure to crime and other negative elements in our society cannot be controlled. The magnitude of the aforementioned syndrome reached its peak when COVID-19 was also at its peak. Several news articles and YouTube videos were responsible for generating panic by publishing false information like hospital authorities engaging in 'morally questionable acts' such as increasing the prices of essentials products and services or alleging that COVID-19 was a part of 'China's biological warfare strategy'. It did not matter whether the information could be verified; people all over the world lost hope in humanity itself.

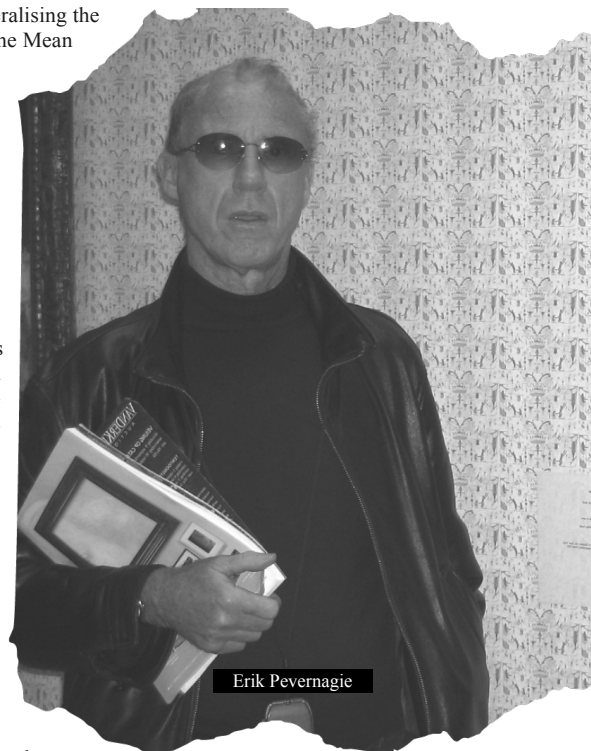
On a personal note, something similar occurred to me when I read about the 'Me Too' movement. I used to believe that women who were financially stable and had control over their lives were not vulnerable to sexual abuse, but soon my opinions were influenced by how various media platforms reported the issue. To think that the workplace, the one area that would give her control of her life, is turning into one of the gravest areas for her, terrifies me. However, this does not mean that all workplaces are unsafe. Even if they are, we have significant

measures to combat the problems. The fear that is triggered is not always personal but an effect of the media. Be it COVID-19 or the Me Too movement, the media extends its news in such a way that it invokes fear in people without actually educating and informing them about ways of dealing with such sensitive situations. Having said that, not all of these are mere fears; some are realities, but generalising the same would lead to the Mean World Syndrome.

For instance, one study done in 2020 found that feelings of anxiety were tied to violent or troublesome news media coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Furthermore, doom-scrolling has worsened the effects of such widespread media exposure. More often than not, we keep scrolling through our phones and read bad news, then dream about it, and then a new anxiety is triggered. 'Zombie attack in Philadelphia', 'Humans become zombies', and 'contact lenses lead to eye-eating parasites'—not only do these kinds of news disturb us, but they are exaggerated like melodramatic Bollywood movies, and we as passive consumers get terribly

affected by the same just by reading the headline, lacking the patience to read through the details of the news story or cross-checking the facts. Thus, it is essential that we analyse every piece of information before getting hyper and stressing the next immediate second. All things said and done, the world might be cruel, but why not make an indi-



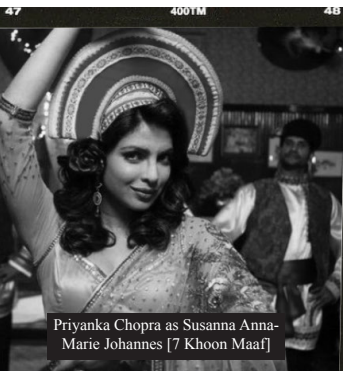
Erik Pevernagie

vidual effort to be good and change what is bad?

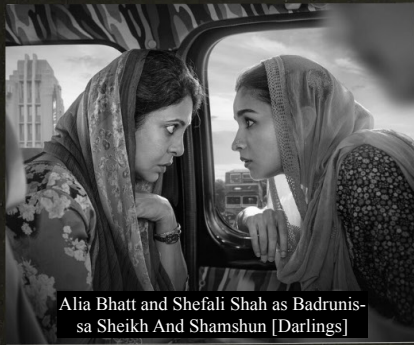
**"If we suffer from an unbearable mean world syndrome and fear we will get a comeuppance anytime, let us endeavour to defeat the inner rejections of buoyancy and confidence, liberate our subdued lust of freedom, start to enliven the bleak outlook of our life story, and technicolor the sky of our expectations. ("With confidence")". — Erik Pevernagie**

# I have a thing about feminine rage ...and also the on-screen crime that ensues.

Shivangi Basu, MA Sem 2



Priyanka Chopra as Susanna Anna-Marie Johannes [7 Khoon Maaf]



Alia Bhatt and Shefali Shah as Badrunissa Sheikh And Shamshun [Darlings]



Anushka Sharma as Meera [NH10]



Rekha as Jyoti [Khoon Bhari Maang]

“Nah, she is just crazy!”

“Why is she being so emotional?”

Last but certainly not the least: “Ladke aise hi hain, lekin tum toh ladki ho na, tumhe baat samajhni chahiye.” (Boys will be boys, but you should be more understanding as a girl.)

Here's the thing: Nahi samajhna mujhe. I do not want to understand, and I will never understand, how some people do not hesitate to dictate or gaslight women into having appropriate reactions to injustices against them. Some expect us to be docile, to weep, and to mourn in silence, but seldom do they expect us to resort to violence.

Enter cinematic portrayals of women avengers who take matters into their own hands, hands that are, more often than not, covered in the blood of the perpetrators. There are debates on the morality of it all and opinions about such stereotypical angry women's revenge drama tropes misrepresenting feminist ideals. It will take me a while to comprehend the nuances involved in such discourse.

The question is, why are these movies with vengeful female protagonists still relevant? Why do we still root for them? This is something that I think I understand, not as a film critic but as an emotional viewer, and I credit Bollywood movies for it.

Before Netflix's recommendations, Sony MAX, on rare occasions, would not air 'Sooryavansham' repeatedly and was responsible for introducing us to different movies. When I first saw 'Khoon Bhari Maang', it left me with an intense fear of crocodiles, and of a potential partner who could feed me to the reptiles.

