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*Goodfellas*

Goodfellas is a film based on the life of Henry Hill a young man looking for friendship loyalty and love of family. The story of Hill unfolds with a direct portrait of him and his life with his friends or crew. It is clear through the film that this narrative of his life adventures is his alone by the filmmakers using prime shots with him as the visual focus and the story is written using more refined details and music choices that directly reflect to moments he alone is living. Through the film the consistent voice over dialog is either Henry or his wife Karen.

As we travel with Henry we are forced to witness the bombardment of consequences and the effects of his choices of lifestyle. If he himself is not in direct danger or the actions of his friends, it’s his marriage at the cusp of ruin or jail time. One of Henry’s good friends Jimmy or James Conway states early in the film when Henry is “pinched” for hocking cartons of cigarettes “never rat on your friends and never say anything.” This line becomes the crux of Henry’s stakes. As far as Henry making mistakes while in attempt to survive his life style; he even says to his wife that “no one goes to jail unless they want to,” This is just a soothing lie he uses to rest the concerns of Karen. At the rate Henry is taking risk, both by himself and with the contribution of his crew he will have no choice but to eat those words sooner or later.

Even though Henry is capitalizing on criminal actions to supply monies for his family’s needs it would appear that he only wants the loyalty of his friends and the love of his family in the end. Henry being only half Italian puts him in the difficult situation of never having a chance to be “made” or become a boss. Henry needs to gain the respect of the ones who do work for him and to prove to the ones he works with or for that he himself is trust worthy. He accomplishes this goal by being open and present to a variety or murders, although himself oddly enough never committing a murder.

The audience of this film might directly be in disagreement with most of Henry’s action through the progression of Goodfellas. The one thing that draws our emotive attention to henry’s character is his honest concern for his family’s wellbeing and his love for his wife. Through his wife’s Karen’s dialog we also feel her love and the devotion she has toward her husband. Henry is also in abundance of charisma and charm, one reason his crew cannot help but to enjoy his company. One the counter of that statement Henry seems to be a simple yes man in my opinion, even as a boy. He has all the wants of a common law abiding citizen, just not the moxy to accomplish it legally.

As Henry involves himself in crime after crime and finds himself in and out of court it takes a finale of long federal time in prison and the risk of his and his families death for him to have an epiphany. His major character change occurred more toward his evolvement the cocaine earlier, but has its mea culpa in the end. Henry goes into hiding through witness protection due to his “rating” on everyone who survived these fiascos. He became the one thing any mobster isn’t to become, a rat.