

# Whatever, I'll Watch It

## Season 1 Episode 20

### Weapons (2025) Transcript

Hello hello everyone and welcome back to a little solo bonus episode on the 2025 film Weapons!

A bit of context, going into Weapons: I'm a big horror fan. You might not know that since I've only covered Jennifer's Body on the podcast but that's actually only been the case for the past couple of years. Your girl needed some EMDR to work through some PTSD to be able to really indulge in the genre. Plus I have found that watching horror is almost like a sport you have to exercise at. The more films you watch, the more you get acclimated to their tropes and the less scary they become.

So, anyway, I've watched A LOT of horror films over the past four years and I was a huge fan of Barbarian. I have critiques of that film as well, but at the end of the day, if I'm watching a horror film I want to be entertained. A horror film with a cool social message or artistic storytelling is always amazing, but sometimes I just want a movie that keeps me constantly guessing what is going to happen and laughing at absurd twists and Barbarian beyond excelled at that.

I loved Barbarian for those reasons, and I'll say I liked Weapons for those reasons. I also have some critiques, and some deeper reads of the film, but let's start there with what I enjoyed:

I really enjoyed the storytelling device of switching between different perspectives. I know this can sometimes feel like a cheap trick to build suspense but ultimately it worked for me. And I think it was purposeful in the film's exploration of our society and the different roles we play in our society—some of us maintain institutions (like the cop, principal, teacher) and some of us are victimized or abandoned by them – (like the children, parents, and addict – and arguably also teachers in this category).

I also loved that the film subverted copaganda which can be a huge issue in horror films, especially films exploring serial killers, and showed a pretty realistic depiction of how the police operate. Movies would lead us to believe that detectives are passionate geniuses who neglect their home lives to dedicate everything to every single case, but

the reality is that HALF of our murders in this country go unsolved (and let's not forget that a significant portion of murders in this country are done by the police themselves).

Like sure, they were working on the case, but they were not taking care of families, they were not taking care of the community.

The one exception to this representation being the police officer's concern over beating that kid up. Sure, it was recorded but by his own device and there are so many instances where recordings are not coming from dash cams but from the public's cameras and even live streams and that shit goes viral and still nothing happens to the cop. So in that sense, the film did make it seem like dash cams and body cams provide some accountability, and that citizen complaints of police violence are taken seriously, when that's not the case.

But overall, not a pandering depiction of cops.

I also liked when the father, Archer, eventually came around to realizing that Justine was also a victim in this situation and was not the perpetrator like he had pegged her to be. Especially after just watching Eddington, a film all about political polarization and mob mentality, it was refreshing to see a situation where people actually have to step out of their bubble of rage and projection and see the other person in front of them as a vulnerable human being who is deserving of care and compassion. It makes an important point that we can actually switch up our perspective by talking to one another face to face and not just hiding out in communities that serve as echo chambers for our distorted perceptions.

And on a less deep level, I loved the ending. The final voiceover was cheesy as hell but watching the children chase Gladys all through the neighborhoods was hilarious and endlessly entertaining. I'm so here for this trend in horror movies of the endings just going for it 500%, I'm thinking of recent films like Barbarian, The Substance, 28 Years Later – like filmmakers are just having fun with it and I love to see it.

Alright, now let's move into some of the critiques, and then some of the deeper reads.

First of all, this movie is absolutely terrible if we dissect it from an intersectional feminist lens.

They made the principal, Marcus, and his partner so lovable – like being all excited for their hotdog date, are you kidding me?? – and then show Marcus brutally murder his lover. I know it's a horror film, and including queer people in our horror films means

we're probably going to see some of them die, and okay, that's fine. I've been fine with some of the queer deaths I've seen in recent horror that I'm not going to name for spoilers. But this was the first and most brutal kill scene in the entire film and it not just focuses on queer people but focuses on violence between queer people – literal gay bashing, and carried out by the ONLY person of color in the whole film. It really upset me, really pissed me off, and I hated it, and it's why we need more queer people making movies.

I'm also so over the scary old woman trope in horror films. This has been dissected a lot, especially by the Bechdel Cast podcast if you check out their relevant episodes, but media acts like there is nothing scarier or more disgusting than an old woman, especially an old woman's naked body. And we see it sooo often.

And the witch thing is complicated because it's like, the entire history of witches in this country has been a history of feminists and Black and Indigenous communities and pre-colonial traditions being condemned for subverting authority, and yet we are still going to fall back on the witch as the hateable, power hungry archetype?

And wasn't the whole first part of the story, focusing on Justine, critiquing the idea of the witch hunt? But really the problem was just that they had the wrong witch? The messages are getting mixed.

Also like, do you know who actually is really into abusing children and grabbing power for themselves? Men. Like I'm not trying to say women and that non-binary people can't be abusers and predators, yeah we can, but systemically, there's a pattern that keeps patterning and men are at the center of it. So why do we keep falling back on the witch trope?