This movie is about a scorned woman's revenge against her swindler husband and his associates. While I do agree that it subscribed to conventional beauty standards when Rekha returned as the iconic Jyoti after nearly escaping death, I couldn't help but be in awe of her transformation. She had her own sense of agency, knew what she wanted, and went after it. During the climax, when she hurt the abominable antagonist with a whiplash, I cheered for her because it felt like she was exacting revenge on behalf of each of her loved ones whom he had hurt, her children especially. For me, it was clearly a good versus bad narrative, so I watched with negligible remorse when she pushed the villain to his death.

One can argue that she was too naive to have trusted someone so easily, to have expected love in this ruthless world. Can you blame her, though? Everybody deserves to experience love and to be loved. Yet, it is truly terrifying to realise how perverse love can be. At this juncture, I present two films: '7 Khoon Maaf' and 'Darlings'. While the two protagonists are very different from each other, be it socio-economically or in terms of the guilt with which they commit crimes, they are similar because of their search for love, acceptance, respect, and finally, a sense of freedom. Priyanka Chopra's Susanna Anna-Marie Johannes was abused, cheated on, blindsided, and blackmailed not once, not twice, but six times. By the time she entered an alliance with her fifth husband (the lecherous Inspector Keemat), one could see a shift in her. She no longer married for love and was almost predatory in the way she killed. However, it was either kill or be killed, and this was evident when she said, "Pehle pehle toh dukh huya aur fir achanak darr lagne laga." (I was shattered at first, and then I started fearing him.) Throughout the movie, it was heartbreaking for me to witness such brutality on-screen because there is a limit to which a person can tolerate such atrocities. Her crimes were acknowledged as sins committed 'for her heart' (dil ke liye), and once I made peace with why they deserved to be forgiven (maaf), I appreciated her ingenious ways of eliminating the monsters and hummed to the beats of 'Darling aankhon se aankhein chaar karne do. Roko na, roko na mujhko pyaar karne do...'

Speaking of which, Alia Bhatt, in her Netflix dark comedy production 'Darlings', understood that her abusive husband was a scorpion, one that would never stop stinging. The analogy is befitting because that is how domestic violence works. You condone it once, and you are stuck in a vicious cycle. Marriage, as a sacred social institution, and the picture-perfect family, as a dream, are ingrained in the minds of

young girls in our country. Probably why an apology is granted when the husband begs for it after character-assassinating and beating her to a pulp. After all, it is the alcohol that is the demon, not him.

Everyone around her, including her mother, tried to convince her to take off her rose-tinted glasses, but she kept finding excuses until it resulted in the loss of her unborn child when he pushed her down the stairs, all while he was sober.

This proved to be the ultimate eye-opener. She decided to turn the tables on him and the chair to which he was tied when she held him hostage, tortured him, lied to the police, and set the stage for his alleged suicide. His death was accidental, but it liberated her nonetheless.

When she wore red lipstick, a colour which was probably forbidden, and treated herself to movies and scooter rides, I smiled unknowingly. What I absolutely loved about this film was the dynamics between the mother-daughter duo.

Having suffered the same treatment in the past, Shamshun had to helplessly watch her child go through it as well. Badru, irrespective of everything she had done, was actually soft-hearted because she still felt guilty, but her mother made it a little easier by being her pillar of support.

I believe that there is nothing more pure than a mother's love and that she can do anything for the well-being of her child. Now, I can't even bring myself to imagine the agony she goes through when that child is sexually assaulted and left to die by sadistic individuals who are not even punished by law for their heinous crimes. Maatr and Mom (both meaning mother), starring Raveena Tandon and Sridevi respectively, in the lead roles, deal with this sensitive subject. It is rather unfortunate and shameful that the victims have to endure social ostracization and sit through the rigmarole of court proceedings only to watch the perpetrators walk scot-free.

These two movies depict the power structure that prevents the effective delivery of justice and the revenge plot that follows, including measures to carefully eliminate the powerholders and their associates. Having seen both movies, I would be lying if I said



7 KHOON MAAF

that there weren't any factual glitches, misinformation about the legal system, or superficial treatment of survivors. However, when I saw both the mothers meting out justice and seeking retribution by violently killing the assaulters, a small part of me felt better. Why? It is because in the post-Nirbhaya world, as movie critics say, this line of storytelling might have become a cliché in the reel, but in real life, I read reports about such gruesome cases so frequently that it makes my skin crawl, and watching criminals suffer on-screen gives me a false means of catharsis.

You may call it immature or even questionable, but there is something very gratifying about watching a woman, beaten down by circumstances and others around her, fight for herself, which brings me to the 1994 controversial movie, 'Bandit Queen'. Inspired by the famous Indian dacoit Phoolan Devi, the protagonist was a victim of child marriage, was repeatedly violated, stripped of her dignity since a woman's honour is erroneously defined by her sexual encounters, and led a life that I would not wish upon my worst enemy. The complexities of criminality are shown through her character. In the movie, on the one hand, she killed those who had wronged her, and on the other hand, she was revered as a true leader. Yes, she was a dacoit who probably murdered many people, including the upper-caste men who raped her, but her vulnerability and defiance against the abhorrent caste system, patriarchy, and its norms, spoke to the audience.

When it comes to social evils and the prevalent patriarchal undercurrents in our country, I do speak from a position of privilege because I talk about such issues without being on the receiving end of them on most days. Yet, I am scared to go out at night beyond a certain time, restrict myself to the comforts of certain areas, and find myself taking every precaution possible to not be in a vulnerable situation. It is so much easier

to pretend that you know what women in many parts of India go through on a daily basis than to actually do something to help them. Anushka Sharma's 'NH10', in a way, addressed this sort of performative activism. She played the role of a 'modern' Indian woman who was subjected to sexist remarks, feared for her safety, and did not want to help Pinky because she sensed danger. My 15-year-old self kept wondering what I would have done had I encountered someone like Pinky. I remember having no answer, and that angered me because I knew that I would want to help but wasn't ready to pay the cost. The rage I felt was almost equal to Sharma's character on-screen. She not only witnessed a brutal case of honour killing, but also lost her husband, encountered internalised misogyny in a problematic social system (Ammaji, the Sarpanch), and a corrupt power nexus in the rural hinterlands. Crushing them with an SUV or beating them to death with a rod, she did everything possible to take revenge. Granted, it was to avenge a personal loss, but nevertheless, the deaths of the gang members felt like a win because, even though I would not have had the courage, somebody else did.

