



FILM: **REMEMBER**

FDG RATING: 3.7 ☺☺☺☺○

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

Director: *Atom Egoyan*, Writer: *Benjamin A. August*
Actor: *Christopher Plummer as Zev*
Actor: *Martin Landau as Max*

DATE: July 17, 2016

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **REMEMBER**

The paradoxical meaning of the film's title, *Remember*, unfolds on in several levels as we meet Zev, 90 year old Holocaust survivor living in a senior care home, who is in the progressive stages of Alzheimers. Losing his memory, in heart wrenching moments, he calls out the name of his wife, Ruth, who has recently passed away. His new friend Max, has a sharp mind and memory but is confined to a wheel chair and is in very weak health. Max has an agenda and uses Zev under the guise of being supportive, to remember all the daily things he needs, and goes a step further, providing Zev step by step instructions on carryout the contract they agreed to: As soon as Zev's wife died, Zev was to find Rudy Kurlander, an 88-year-old German immigrant whose real name is Otto Walisch. According to Max, who has spent the past years finding and bringing Holocaust criminals to justice, Rudy was the Auschwitz Block Commander who ordered the deaths of Zev's and Max's families during the Second World War. Zev embarks on a devastating journey across North America meeting each of four Rudy Kurlanders who are the correct age and nationality until he is sure he has found the right one. As one of our resident reviewers noted, this film is a powerful testament to the fact that Holocaust criminals still live among us.

Christopher Plummer (85 years old) as Zev and Martin Landau as Max are outstanding in their roles. All of us were caught up in the suspenseful unfolding of the plot and really liked the surprising, clever twist at the end. But for some of our critical reviewers, the story didn't hold up after rethinking the plot and deconstructing the scenes. Those who have had experience with dementia patients, believe that Zev could not have functioned as well as he did.

With outstanding performances from the rest of the cast, we were disappointed that the son and daughter-in-law were such weak characters, and felt they detracted from the strength of the film.

Snippets of humor occurred in the early part of the film such as the jokes about assisted living that one reviewer's dad (who is 101 by the way!) especially liked,

Repressed memories and actual memory loss collide in the film as we learn why Zev had no problem purchasing and using a Glock (the seller tells him it is an Austrian gun though many people assume it's German). Bread crumbs or small clues were interjected along the way, such as when Zev tentatively starts to play Mendelssohn (a beloved Jewish composer) on the piano at one of the senior homes he visits in his search for Rudy. And at the last house Zev visits, he very confidently plays Wagner (Hitler's favorite composer) on the family piano.

Many of us are tired of Holocaust films and reluctant to see yet another one, but this film presented a modern day perspective of elderly survivors living with their next generation families. A refrain to the title of the film, people need to remember, especially future generations, what really happened during this horrible episode in history, as Zev finally remembers in the closing climactic scene.

The film's tension and clever story line were applauded by most of our reviewers but others recognized the effort as a bit tedious and thought the tension was too inflated. Despite gaps in believability, this powerfully memorable film earned a clearly deserved cumulative score of 3.76 on a scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).

Note that the director, Egoyan, said the film came at a time when the last of the Holocaust survivors and criminals were alive, and that trials underway in Germany also made the film timely. Time magazine specifically noted the trial of Reinhold Hanning was in the news.



See you at the movies!

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[Film Discussion Group](#) (FDG) organizer