I was reading that Jordan Peele's production company got out-bid on this script, and I think that's such a shame because I would have loved to see what Monkey Paw would have done with this film and if they would have had more sensitivity around these issues. Not that Jordan Peele's movies are necessarily like, pinnacles of feminist cinema, but I just really feel like they would have benefitted from more sensitivity readers or people with more diverse lived experiences in the room.

As much as I did like Weapons and loved Barbarian, both films would really benefit from sensitivity. Like, without giving spoilers for Barbarian, I will say that film also makes monstrous people who are put into victim positions societally and I have some issues with that.

Okay, let's get to the deeper stuff.

Watching this movie, I think it's very clearly making a statement about how our social institutions fail us. The police, as I discussed, are incompetent and not invested in the community's healing. The educational system has some well-meaning people but they are ultimately limited by state policy. Justine ends up saving the children because she violated policy and went and investigated a situation that the state says she should have stayed far away from.

There are all these ways we are supposed to be impartial, neutral, kept at a distance from one another, and allow the state to intervene, and that can have deadly consequences. Not just because the state doesn't intervene, but because of how dangerous it is when the state DOES get involved. We see this in the case of the police officer, and it's subtly a thread in the story when both Marcus and Justine don't want to involve CPS. If folks aren't familiar with the really important critiques being made of CPS and the role they have played in separating Black and Indigenous families, I highly recommend Dorothy Roberts work! She has a book called *Torn Apart: How the Child Welfare System Destroys Black Families*, published in 2022. So, as educators, a lot of us get put into these shitty positions where we may worry about the welfare of children or our adult students, but we are also aware of the violence of these state institutions and the violence that comes along with being a mandated reporter.

This means we end up in a position where people just don't intervene.

This comes up again with James, who plays the addict. James finds where all the children are, and when he tries to come to the police station to give over the information, he gets chased away by the bully cop who was previously harassing him. This is such a real problem, where addicts, immigrants, homeless people, and other marginalized members of our community know that they can't find safety in these institutions that victimize and criminalize them.

And then underneath this critique of institutions, there's this larger problem of interpersonal violence that happens in the home, and how our social norms around privacy, respecting authority, respecting the hierarchy of the nuclear family, allows all kinds of violence to continue.

The whole storyline with Alex and his parents being bewitched is clearly a story about child abuse – like it's not even a metaphor, it's a horrible, heartbreaking, abusive situation that Alex has been thrown into.

And Alex doesn't tell anyone because he if he tells, it could hurt his parents, hurt his family. Which is the exact position many children are put into when there is violence in their homes, because of how violent the police and CPS are, how families can get destroyed when our society prioritizes punishment over rehabilitation and transformation.

We see this interesting kind of parallel with Archer and his son Matthew. We find out in a monologue that Archer never said I love you enough; and later, we get this amazing reveal that Matthew was bullying Alex at school. And while Archer might have some growth in recognizing that Justine is a victim too, as soon as he discovers the children in the basement, he is only interested in finding Matthew, basically throwing all the other kids to the side. Same with the final shot. He is apparently like "fuck them kids" and only concerned with what's his.

We get this again with the man working the gas station. Justine is being chased by a truly terrifying bewitched Benedict Wong, this man is truly trying to kill her, and as she calls for help the shopkeeper tells her to get the hell out of his store.

At the end of the film, hordes of children blast their way through private living rooms chasing Gladys, and we get a humorous shot at the end where the families are processing what just happened saying, "Look what they did to our kitchen!" and then screaming, "oh my god there's a man in our house!"

There are all these ways that private spaces function as shields—not just from violence outside, but from the violence inside as well; like when things happen behind closed doors, that means it's private and others can't or shouldn't or won't intervene.

And then that's contrasted really clearly with the addict, James. James lives in a tent and doesn't have a right to privacy. He doesn't get to shield outside eyes from his mistakes or violences or harms. His life is literally on the streets and the cop is going to enter his tent without a warrant not just because he's a shitty cop but because his tent isn't seeing as a home; it's illegal, criminalized, not permitted, not given the sanctity of private property we see echoed throughout the rest of this film.

So as much as this is an unpredictable and wild and fun film, I think it's also saying something to us about how we need to look out for another. And how our rights to privacy and autonomy don't mean that we get to hide out and shield ourselves from care or critique or intervention from our community. That we need each other, and we need to be looking out for each other, and we need to care about people even if they aren't our own kid or our responsibility.

I really have no idea if any of these themes were intentional, but it's what I was really thinking about as I left the theatre.

I'd be really interested to know what others think, as well as your favorite horror films, cause I'm always looking for recommendations.

I'm not really on socials these days but you can connect with me by email at whatever tv pod at gmail dot com.

And if you haven't done it yet, please rate 5 stars!