

English 1413.C1
Final Paper

In *Gone Baby Gone* the young daughter of a drug addict is kidnapped. When the mystery surrounding her disappearance is finally unraveled, the movie's two main characters face an ethical dilemma, to which each responds in a way opposite to the other. By declining to advocate the position taken by either character, the movie refuses to present viewers with a "correct" response.

For this assignment, you are required to compose an argument in favour of one or the other position. If you were in Patrick's shoes, would you do what he does, or would you take the path recommended by Angie? Explain and justify your answer.

Try to convince your reader that your response is the better option of the two the movie presents. Use whatever rational appeals (ethical, empathetic, or logical) you consider appropriate, but remember that your argument is an attempt to convince someone else to see the issue as you see it, and to agree that your position is the better of the two available responses to the situation presented in the movie.

You are not allowed to change the situation, or to add a third option. Do not attempt to take the cheap and easy relativistic route that runs something like "this may not be the right answer, but it is what I would do." If you take any of these paths, your paper will be failed (i.e. graded at less than 50%).

There may not be a right answer, but you are tasked with arguing in favour of the better of two possible answers. To do this you will have to use reasons that are sharable with others. It may be that not everyone shares your belief that the bond between birth mother and daughter is sacred, special, or somehow different from a bond that could be built by a loving adoptive mother. So if you want to argue in favour of the position that the birth mother-daughter relationship is important enough to form a reason for returning Angie to Helene, then you will first have to explain why a person should see the birth mother-daughter relationship as important. In other words, it is not that you cannot use that reason, it is just that you cannot assume that everyone shares your position on it. Give your reader reasons to share your outlook. "My mother loves me like no one else would" is not a shareable reason (nor, for that matter, is it a claim that you or anyone can know to be true).

Length is largely irrelevant, but the argument should be long enough to show you have thought about the issues thoroughly.

You will be graded on the convincingness of your argument. Again, neither position is inherently right or wrong, and your reader will not bring his own preference into his evaluation of your paper. Both positions will be greeted with skepticism, and you will be expected to convince your reader that the position for which you argue is a reasonable one, and is better than the other. At the end of each paper, the reader will reset his skepticism for the next paper.

