

## Not Your Mother's Library Transcript

### Mini-Episode 16: Neon Noir

(Brief intro music)

Rachel: Hello, and welcome to Not Your Mother's Library, a readers' advisory podcast from the Oak Creek Public Library. I am one of your hosts, Rachel, and our other host Leah is also recording mini-episodes while the library building is closed. Just a friendly reminder as Coronavirus rips through every aspect of our lives, OCPL offers plenty of online services such as a vast electronic collection of books, movies, magazines, and more. Not to mention the countless free-to-use databases that you can reference by visiting our website at [oakcreeklibrary.org](http://oakcreeklibrary.org). We also check our voicemail and email inboxes in case you have any questions that need answering from nine to five. We're very active on our Facebook page of late, as well, so make sure you're following us @oakcreeklibrary to join us for Online Story Time videos, weekly Family Fun Nights at Home, and a lot more. As for Not Your Mother's Library, Leah and I are sharing a few of our favorite things, from books and music to video games and everything else in between. For the month of May, I am looking into specific genres. This episode is all about neon noir. These types of movies are a bit niche. You might have heard of the neo-noir subcategory, which is a revival of those gritty, crime-filled, hardboiled detective flicks that came out of Hollywood in the 1940s and '50s. It's a term used in cinematography to capture the same essence of stylistic visuals and cynical storylines. Neo-noir applies the same shadowy, smoky vibe to both visual elements and overall themes. So, it's modern film noir, keeping the mood off-kilter with crazy camerawork and classic motifs along the lines of "revenge, paranoia, and alienation." Or so Wikipedia claims. Then what on earth is neon noir? It's more to do with aesthetic than anything else, because movies in this genre can cross over to others like horror, psychological suspense, and thriller. And the answer is actually in the name; these films prominently feature neon lighting, turning the tone totally '80s. Aiding this effect are the retrowave tracks that usually make up the bulk of the soundtrack, with artists like S U R V I V E, Kavinsky, Chromatics, and Disasterpiece. If you've never listened to this kind of music, give it a listen by visiting the channels New Retrowave or Neon Nights on YouTube. I'll add links in the show notes. An article on [ThatMomentIn.com](http://ThatMomentIn.com) brilliantly describes neon noir movies as having "the sensibilities of a neo-noir film, the visuals of a Tokyo strip, and the soundscape of a Berlin nightclub." That's, yeah, that's...that's a tight nutshell. I will say that these movies tend to feel like they're taking place in an alternative reality, and that just adds to how awesome they are. Let's start out with some examples! Or, my top recommendations. Number one: "Drive." This is an absolute staple with a dramatic story backed by moody composition and spurts of extreme violence. The lead character is a soft-spoken getaway driver whose life starts to become very complicated when he tries for some semblance of ordinary happiness. It stars Ryan Gosling, Carey Mulligan, Oscar freakin' Issac, Bryan Cranston, and Ron Pearlman. Whewph. Some big names, my dudes. Number two: "The Guest." I dig this one so hard. It's my favorite of the lot, honestly. Bit of a slow burn to start with, but that just builds the suspense so beautifully. There's plenty of violence, and Dan Stevens is exquisite as the villain of the piece. An ex-soldier waltzes into the life of a family whose son—also a soldier—recently died overseas. The stranger is endearing and cunning, but he's also hiding a big ol' secret. Number three: "It Follows." This one is flat-out mature content horror, so if that's not your thing, bounce. Uh, basically, there is a creature that relentlessly follows its victims 'til it gets 'em. It's more complicated than that, obviously, but difficult to describe on a podcast of this

ilk, so I recommend watching the trailer. The premise is downright freaky, but I really like it because of something nonobvious; in an attempt to keep the audience from pinpointing when, exactly, the movie takes place, the creators add in a lot of retro, anachronistic, and even nonexistent technology. Remember what I said about neon noir taking place in alternate realities? This one hits that mark, and it does it well because it's so subtle. When you watch these movies, it's almost like you're in a dream.

Number four: "Good Time." Two brothers, one of them developmentally disabled, rob a bank. One of them is caught, and the other has to go through hell to try and bail him out of jail. I don't like the main character, but that's kind of the point. He's played very well by Robert Pattinson, and his brother is played by one of the directors, Benny Safdie who, with his real-life brother Josh, also directed Oscar snubbed "Uncut Gems." Expect to see more incredible work from them in the future. Number five: "Nightcrawler." Jake Gyllenhaal plays a sociopath who works as a photojournalist in L.A. He's ultra-skeevy and will do whatever it takes to get a good scoop, the more disturbing and fear-mongering the better. This is another slow-burn story, in my opinion, but worth the ride. Number six and number seven: "The Neon Demon" and "Only God Forgives." I think that part of the message for these two films went over my head, just a bit, but I still wanted to mention them. Written and directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, who also directed the aforementioned "Drive," all of these titles rely heavily upon aesthetic. Especially "The Neon Demon," which is literally about perceived beauty. "Only God Forgives" is a bit too cerebral for my taste but still entirely worth the watch. If you're consuming this genre as quickly as everyone else, you might enjoy watchalikes including "Nerve," "Beyond the Black Rainbow," "Maniac," "Lost River," and "Enter the Void." Everything will be listed in the show notes, so check there if interested. You can reach us through OCPL's website or Facebook page; be sure to use the #notyourmotherslibrary. Subscribe and rate the podcast if you like—or don't like—what you hear. I can take criticism, you know, after many, many hours of internal screaming whilst staring into the bottomless void of my own failings. Glad you gave this short episode a listen. Until next time, happy reading.

(Brief outro music)