

MHS4931 Movies, Memoirs & Mental Illness – Content Grid

5 Core Topics	Describe how topic is demonstrated in the movie, or if not demonstrated you think the topic might have impacted the character in the past or could in the future.	3 Movie Links – Briefly Describe Clip & How it Applies to Core Topic (Leave Blank if completing Content Grid for a book)
Stigma	39:59 A woman who has schizophrenia and suffers from homelessness speaks about how staff treats her like trash at the hospital. This could be in part that they feel stigma towards her for her condition and are acting out on it. 56:16 Nathaniel is offered to attend a musical event. He denies, saying, “I don’t want to cause a scene. I don’t want to stick out. It’s impossible. It can’t happen.” He is scared something might happen where others will think less of him for causing a scene. He’s expressing how stigma might affect him if he attends the concert. He also feels like he is different from anyone else and others might judge him for it. 56:50 Nathaniel feels stigma towards the other people in the community house. He’s scared they’ll steal his stuff because they are “drug addicts.” He is acting out on his belief that people who have substance use disorders are untrustworthy. 1:16:34 Steve tells the doctors that Nathaniel needs to be put on medication. He calls him “sick,” and thinks that’s the only way for him to be cured. This shown some stigma on Steve’s part. He believes that someone who has a mental disorder should simply take medication to get better. He also says the doctors should force him to see a psychiatrist, showing his lack of knowledge about how the mental health system works. 1:21:02 Steve tells his wife that writing a book on Nathaniel would be difficult because its complicated. Mary agrees saying that it is because he’s mentally ill. She shows stigma towards him, thinking less of him because he has a mental disorder. She makes fun of Steve, joking that he should stop exploiting him. In reality, she doesn’t think its exploitation and is only interested in turning Nathaniel into a book. She doesn’t see him as a person, only a way to sell a story. 1:28:20 While cops are arresting people who live on skid row hey are being overly aggressive. This could be due to stigma they feel towards people who are homeless or who have mental disorders. They may perceive them as dangerous and feel like they need to use extra force. This reflects how some police are in society as well. Furthermore, the people are being arrested for very petty crimes, like a stolen shopping cart or milk carton.	

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Recovery	19:37 Nathaniel reveals that his mom passed away, after talking very highly about her. She probably served as a support system for him when he developed his mental disorder. After her passing, Nathaniel may not have had anyone to help him, causing him to wind up on the streets alone. 20:05 It is shown that Nathaniel has other family members that are aware he is homeless and could help him in recovery. We do not know why they aren't helping him though. 37:35 The community center for people who are homeless is shown to be in a bad area, where people are selling drugs or taking drugs. This makes it challenging for people who may have co-occurring disorders to recover. It reflects similar situations across the country where community homes may be in areas that could hinder people from recovery. 38:19 A women speaks about how her medication, lithium, helps “eliminate the voices” inside her head. However, she doesn't like the medication because it stops the voices and she finds them comforting. Medicine can be very useful for people with mental illnesses, but only if they agree to take them. 48:19 One of the staff at Lamp explain to Steve that he doesn't listen to diagnosis much because knowing diagnoses hasn't helped anyone at the facility. He goes on to say Nathaniel doesn't need another person telling him to take medication. He may not believe in forcing people to take medication, or may not see it as beneficial to recovery. 54:58 The shantytown where Nathaniel lives is revealed, showing the terrible conditions people are living in. Some of the people are shows to have mental disorders or substance use problems along with not having a home. One of the key pillars of recovery is having a safe and stable environments, which none of these people have. Their ability to recover or even live better lives is reduced dramatically when you take into account their living situations. 1:06:42 Choice is important for people to have in recovery. Steve is trying to convince Nathaniel that he should stay in an apartment, but Nathaniel doesn't want to. Steve isn't really accepting of his choice to stay outside. This could be both a good and bad thing for Nathaniel's recovery. It may be good because having a home is important for recovery, but it may be bad because its taking away his choice. 1:17:34 Steve again pushes the doctors at the community home to give Nathaniel medication. He believes he's sick and needs it in order to recover, which may not be true for everyone. He also suggests forcing him to see a psychiatrist, which is against the principle of having choice in recovery.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv_SuIRPPyQ This clip shows Nathaniel and Steve making amends. Steve tells Nathaniel he is honored to be his friend, and dismisses the events that occurred. This shows recovery because Nathaniel learns that he has a friend that will stick by his side through everything. Even having an episode and attacking and threatening Steve, he will be there to support him in any way. Its important for people in recovery to have a lending hand because it can ease the process for the individual with a mental illness.