This does not mean that I condone or support unlawful violence or crime in any form.

I am completely aware that people must abide by the law and not resort to vigilante justice. Life is not a movie, and there are grave consequences for your actions. I also agree that all the aforementioned movies have failed in certain areas. For instance, Phoolan Devi accused the makers of falsifying information and using her name as clickbait; Mom and Maatr were criticized for trivialising survivor experiences and reducing them to helpless victims; 7 Khoon Maaf was seen as a film that romanticised murders; the list goes on.

Having said that, I believe such movies need to be made, albeit more responsibly, because of the

various issues they bring into the limelight, whether it is domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stringent societal orthodoxy. They subvert the entire idea of a damsel in distress, and coming back to where this article started, they validate a woman's range of emotions.

As Anya Taylor Joy famously said, "I have a thing about feminine rage..."

This is no disrespect to any writer; I get a lot of men doing really terrible things and women sitting silently while one tear slowly falls. And I'm like, Oh, no, no, no. We get mad and angry."



Anya Taylor-Joy.

# Be a little less 'Saavdhaan'!

Dr. Nitesh Tripathi (Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Comm)

**'Jurm kabhi bhi apke darwaaze pe dastak de sakta hai. Toh saavdhaan rahein.'**  
(Crime can knock anytime on your door. So, be alert)

**'Chain se sona hai, toh jaag jao'** (If you want to sleep soundly, then wake up!)

**'Daya kuch toh gadbad hai'**  
(Daya, there is something fishy about this)

Your monthly dose of TV is not complete until you've been subjected to these TV tropes. Isn't it? And you can't claim to be a true couch potato until and unless you haven't seen Saavdhaan India, Crime Patrol, CID and Sansani. Now one thing with which I'm sure you all will agree that these programmes disseminate negativity and make us believe that the world is not safe. (Also, it may make you lose the will to go outside). Such shows, along with Saas Bahu serials obviously, sow seeds of doubt and distrust. (Though it's a different thing I personally find them hilarious and worthy of meme material). These programs deal with themes of betrayal, adultery, cheating, looting, theft etc. and create a perception that everything is wrong with the world and people in general are mean, unreliable, malicious, and delinquent by nature. The way these serials portray crime, it seems being vigilant is not enough, one has to turn into a vigilante. While they claim that they are just cautioning people i.e., to be 'saavdhan', but over

the time such portrayal has led people to think or assume that trusting others is entirely a bad idea. We fear or hesitate taking help from strangers or inviting them home. (Fearing that the person might turn out to be a psycho or serial killer) Here, we often forget that even our best buddies were once strangers. These programmes make us suspect everything to the extent of being paranoid. I'm sure you might have doubts over my claims. Alright I'll put across a situation and tell me if you are able to relate with it. (And by the way, this happened a couple of times with me). At night while walking on an empty street you come across a lady, could be old or young, doesn't matter. Because of your natural tendency to walk fast, you are increasingly coming close to her. She then gets alarmed and thinks that you are following her. STALKER ALERT!!!!

If you think about it, the entire world suffers from this wrong assumption. If a white person sees a brown guy with beard or a black person, immediately

the person would judge the other person on the basis of their ethnicity. And that's just one form of xenophobia or racial profiling. People from certain ethnic background are mistreated, manhandled, or attacked without any fault of theirs. To an extent, commercial media is to be blamed for furthering such stereotypes. These are the lessons which we borrow from crime shows. For instance, never trust a guy with dishevelled beard who offers lift or food. No wonder, we have a hard time trusting the- grocery vendors, bus drivers, mailman, plumber, electrician, and politicians. Apologies I didn't say politicians!! Tell me, isn't it possible that a clean-shaven good-looking person (like Jeffrey Dahmer or Charles Sobhraj) may also commit crime which a bearded individual can? These crime programmes feed us stereotypes rather than inform/educate. For example- vamp bahu (daughter in law), cunning saas (mother-in-law), lecherous sasur (father-in-law), pervert servant, jealous husband etc. Hence, we end up doubting every relationship. In order to make the criminals convincing, they stereotype looks, race, and religion. Funnily

The urge to be a good Samaritan made me stop the bike when he waved his hands in front of me. I stopped the bike and he sat on the seat. As he sat, I felt something touching my back. It was definitely metal. I used the rear-view mirror to look back and got the shock of my life! The guy had a rifle with him which now was apparently mounted on the seat with my back support. I was cursing the helmet that blocked my peripheral vision and that's why the rifle went unnoticed when the old man was standing on the road. So here I was with an old gurjar holding a rifle, sitting behind me on my bike and I had no idea about his intentions. Is he a dacoit? Am I being kidnapped? I imagined the worst from his attire. Throughout the journey, as the metal of the barrel of the rifle kept touching me, all the episodes of Sansani, Crime Patrol and Saavdhaan India flashed in front of me. I was so scared that I couldn't utter a word. I did not even have the courage to ask the guy to keep his rifle on his shoulder's support and not mine! Within few minutes, I crossed my home and yet didn't stop. I was scared to the extent that I didn't even tell the person that

(anchor of Sansani) on my way for misleading me. DODGED A BULLET! LITERALLY!

For a very long time I have been seeing a very disturbing trend. You open tv news channels at prime time and chances of you seeing a murder case being dissected from various angles by the news anchors are very high. And then late in the night comes programs like Sansani and Vardaat! Not just this! You open a newspaper and you will notice that most of the pages in a newspaper (especially the vernaculars) are dedicated to ..... can you guess? Drumrolls please. Yes! CRIME!! No wonder, the millennials (people from our parent's generation) who devote good amount of time on newspapers come up with scary stories of crime in name of caution.

I fail to understand- Why give such importance to negative news? Why not focus on human interest stories instead of crime stories?

I remember such used to be the impact of crime shows on me that at night while going to the bathroom I used to look back twice fearing an intruder might be holding a knife behind me,

room besides mine and that's why the place lost its hotel license. Usually, I would hear knocks on doors or furniture falling late at night but I thought it was just a hungry cat. With this new information that the PG was haunted, I lost sleep. I had a trouble sleeping for months after this piece of information. Anyways that's another thing that I used these sleepless nights to complete my PhD thesis. Also, I stopped my late-night strolling in the gallery out of fear. See, I don't know whether the PG was haunted or not but the hint that it might be haunted was enough to make me want to leave that place as early as possible.

