

SENT AWAY

A Screenplay by
Joel McElvaney



LOGLINE

Forced to stay with their ex-convict dad for a summer, two boys discover a dark family secret that leads them to run away rather than return to their mom and abusive stepfather.



“A thought-provoking and engaging concept.”

-- The Golden Script Competition

FILM SUMMARY

MICHAEL (13) and DAVY (11) live in constant fear of their abusive stepfather FRANK, so when their mother MARY tells them they will be staying with their father ETHAN for a summer, they should be happy, but they don't know Ethan; he's been in prison for 9 years for killing a home intruder. Michael has flashbacks of a dead body with a knife in it. After an awkward start with Ethan, Michael and Davy discover he is kinder and gentler than Frank, so they beg their mother to stay through the school year, but she says no. When Ethan sees signs of Frank's abuse on the boys' bodies, he determines to go for custody, despite his prison record.

At the custody hearing, the judge refuses to hear the boys' testimony and orders them returned to Mary and Frank. Horrified and despairing, the boys concoct a hasty plan to run away and hide in the woods. Ethan helps by leaving the boys alone to give them time to make their escape. When Frank and Mary arrive to pick up the boys and find them gone, Frank beats Ethan into a coma, believing him to be hiding the boys himself.

Hiding out in the forest with Davy, Michael remembers an additional detail about the night of the murder: someone else was in the house that night. He and Davy leave their hiding place to share the information with Ethan, but find him in the hospital. Outside the hospital, Frank catches them and forces them into his truck. As Frank drives them back toward their old life, Michael manages—with the help of a friend's voicemail—to record Frank confessing to killing the intruder himself and framing Ethan—with the help of Mary. Not long after Frank returns home with the boys, the police show up to arrest both Frank and Mary. Ethan's conviction gets set aside, and he's awarded permanent custody of Michael and Davy.



**“The characters are relatable and genuine;
they are realistic and sympathetic.”**

-- The Golden Script Competition

KEY CHARACTERS



Michael Mullen

Thirteen-year-old protagonist plagued by fragmented memories of the night he saw a man dead on his kitchen floor. Anxious and fearful of returning to face Frank. Protective of Davy.



Davy Mullen

Michael's naive younger brother. Worships Michael. Anxious, obedient, eager to please. The conscience of the film.

Mary Crouch

Michael and Davy's mother. Ethan's ex-wife. Loyal and deferential to Frank. Outwardly caring, but inwardly selfish and cold-hearted.



Frank Crouch

The boys' cruel, petty stepfather. Aggressive, violent, and abusive.



Ethan Mullen

The boys' father. Good-natured and kind. Remorseful and wary. His deep love for his sons strengthens his resolve to protect them.



KEY CHARACTERS

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Bob

Ethan's boss. Gregarious and demanding. Owner of the town bowling alley. Father to Lane.



Lane

Bob's 14 year-old daughter. Spirited and rebellious. Romantic interest for Michael.

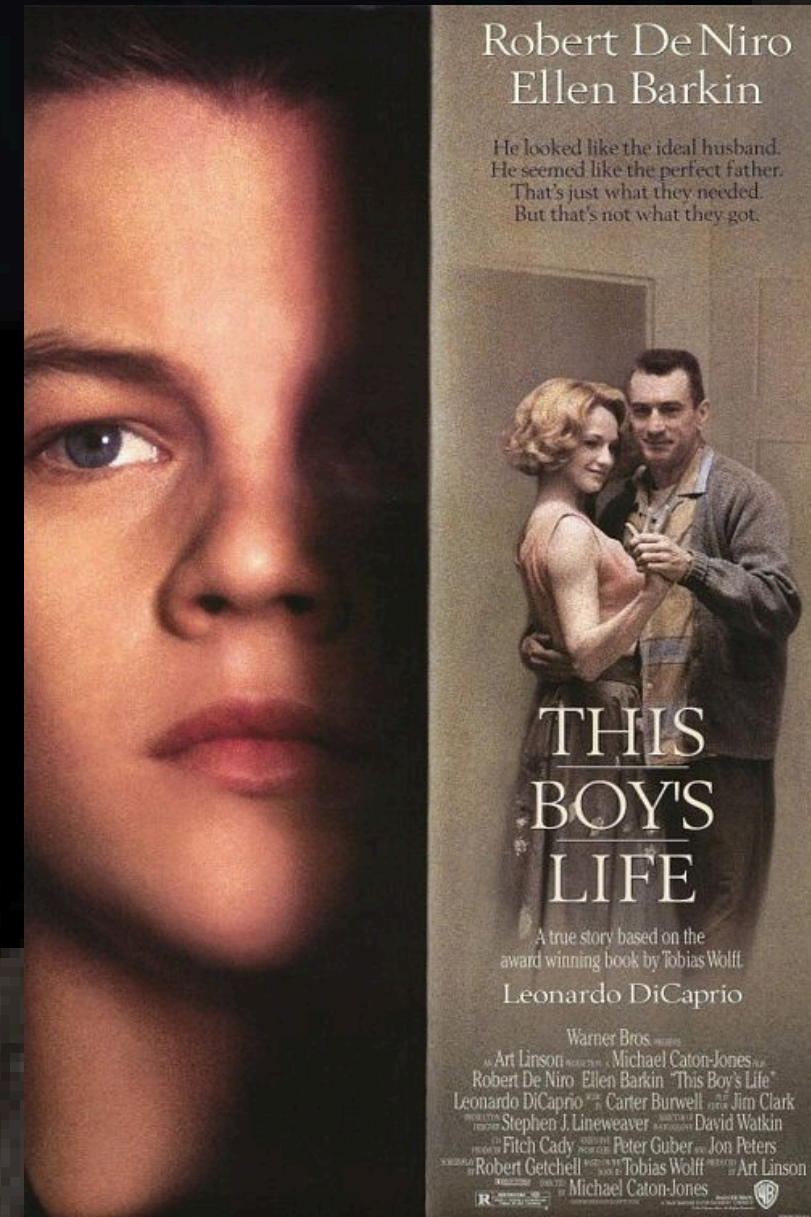


Valerie

Friendly and compassionate social worker who interviews the boys for the pre-hearing "home study."

FILM TONE

- Suspenseful
- Emotional
- Mysterious
- Poignant



FINAL WORD

FROM THE SCREENWRITER



At its core, *Sent Away* (a SemiFinalist in the 2022 Atlanta Film Festival) is a hopeful, coming-of-age story about the endurance of a father's love and the powerful bond between two brothers who must come to terms with a confusing and cruel reality in their quest for independence and justice. Based on actual events in the writer's own childhood, *Sent Away* takes the common experience of a post-divorce custody battle and gives it a murder mystery twist. With two likable young leads, a frighteningly realistic antagonist, a gripping conclusion, and a powerful message about love and justice, *Sent Away* will appeal to viewers drawn to underdogs who overcome tremendous odds and ultimately prevail.

CONTACT

EMAIL

jdmcelvaney@gmail.com

MOBILE

678-314-0213

MAILING ADDRESS

2337 29th Ave. South
Seattle, WA. 98144

