

Movie Comparisons

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Overview

- **Apparent Similarities.** Many have noted very strong similarities between the content and language of the RN and certain movies. Internet poster [\[Cherokee\]](#) has laid out comparisons to Dirty Harry, Ransom and Speed here]. This template has been applied to other movie comparisons made by others.
- **Similarities Largely Coincidental?** Internet poster [AntiK](#) has cautioned against overinterpreting these comparisons as [AntiK](#) does not "share the view that the author watched a lot of movies or was a big fan of crime or crime fiction, etc." Some of the references may be nothing more than "memes."
- **No Verbatim Quotes.** Despite the similarities noted below, Internet poster [thewhitewitch](#) has pointed out that *not a single phrase used in the RN appears to be an exact quote from any of these movies.*
- See [The Ransom Note and the Movie Connection](#) at Webbsleuths forum chat.

[In Cold Blood \(1967\)](#)

- **When Aired.** Internet poster [Braveheart](#) has reported that "a two part mini-series of the Clutter family murders was aired on National TV on November 24 and 26, 1996. An article in the Wichita Eagle, Wichita, Kansas newspaper, dated Nov. 25, 1996, describes the nation wide attention that the series had generated in the town of Holcomb, Kansas, and the house where the family was murdered."
 - **Story Lines**
1. There was no ransom note in this movie. However, it may be that the perp identified with the backgrounds of either of the killers: "The movie also gives us a sense of the young lives of Hickok and Smith. Perry Smith, whose early life was filled with security and love, but watched in horror as alcohol took his family down a tragic path. Hickok, poor and left pretty much to his own devices, not able to see how he fit in, using his intelligence and charm to con everyone he came into contact with" (comment by [jmorrisson-2](#). There also are lines that may have inspired themes in the RN.
 2. "I thought Mr. Clutter was a very nice **gentleman**... I thought so right up to the time I cut his throat."
 3. 1:18 PM. is the time Perry Smith was hanged in *In Cold Blood* and some think this may have inspired the selection of \$118,000 as the ransom amount.

[Dirty Harry \(1971\)](#)

- **When Aired.** Internet poster [narlatcat](#) [claims](#) Dirty Harry was aired on TBS in Boulder on November 29, 1996.
 - **Story Lines**
1. Specified denomination of bills and type of container for delivery of the ransom
 2. The delivery of the ransom requires extreme physical exertion (Harry had an exhausting run at the kidnapper's direction). This could explain why the killer advised John to be rested
 3. The kidnapper employs counter-surveillance
 4. The girl was dead all the while Harry was running all over town
- **Similar Phrases**
1. "Now listen to me carefully." (JBR's RN begins "Listen carefully")
 2. "Now listen. Listen very carefully."
 3. "If I even think you're being followed, the girl dies."
 4. "If you talk to anyone, I don't care if it's a Pekinese p i s s i n g against a lamppost, the girl dies." (JBR's RN says "If we catch you talking to a stray dog, she dies")
 5. "... that's the end of the game. The girl dies." (the phrase "the girl dies" is used 3 times, just as in the JBR RN)
 6. "It sounds like you had a good rest. You'll need it."

[Poltergeist \(1982\)](#)

- **Story Lines**

Internet poster [Cobalt](#) [claims](#) there are many similarities between the JBR kidnapping and the movie Poltergeist:

1. The spiral staircase was featured in many scenes in Poltergeist. It was the visual centerpiece.
2. [JonBenet](#)'s body was covered with a blanket from her bed and placed in a small, windowless room within a room.
3. Carol Ann was "kidnapped" by spirits (the dead) via a portal in her bedroom closet (small, windowless room within a room). Her parents feared that the small body under her blanket from Carol Ann's bed was hers, but it was the large clown doll.
4. Carol Ann's bed table has a lamp consisting of 2 lifesized hands holding a large light red, or pink heart. [JonBenet](#) had a red heart drawn in the palm of her hand. Hearts are one of the movie's themes. She has a poster with a heart and a heart balloon in her room. The mother has a heart on the table by her bed.
5. Heather O'Rourke was born Dec 27th, one day from [JonBenet](#)'s murder, and as close as the killer could get to H's birthdate considering the Ramseys were leaving for a trip.
6. Heather O'Rourke is buried in a vault next to Truman Capote. Truman Capote wrote In Cold Blood. The killers bound their victims with cord. Perry Smith took 1:18:00 (1 minute, 18 seconds) to die by hanging.
7. Heather O'Rourke was a [JonBenet](#) lookalike.