Now let's talk about another common thing that you might have witnessed. Your parents freak out at the idea of something wrong happening to you. Right? And so, it is a common thing for our parents to recite verbatim the advisories of crime shows on how to keep ourselves safe when we go out of town. Whenever your phone dies due to battery discharge or is out of network coverage, your overprotective parents bombard you with 30-40 missed calls and then when you call them back you realize that in this short duration, they assumed the worst happened to you.

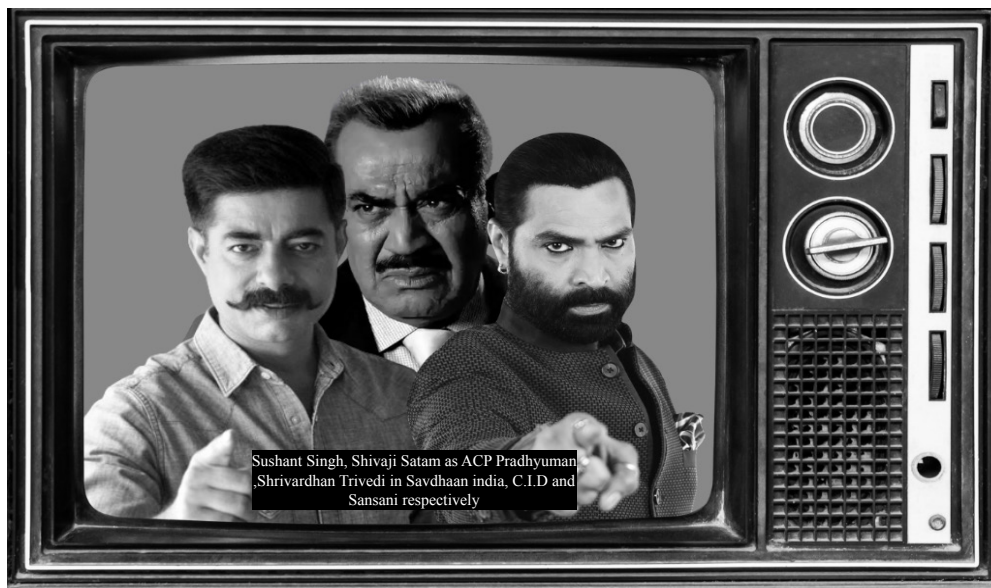
'Might have been attacked by a criminal on the street'

'Met with an accident'

'Colleague might have spiked his drink and kidnapped him/her' etc. etc. Well, the list is endless.

I don't know sometimes I get this feeling that these shows rather than educating us, instead inform the criminals about news ways and techniques to deceive someone or commit crime and not get caught! I believe such crime-based shows would remain a staple diet of a regular audience in future as well. So not much can be done regarding these shows. But yes, we can certainly do something from our side. The problematic and stereotypical depiction of crime in such shows must be discussed in the context of how media picks up selected incidents of crime and then amplifies them and makes people think such rare occasions are happening regularly and are pervasive. I would suggest that until and unless you don't hate your sleep, please avoid the negativity emanating from such shows. They may make you vulnerable, lose sleep and even worse- scar you for life. So, I'll conclude by saying that we should take the advisories issued in such crime-based programmes seriously. However, the depiction and extent of crime and criminals in them should be taken with a pinch of salt. And before I leave, here's a word of advice-

**'Spread positivity.  
Not Sansani!'**



Sushant Singh, Shivaji Satam as ACP Pradyuman, Shrivardhan Trivedi in Savdhaan India, C.I.D and Sansani respectively

enough, the perpetrators in such shows are mostly dark skinned (and the cops have neat moustaches!). How does it feel to escape the Lion's den? Ask me. I'm going to narrate an incident that happened with me to highlight how such shows have stereotyped the demography of people who commit crime and how its problematic. Imagine badlands of Chambal region- the hotbed of crime and lawlessness, the land of rebels and dacoits! I hail from this region by the way. So, it once happened that I was on my way back to home when I saw a tall old man standing near the road waiting for the auto. He had big moustache, turban on head and was wearing dhoti kurta.

my home has come and that he should take lift from another person. Anyway 3 kilometres later after crossing a few remote villages, he tapped on my shoulder and asked me to stop. This was the same area where many retired dacoits resided. At that time, I felt like my end is near. I thought now he will kidnap me using the same rifle. To my surprise none of it happened. I was confused as well because that's what I had heard from my parents and from the media about this region. Anyway, he didn't thank me or looked back at me. As he started moving away, I took a U-turn and raced towards home without looking back cursing Anup Soni (anchor of Crime Patrol) and Shrivardhan Trivedi

ready to kill me.

Not just this! Tell me.

Am I the only one who checks the lock twice or thrice before leaving?

Am I the only one who refuses food or help from strangers?

Am I the only one who feels scared walking on an empty street at night?

See that's the point. These shows claim they are educating the masses. But more than education, it's about scaring the people and making them lose trust. These shows merely glorify and recreate crime scenes as they know it brings TRP. I remember in Varanasi I was living in a PG that was previously a hotel. I heard from a student staying in the PG that a foreigner OD'd in the

# Must - Watch Crime Series Recommendations:

*Sanica Chakraborty and Ankit Pal Chowdhury, MA Sem 2*

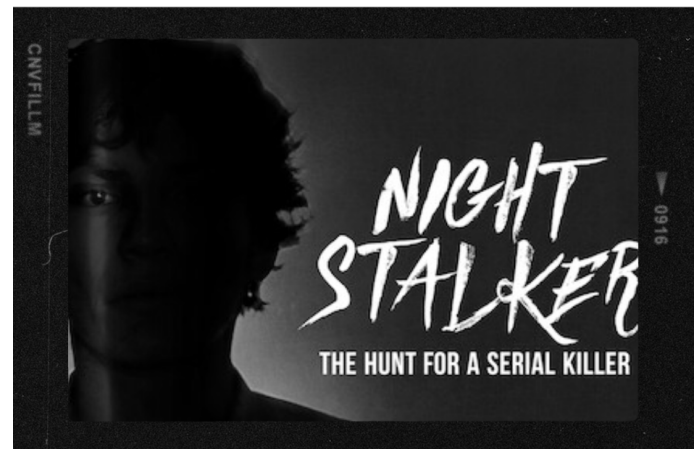


## Mindhunter

Joe Penhall's psychological crime thriller television series is based on the true-crime book 'Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit,' authored by John E. Douglas and Mark Olshaker in 1995. Set in the late 1970s, 'Mindhunter' follows two FBI agents entrusted with interviewing serial killers. The series also exposes the effects of false convictions on the lives of people concerned. Mindhunter is a must-see for every crime and drama fan interested in diving into the minds of serial killers. The show's outstanding run was extended with the release of a second season in 2019, and fans are eagerly awaiting word on a potential third season. It's an engrossing and well-crafted crime drama about the dark and twisted world of serial killers which leaves viewers on edge and reconsidering everything they thought they understood about true crime. From beginning to end, it is a fascinating and entertaining show.

