



FILM: **ANATOMY OF A FALL**

FDG RATING: 4.1 😊😊😊😊○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Justine Triet: *director*
Sandra Huller: *actress, Sandra*
Milo Machado Graner: *actor, Daniel*

DATE: February 18, 2024

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **ANATOMY OF A FALL**

Awarded the Golden Globe for best foreign language movie, the 2023 French film, *Anatomy of a Fall*, is a compelling court room drama. It dissects the husband's fall to his death as it also dissects the falling apart of the couple's marital relationship.

Sandra, a celebrated writer is put on trial when her husband, Samuel, is found lying dead in snow next to their secluded chalet in the French Alps. Was the bloody wound on his head from a fall from the attic window? Did he jump? Was he pushed? Was it an accident? A marital argument preceded the discovery of his body in the snow by their vision impaired, 11 year old son, Daniel. Sandra is put on trial, responding to questions that expose their troubled marriage, betrayals and secrets. Their young son is faced with a moral dilemma as the only witness.

Sandra Huller is outstanding as Samuel's wife. (Many of us remember the actress from her engaging performance in 2016 *Toni Erdmann* and, she plays the commandant's wife in 2024 Oscar nominee *Zone of Interest*.) As one discussion participant pointed out, the director was really courageous with the woman character, she carried the weight of the film. She was a complicated accomplished woman, successful in her career, and her husband couldn't match her success.

A few discussion participants thought the court proceedings got a bit tedious. One comment was that the tedious analyses lost the emotional connection with the characters. But others liked the slow, progressive way each slice of evidence caused constant reevaluation. The strength of the film is how it is framed was another observation. It was definitely interesting and educational to see how the French legal system works. Like peeling an onion, personal details are slowly exposed. Sandra is German and had relocated to France at the behest of Samuel, an aspiring writer, leaving her family and friends. When the film opens, a journalist is trying to interview Sandra, but her husband is purposely playing extremely loud music in the attic where he is supposedly working. The interview has to be terminated. The son wants to be at the trial and presents conflicting statements about where he was standing when he discovered the body. In one location, he would be able to hear his parents arguing, but not so in the other location. And we don't know who is hitting whom. And then the incident about the aspirin. Was Samuel suicidal? Is the boy lying to save his mother? The film underscores how relationships are so very complicated.

What we liked about the film is that it is inconclusive. The intense courtroom scenes, the ambiguity, even occasional humor, all made the film a terrific family courtroom drama in the opinion of one critical film discussion participant.

4.1 was our verdict for *Anatomy of a Fall*, on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!
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