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	1:19:02 The doctor tells Steve that he is the only thing Nathaniel has going for him. Steve serves as a hope symbol to Nathaniel, someone who is there for him and keeps his best interest in mind. If he lost that, recovery may become near impossible for him. 1:43:18 Nathaniel is reunited with his sister and seems happy with it. This could be a big step in his path to recovery. He is with someone who is there to help him whenever he needs and support him in every way. 1:44:46 Steve forgives Nathaniel for getting mad, and doesn't make it a big deal. He tells Nathaniel he is honored to be his friend. This can also help him recover because he has another friend who has helped him, and knows he will continue to help him towards recovery.	
Diagnosis & Disorders	9:15 Steve meets a man who is homeless and playing a violin. The man continues to speak in an abstract and tangential way, hinting at possibility of having schizophrenia. He goes on to say he believes a statue is Beethoven and is the leader of L.A. 13:19 We find out Nathaniel attended Julliard, but never graduated. This might have happened as a result of developing schizophrenia. Many people who are diagnosed with a serious mental disorder have trouble with post-secondary education, and this is a good example of that. 16:06 A women on the radio briefly mentions “restlessness, anxiety, euphoria...” but it is quickly changed. 17:13 Nathaniel has a serious mental disorder and also suffers from homelessness. This happens often, as people who have mental illnesses may have trouble finding affordable housing. The only option they may have is living on the streets, which doesn't help their condition any. We learn that Nathaniel learned to play violin after becoming homeless. This hints at the notion that people with schizophrenia are often brilliant and able to learn. 25:10 At age 11, Nathaniel is shown having a hallucination about a burning car rolling down the street, serving as a precursor to his onset of schizophrenia. 29:37 Nathaniel risks his life to get a cigarette butt out of the tunnel saying, “I won't have this degradation.” He doesn't understand that he could die; his only focus is on cleaning.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymzHr_Uvp7w This is the first scene where Nathaniel and Steve meet. We get a glimpse into what Nathaniel is going through. He speaks in an abstract way, making odd associations between words and continuously talking. We also find out that Nathaniel doesn't have a home. This shows the disorder Nathaniel has, and how it has affected him having a home. Often, people who are homeless may have some type of mental or substance use disorder.

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	39:37 Steve talks to residents of the Lamp community home. Some people have built relationships with others, serving as support for each other. 44:48 Nathaniel is shown having hallucinations while he is in a crowded room. He continues having them while playing a piece, eventually running out to hide. The voices continue while he's running, saying "whiteness" and "heartless." Hallucinations are one of the symptoms of schizophrenia, so his disorder may have started to intensify when he began at Julliard. 50:34 Steve walks up on a paramedic trying to help someone who has overdosed. In the area they are at, substance use disorders may be more common.	
Legal Issues	27:30 Steve writes a column about Nathaniel and publishes it in the L.A. Times. It is unclear whether he got permission from Nathaniel's family, seeing as Nathaniel himself may not be able to provide consent because of his mental disorder. It raises a question for me whether Nathaniel is considered coherent to make an informed decision about the publication, or if he asked the family members. 1:04:04 The mayor, after reading Steve's column, increases finances for the area Nathaniel lives at. Steve mentions how sometimes his words reach the right person, and can make a big impact. This could be potentially very great for people residing in the area, as more money will be invested in their lives. He continues on to say that everyone's heart opens at the same time, and policies are made to better the lives of people in the city. 1:05:09 Steve tells Nathaniel that he cannot stay outside the L.A. Times building because it is company policy. 1:18:17 After Steve tells the doctor to force Nathaniel to take medication, the doctor points out it is against the law unless he is in imminent danger. This is a good thing because no one should be forced into doing something they don't want to. 1:28:09 We see cops arresting people who live on skid row and searching through their belongings. They are being physically aggressive towards the individuals as well. People are being arrested for minor reasons, which is something that happens society as well. This is the reason why jails and prison systems are filled with people who have mental illnesses.	