## Night Stalker

An unlikely pair, young detective Gil Carrillo and Frank Salerno, a reputed homicide investigator, come together in this series to capture a serial killer responsible for the gruesome murders and sexual assault of multiple people. Night Stalker is a thrilling true crime documentary series that delves into one of America's most terrifying serial killer cases. The show provides a comprehensive insight into the twisted mind of serial murderer Richard Ramirez and his crimes. The series is not just scary but also incredibly fascinating. It features never-before-seen footage and interviews with investigation experts, victims, witnesses, and family members of the killers and the victims. In addition to being an educational experience, it is a riveting watch that will have you on the edge of your seat.

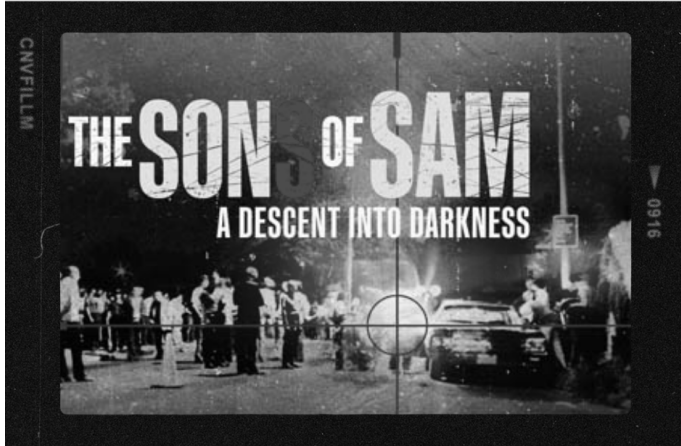


## Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story

The story of one of the most notorious serial killers in the United States is told mainly from the point of view of his victims. Dahmer is about the life of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer. The entire series is based on the whole process that Dahmer underwent, right from targeting his victims to murdering them. It also talks about how he gradually developed a criminal mind when he realized his fetish for blood and flesh due to his childhood trauma. The show details Jeffrey's life, from his troubled childhood to his adult life as a murderer. It is a profound and fascinating exploration of the mind of a killer and how isolation and a deep-rooted sense of abandonment triggered Dahmer's obsessive thirst for murder. The series is not only chilling but also educational, providing insights into the investigation of one of the most horrific crimes in American history. I recommend the Dahmer series for people interested in true crime stories and understanding the complexities of human psychology.



# Crime Series Recommendations:



## The Sons of Sam: A Descent Into Darkness

Author Maury Terry becomes persuaded that serial killer David Berkowitz did not act alone, and his inquiry costs him everything. The entire series is driven by the narrative of darkness in which the murder cases of Sams' son are perpetrated. This documentary series is a gripping examination of one of the most notorious criminal cases in modern history: the Sons of Sam killings that terrorized the city of New York in the late 1970s. The show delves into the mind of the infamous serial killer, David Berkowitz, known as the 'Sons of Sam', who killed six people and wounded seven others, sending the city into a panic. The documentary traces the investigation that led to Berkowitz's arrest, including police interviews with the killer and the victims' families. The series provides a comprehensive and disturbing look at the dark underbelly of America and is an important reminder of the constant struggle to keep our society safe. If you are a fan of true crime, the Sons of Sam series is a must-watch.

## Crime Scene: The Vanishing at the Cecil Hotel

A new Netflix documentary series, *Crime Scene: The Vanishing at the Cecil Hotel*, covers the true story of the tragic death of Canadian student, Elisa Lam, in Los Angeles in 2013.

It is an in-depth examination of a shocking crime that took place at the infamous Hotel Cecil in downtown Los Angeles. The series covers the disappearance of Canadian tourist Elisa Lam, whose body was later found in the hotel's rooftop water tank. The documentary unveils graphic surveillance footage, interviews with witnesses and those connected to the case, and incorporates major cultural and societal themes surrounding crime and cultural decay. It is a gripping and compelling story, delving into the mysterious and controversial circumstances surrounding Elisa Lam's death. The series presents the complexity of our society and the underlying issues that led to the tragedy, making it much more than just a simple documentary about a single crime. Thus, it is a good chance to have an insightful understanding of America's prevalent criminal systems through a poignant historical lens.



## House of Secrets: The Burari Deaths

'House of Secrets: The Burari Deaths' is a 2021 docuseries on Netflix. Created by Leena Yadav and Anubhav Chopra, the three-part series explores the theories surrounding the demise of 11 members of the same family on June 30, 2018. The series guides us through the mysterious deaths of the entire family.

The documentary offers new evidence, interviews, and insights into the family's mysterious deaths, providing an intimate look into their lives, the rituals, and the reasons believed to be behind the deaths. It also covers Indian society's cultural and spiritual beliefs, which are uniquely intertwined with the crime and its aftermath. The Burari murder-suicide case not only shook India but also created international headlines. The documentary offers a unique perspective on the tragic event and how it unfolded, therefore engaging viewers with an incredibly harrowing story combined with an investigation carried out by a team of sleuths to uncover the truth. If you're a fan of true crime, 'House of Secrets: The Burari Deaths' is an easy and gripping watch.



# Cracking the Minds of Serial Killers:

## Why Mindhunter Should Have a Season 3!

Ankita Pal Chowdhury, MA Sem 2

Are you a fan of crime dramas? Do you find yourself fascinated by the minds of serial killers? Look no further than Mindhunter, the critically acclaimed Netflix series that takes a deep dive into the psychology of mass murderers. The show follows two FBI agents as they interview serial killers to better understand their motives and methods. Through its excellent storytelling and characters, Mindhunter delivers an enthralling mix of tension, psychological drama, and social commentary that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Don't miss out on this captivating series that will leave you questioning what you thought you knew about true crime.

It has received critical acclaim since its release in 2017. It is a crime drama series based on the popular book 'Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit', written by John E. Douglas and Mark Olshaker. The show is set in the late 1970s and tells the story of two FBI agents, Holden Ford (Jonathan Groff) and Bill Tench (Holt McCallany), who travel across the country in search of information on how serial killers think and operate. The aim of their research is to understand the minds of these killers so that they can more efficiently investigate and catch them. Throughout the series, the agents interview several notorious serial killers, such as Edmund Kemper, Jerry Brudos, and Richard Speck in order to gain insight into their thought processes. One notable aspect

of the show is its gritty portrayal of crime scenes and the various criminal elements involved. The atmosphere of the series is dark, tense, and extremely well-done, which adds to its realism. The series is thought-provoking and helps viewers understand the psychological and social factors that drive serial killers to commit such horrific

also superbly captures the political and social turmoil of the 1970s, touching on issues such as the feminist movement and the rise of race-motivated killings. Overall, Mindhunter is a must-watch for any crime and drama enthusiast who is keen on delving into the minds of serial killers. The show continued its successful run with the release

It delves into the minds of some of the most infamous serial killers in history, leaving viewers on edge and constantly questioning what they thought they knew about true crime. It is a fascinating and enthralling production from start to finish. The first two seasons of Mindhunter captivated audiences worldwide, taking us on a journey deep into the minds of some of the most infamous serial killers of our time.



Mindhunter- Series

acts. What sets Mindhunter apart from other crime series is its engaging and well-developed characters. Holden and Bill are not your stereotypical heroes who always get everything right. They struggle with their own personal issues and are constantly questioning their own beliefs and methods, adding depth to their characters that is often missing from crime dramas. The show

of a second season in 2019, and fans eagerly await news on a potential third season. It is a captivating and well-crafted crime drama that explores the dark and twisted world of serial killers. The show's attention to detail, its realistic portrayal of crime scenes, and its portrayal of psychologically complex characters make it much more than just another procedural crime drama.

The series was praised for its intense writing, impeccable performances, and realistic portrayal of crime-solving and psychological profiling that left viewers begging for more. However, with the future of the series still uncertain, fans are left to wonder if there will indeed be a third season. But with so much untapped potential and an abundance of new serial killers to be explored, it's clear that the show must go on. We can't deny that Mindhunter has become a cult classic, and with so many loose ends from the first two seasons and unanswered questions, another season is a must. Be it to see how the personal lives of our favourite crime-fighting duo evolve or what new killer puzzles they have to solve, Mindhunter has proven to be a masterclass in both storytelling and characterization, so bring on season three!

# We Don't Say Goodbye...

By- Aparajita Roy, MA SEM 2



Farewell program hosted by MA Mass Comm Sem 2



As the legend goes, once a Xaverian, always a Xaverian! Though we always remain a part of the Xavier's family, there comes a time when we must move ahead of the campus, just like the baby birds who flock their wings and grow away from the parents' nest. To make this day memorable for our dear seniors, the M.A. Sem 2 of the Mass Communication department decided upon an event where they could relive their memories, have fun and games, and be a little emotional as they embark on their journey ahead.

With the theme being 'The magic in you with the prom you never knew', the planning began in February. From bargaining at New Market to selecting a home bakery for the perfect cake, the organising committee members were running on the streets of Kolkata during the heatwave, perspiring and panting, but with our hearts full of joy and our bags full of ribbons, receipts, and more. A bigger fight was finalising the date. I remember after the 5th cancellation, we ran to the Dean's office teary-eyed and finally received the green signal.

Farewell is one of the most treasured experiences of one's life as a student, and both the batches were eagerly awaiting a day filled with happiness and glee before the seniors have a calendar busier than Mr. Bachchan!

With decorations starting early the following morning and preparing

the schedule, we were now ready to welcome our guests. Our seniors, 'dressed in their best', didn't know what to expect! We wanted to change certain stereotypes of our society, and thus boys were made to embrace pink ribbons while girls were to party with blue flowy ones, our way of expressing our unconventional choices. With words full of wisdom from Dean Sir and heartwarming songs from Harish Sir and Nitesh Sir, we began with the inauguration.

'Passing the Balloon', with them being forced to sing, dance, or enact, was fun to watch. With the Guess the Movie challenge, the screams seemed to have echoed through the corridor. We concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony, and a gazillion selfies later, we had to finally bid adieu to this amazing batch of students, each with their own unique personalities and talents. We wish them all the best for their future endeavours. Although this was completely for the seniors, this event got us in Sem 2 a lot closer than we were. After one year of being on campus, this was the first time we as a class felt so connected and truly felt a bond. I don't know what memories our seniors will carry forward, but the memories that we made were enough to last a lifetime, memories that we will cherish for sure!

## Nukkad Natak

Portraying societal depravities through performance art

By- Yukti Karwa and Leon David, MA SEM 2



Safdar Hashmi, a name to reckon with when it comes to Indian political street theatre, believed that a haven for unheard voices could be created through this art form. Xinephile, the Xaverian Film Society, honoured this belief by organising the event 'Nukaad Kamaal Da' on the 13th of April, 2023, as a part of Xavrang '23, our annual university fest.

The participating teams from institutions across the city put their best foot forward and brought to the fore pertinent social evils that plague our society. Mr. Moinak Ganguly and Ms. Nandita Chanda graced us with their presence as the judges for the day and enriched the students' experiences with their valuable insights. The attention-grabbing event was helmed by our students,

Tejeshwi Khetan and Debdyuti Sarkar, who, along with their team, ensured the smooth flow and subsequent success of the competition. Having said that, the purpose of this enactment was not limited to winning; it was more about the lessons learned throughout the process and, in the words of our home team, to deliver a performance through which 'truth tears open society's curtains.

The team representing St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, was led by Maulika Basu, who carefully curated every minute detail so that they could do justice to an extremely sensitive topic: sexual violence. The play focused on various forms of sexual harassment, ranging from child abuse to workplace harassment and ultimately domestic violence. Themes of human

deceit, corruption, suicide, and mistrust were explored.