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Trauma	12:43 Steve admits to being scared of needles. It could be because of something that has happened in the past, or he may just be terrified. He is visibly shaken at a doctor's office when a woman shows him vials to collect blood in. 31:00 Nathaniel has been mugged 14 times. Although he seems to not react negatively to the incidences, it shows he's been conditioned to think it's a normal occurrence. He sees it as something he must deal with as it happens. 31:21 Nathaniel says people are throwing cigarette//./. butts on the ground to torment him. Seeing as he risked his life to remove one from the middle of the street, they may have a negative experience associated with them. He debates whether an instrument is worth playing because of his belief that people are going to torment him with cigarettes. 1:09:34 In a previous apartment, Nathaniel begins to have horrible hallucinations. He is seen pacing, sweating, shouting, and showing physical signs of distress because of them. He doesn't have any relief until he manages to fall asleep. This may be why he doesn't want to move into a new apartment: he has associated them with negative memories. 1:12:38 Steve sees a cigarette butt on the side table of Nathaniel's new apartment and dives across the bed to get rid of it. He understands that they are a trigger for Nathaniel so he does what he can do hide it. 1:24:19 While playing his first concert, he hears people laughing and begins to panic. He has a flashback of when he thought someone was trying to kill him. He ends up attacking them in the flashback as well. While doing this, someone touches his shoulder in present time. He reacts negatively, yelling at him to back off and swinging a bat at him. 1:35:38 Nathaniel attacks Steve after reading that he has a "schizophrenic mind" and that his sister is going to take care of him. He has negative memory and trauma associated with his sister, and doesn't want anything to do with her. It gets to the point that he punches Steve, pushes him to the ground, and exclaims that he despises him. He has lost the trust he had in someone he held closest, and its greatly affecting him as well. Nathaniel cries, saying if he sees Steve again he will kill him.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAc1rDS3YhQ This scene shows Nathaniel getting mad at Steve for trying to get him to sign paperwork. Once his sister is brought up and the fact that he has a "schizophrenic mind," triggers him. Because of this, he becomes enraged. The trauma of being labeled and of associating his sister with a negative memory causes him to have an episode.

Type examples of the objectifying language used in the movie and a suggestion for how this could be made into person first language.

Steve calls Nathaniel a “great column.” He doesn’t really acknowledge him as a person, instead seeing him as a story piece. First person language may say “Nathaniel would be a really great person to be featured in this column.”

1:21:02 “He’s mentally ill.” Instead, Mary could say he is someone with a mental health disorder.”

Write one or two paragraphs about how what you learned in the movie can be applied to your future career and/or life in general

I thought the movie was amazing. It showed how the power of friendship could make a huge difference in anyone’s life. Nathaniel started out alone, without anyone there for him. By the end of the movie, he has a stable support system that is there for him and genuinely cares for his well-being. This is something detrimental to recovery, and he finally has it. It’s something that can be applied to anyone’s life. Being there for someone in their time of need can improve many aspects of both individual’s lives. With Nathaniel, he ended up getting off the streets and working to better his music. Steve however learned the power of loyalty, faith, and friendship. Steve’s unwavering support of Nathaniel is something everyone should try to do. Helping someone with a serious and persistent mental illness can be difficult, but we shouldn’t give up no matter what. Our support can help in more ways than one and everyone should remember that.

One thing I thought was important in the movie was the discussion of choice. While Steve urged the doctors to force him to take medication and force him to see a psychiatrist, the doctor urged that he couldn’t. Nathaniel has his own option as an individual, and cannot be forced to do anything against his will unless there is a danger present. Choice is important for anyone on the path of recovery, and the movie points at that. Another thing I thought was important was Mary pointing out that you cannot cure schizophrenia, which is something Steve may have been wishing for. Instead, people can recover and live very healthy and independent lives while having schizophrenia.