When dealing with issues grounded in reality, it can become overwhelming for people from non-theatre backgrounds to separate their characters on paper from their own personas. On the one hand, the boys had to portray themselves as sexual predators and flag-bearers of toxic masculinity who torment and dominate women without any severe repercussions. Such roles leave lasting impressions in the minds of the actors, who themselves condemn demeaning treatment of women. On the other hand, the girls had to condition themselves into acting out their worst nightmares.

They tried to depict the disgust and dread that they, unfortunately, experi-

ence in their day-to-day lives. The pain and aftermath of abuse that women face when they are not looked out for in society were exhibited through the scripted scenes.

Guided by Mr. Abhisek Chatterjee, an experienced theatre person who in his sessions explained the motive behind performing a Nukkad Natak, the performers were able to convey their powerful message responsibly and effectively.

At the end of the day, the sensitivity of this issue caused everyone to be more kind and understanding towards each other and hope for a better future by being better individuals who understand and are aware of the atrocities around them and thus make an effort on an individual level to condemn them.



# Documentary Screening Session-2

By- Aparajita Roy and Shivangi Basu, MA SEM 2



Teams participating in Documentary Screening



Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Rev. Fr. Dr. John Felix Raj S.J addressing students

**What is the essence of filmmaking?** According to Mrinal Sen, the legendary director and screenwriter who paved the way for parallel cinema in India, it would be capturing “reality with a comment”.

The Department of Mass Communication, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, commemorated the centenary year of the cinematic visionary by organising the second edition of the Documentary Screening on the 18th of May, 2023, at Albert Huart Hall, Aruppee Building. The event commenced with the lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries, followed by the welcome speech, which was delivered by the Hon'ble Reverend Father Vice Chancellor Dr. Felix Raj, who encouraged the participating students with his words of wisdom.

The Head of the Department, Dr. Reshmi Naskar, introduced Mr. Premendra Mazumdar, a notable film critic who serves as the President of the Film Critics Circle of India and General Secretary of the Indian Film Critics Association. He graced the occasion with his presence as the guest of honour and conveyed his best wishes to the aspiring filmmakers.

In movies such as 'Punascha' and 'Mahaprihithi', Sen had intrinsically woven the people, value system, class difference, and picturesque lanes to portray Kolkata as a city with vibrant, coming-of-age attributes. He believed that cinema must depict humanity and social realities through thought-provoking storytelling.

For this session, six documentaries that explored the prevailing grave societal issues in India, specifically Kolkata, were shortlisted and screened. These were scripted, directed, and edited by the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Mass Communication department. It was an endeavour on their part to surpass the superficial narratives set by mainstream media and educate the viewers on the struggles of people they have never met but can empathise with on humanitarian grounds.

The first documentary, 'Ei Rickshaw: The Human Engine', brought the audience closer to the streets of our city of joy and the story of the people who have contributed significantly to its vibrancy—the Tana Rickshaw pullers. Economic uncertainties due to the ushering in of app-based rides, loss of passengers, future prospects, and preservation of one of Kolkata's iconic cultural symbols were discussed, evoking nostalgic sentiments and compassion among the audience.

'Nishiddho', was a compelling work on the development efforts towards the welfare of sex workers in Sonagachi, South Asia's largest red-light district located in Kolkata. Unfortunately, because of the taboo associated with this profession, people hesitate to develop sensitivity towards the hardships endured by those involved. This particular documentary explored the need for measures to improve their health and quality of life, informed people about the legal procedures-involved in combating human trafficking to rescue to restoration, and highlighted the indelible role played by non-governmental organisations in helping the victims. As a society, we often judge those who engage in sex work as immoral and unworthy of basic human rights. We view them through a narrow lens that fails to take into account the complex and often devastating circumstances that led them to choose this profession. These brave and inspiring individuals have allowed the filmmakers to tell their stories in their own words, shedding light on the often overlooked experiences of sex workers. The next documentary, titled 'Kharij', dealt with the failures of Swasthya Sathi, the group health insurance scheme of the Government of West Bengal. Healthcare is one of the basic rights of every individual, and every

country strives to provide it to its people. Having said that, sometimes these facilities do not do justice to their beneficiaries, and this work featured some of them who shared their personal experiences. They spoke at length about the inconveniences caused by various hospitals across the city and their refusal to admit patients who avail the benefits of the health card. The pressure that this puts on the families is unimaginable, and the audience felt deeply for those affected.

In today's day and age, it is imperative that we, as responsible citizens, be aware of our rights and be active participants in the democratic processes within the country. Women have come a long way in terms of accessibility to voting rights, but the question is, how effective has it been in changing their position in society for the better? Are they independent voters or influenced by the men in their families? Do they vote on a regular basis? In totality, are they still shackled by patriarchy in the 21st century? These pertinent queries were raised in this intriguing documentary.

'Threads of Struggle' took a deep insight into the working facilities and the traditional craft of textiles that has lost its popularity amongst the common folk in recent times. The workers featured in the documentary spoke about the problems they face in finding work with consumers having made the shift towards cheaper, ready-made clothing from big brands.

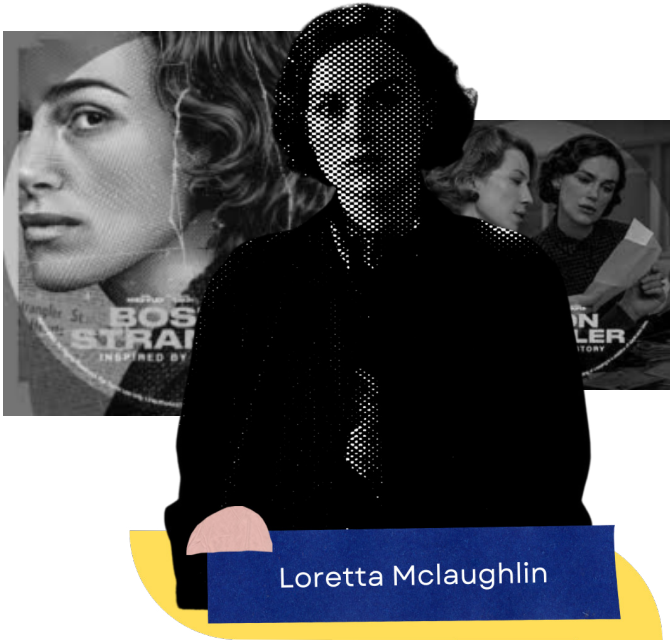
They are forced to work long hours every day for meagre wages to sustain their livelihood and can barely make ends meet. The objective of this stimulating documentary was to highlight the persistent problems and exploitation faced by the textile workers in this culturally significant industry that have put this centuries-old craft in danger.

Sanitation workers are responsible for keeping our surroundings clean by ensuring that the waste and garbage generated are disposed of properly. They perform tasks such as manual scavenging, cleaning sewers and septic tanks, and sweeping streets. Unfortunately, despite the critical role that they play in maintaining public health and hygiene, these workers receive little respect and recognition for their service. Furthermore, one of the most significant challenges faced by sanitary workers is the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE).

They are exposed to hazardous chemicals, toxic fumes, and sharp objects and are prone to infectious diseases, which can be fatal without access to PPE. Through the documentary 'Littered Dignity', the students tried to shed light on these pressing issues that warrant our attention and advocate for the basic rights and dignity of every individual. The hosts for the event, Aparajita Roy, MA Mass Communication, and Sampreeti Purohit, BA Mass Communication, invited questions and observations from the audience for the makers of all the documentaries. From personal experiences and anecdotes to the technicalities regarding outdoor shooting and interviewing subjects to individual opinions and viewpoints, the participants were asked about various aspects related to their process of producing their works. Prof. Dr. Sithara Puli Venkatesh and Prof. Dr. Harish Kumar offered constructive feedback to all the teams and congratulated them. The vote of thanks was delivered by Prof. Dr. Harish Kumar, which was followed by a group photograph that stands as a testament to the spirit of collaboration and commendable teamwork displayed by the students.

# The Boston Strangler

Samantha John, MA Sem 2



Loretta McLaughlin

Television crime shows have recently become one of the most watched genres of entertainment. Under this, one can either watch crime shows that are inspired by real events and happenings or that are simply fictional. Due to the growing popularity and increasing obsession with such shows, especially true crime-inspired series, movies, or documentaries, OTT platforms such as Netflix, Hotstar, and Amazon Prime are producing content that caters to the wants of their viewers.

If you are a fan of this genre, 2023 has a new offering for you- 'The Boston Strangler'. It was the name given to the murderer of 13 women in Greater Boston during the early 1960s. Before the release of this movie that features Keira Knightley playing the lead role of journalist Loretta McLaughlin, who had intensively covered the case back in the 60s, there had been one other movie with the same title that had been released in 1968 based on the book *The Boston Strangler* by Gerold Frank. The 1968 adaptation, however, showed little to no importance to the hard work of Loretta McLaughlin and Jean Cole, the two unsung heroes who tried to unmask the face of the criminal. This year's version has exceeded my expectations with the way it has beautifully highlighted what women journalists of that time could do. The chauvinistic practice of

giving men priority to cover crime stories and assigning women stereotypical stories of lifestyle and fashion has been boldly shown in the movie.

"How many women have to die before it's a story?", is a piercing question that is asked by Loretta.

The protagonist, who worked as a reporter for the Boston Record American, had a passion for covering crime stories. Unfortunately, she was also the victim of the aforementioned stereotypical mindset, and even though she was a brilliant writer, she had to suppress her talent and write about fashion and lifestyle.

This was until she took matters into her own hands and worked overtime to investigate three cases of older women who were murdered and raped in the Boston area. Through her extensive reporting, she found out that all the victims had a stocking tied around their neck in a bow, almost like a present. This confirmed a pattern and connected the crimes to a serial killer. The story that Loretta published subsequently angered the law enforcement of Boston and her boss as well because her story questioned the efforts of the police, who could neither provide justice nor ensure the safety of the women in their area. Soon, a fourth victim was found, with the same pattern as the previous three killings. This brought Jean Cole onto

the scene, a fellow reporter who, along with Loretta, continued the investigation. These brave 'female' journalists faced massive sexism for carrying out their work in notably male-dominated newsrooms in the 1960s. If sexism at her workplace was not enough, Loretta's relationship with her husband strained over time. She also received multiple unknown calls with no one talking on the other side but only the sound of someone breathing down the phone, clearly a threat to convince them to quit.

All these hurdles did not stop Loretta and Jean from investigating the murders that took place. While continuing to write articles, Loretta coined the name "The Boston Strangler". By the time a seventh victim was found, Loretta and Jean found out that the Boston police department had been botching the investigation and had been keeping away multiple facts that could have been helpful for the investigation. It was also found that there were no signs of forced entry into any of the victims' houses, and upon further investigation, they discovered that the killer used to disguise himself as an electrician or plumber to target women who stayed alone.

Soon, it was brought into the limelight that murders of the same style had been occurring in other cities as well. A woman in the 1960s was considered a nobody. This was evident when Paul Dempsey, a man who Loretta believed had started the killings in Boston before moving to New York City, was overlooked as a suspect.

There was finally a breakthrough in the movie when a suspect by the name of Albert DeSalvo was taken into custody. He confessed that he had committed all the 13 murders that had taken place in Boston but was soon stabbed by a cellmate, after which the authorities found

through a DNA sample that DeSalvo had only committed the 13th murder and not the other 12. This revelation uncovered a completely new side to the story, as it was found out that he was groomed and deceived by his jail mates, who had offered him a million-dollar book deal and a high-profile lawyer who would represent him in court, neither of which he received in the end. However, the movie showed that one of his jail mates, George Nassar, told the police that DeSalvo was not groomed, and that the media eventually created a sensation around the strangler, insinuating that there was more than one murderer, but the public was unwilling to accept this fact. Loretta and Jean soon put together a timeline and a theory that copycat murders were taking place, which resulted in the victims being younger in age as well. Thus, there was never one Boston strangler, but in conclusion, there were multiple stranglers who remained free until the end.

The Boston Strangler, which initially was a movie, set to remind the audience about how the safety of women meant little to nothing, highlights beautifully and ironically the efforts of two women journalists to bring justice to those women who were brutally murdered. The movie also shows the hardships that working women face in general and that balancing work and family is not as simple as it seems. Keira Knightley, who plays the role of Loretta, carries out her character in the best way possible, becoming the main attraction of the movie.

Carrie Coon, who plays the role of Jean Cole, shines in her role as well. For anyone who loves watching crime movies, *The Boston Strangler* will not be a disappointment as it ticks all the boxes when it comes to being a beautifully directed crime movie from a journalistic perspective.

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