[Ruthless People \(1986\)](#)

- **Similar Phrases**

1. "Mister Stone. Listen very carefully."
 2. "We have kidnapped your wife."
 3. "We have no qualms about killing and will do so at the slightest provocation. Do you understand?"
 4. "I have no patience for stupid questions, Mister Stone, and I don't like repeating myself. Do you understand?"
 5. "You are to obtain a new, black, American Tourister briefcase. Model number eight-one-o-four. Do you understand?"
 6. "In it you will place five hundred thousand dollars in unmarked, non-sequentially numbered one-hundred dollars bills. Do you understand?"
1. "Monday morning, at eleven A.M., you will proceed, with case in hand, to Hope Street Plaza and wait for a phone to ring. You will receive further instructions then. Do you understand?"
 2. "You will be watched at all phases of execution. If anyone is with you, or if any action is not carried out to our complete satisfaction, it will be considered an infraction of the rules, and your wife will be killed. Do you understand?"
1. "If you notify the police, your wife will be killed. If you notify the media, she will be killed. If you deviate from our instructions in any way whatsoever, she will be killed. Do you understand?"

[Ricochet \(1991\)](#)

- **Story Lines**

1. An attorney is terrorized by the criminal he put away years ago when he was a cop [Revenge against John Ramsey is a possible motivation for the JBR killing].

- **Similar Phrases**

1. "Your mother, nigga! The one that prayed with my father every night over your sorry ass. The one that buried your kid brother **without his head** because they couldn't find it." [RN threatens to behead JBR].
2. Nick Styles: "The parole board's ready, Blake. I hope you remembered to floss.

Earl Talbot Blake: I did! With your wife's pubic hair!" [A single hair, possibly a pubic hair, not sourced to Ramsey's, was found on the blanket in which JBR's body was wrapped when found].

Speed (1994)

- **Story Lines**

1. Specified denomination of bills and type of container for delivery of the ransom
2. The kidnapper employs counter-surveillance

- **Phrases**

1. "You know that I'm on top of you. Do not attempt to grow a brain." [RN states: "Don't try to grow a brain John"]

Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit, by John E. Douglas (1995)

- ABC's Elizabeth Vargas [reported](#) in 1998 that "sources say as many as 250 books were cataloged and photographed from various rooms in the Ramsey house in the event they yielded possible clues. At least one book, found in the bedroom, did—"Mind Hunter," by FBI profiler John Douglas. In chapter 16, there is a case of a young girl who is kidnapped, sexually assaulted, and suffocated with duct tape. When the killer called the mother, he began with the words "listen carefully." The same two words begin the ransom note."
- Others have speculated that the references to "John" in the RN were to John Douglas rather than John Ramsey, i.e., that the writer was deliberately taunting FBI profilers.

Seven (1995)

- **Story Lines**

1. Police drama about two cops, one new and one about to retire, after a serial killer using the seven deadly sins as his MO. [JBR may or may not have been killed by a serial killer; elements of "staging" suggest there may have been something symbolic about her death in the mind of the killer].

- **Phrases**

1. Killer: "I'm setting the example. What I've done is going to be puzzled over and studied and followed... forever." [JBR's killer may have been implicitly trying to "send a message" about the U.S. "we respect your business but not the country that it serves." Alternatively the killer may have been bothered by little girls being beauty pageant queens, although this theme is not mentioned in RN].
2. Killer: "Wanting people to listen, you can't just tap them on the shoulder anymore. You have to hit them with a sledgehammer, and then you'll notice you've got their strict attention." [JBR was dealt a savage blow to the head, one that would fell a 350 lb. lineman, far more than what was needed for her to die. If the point of this blow was to send a message, however, one would have expected it to be externally visible, which it was not. On the other hand, an extremely experienced or far-sighted killer would have known the public shock value of learning this fact at the autopsy.].
3. Killer: "It seems that envy is my sin." [The allusion to "fat cat" in the RN suggests the killer may have been envious of JR; on the other hand, it's not clear the killer would have been self-critical enough to label his/her behavior as envious].

Nick of Time (1995)

- **When Aired.** "On the night [JonBenet](#) was murdered, the movie 'Nick of Time' aired at 7:30 P.M. on a Boulder cable channel. ...Bill Cox, who was staying with Fleet and Priscilla White, told the police he remembered watching the movie that night." (Schiller 1999:225, according to Internet poster [narlacat](#)).

- **Story Lines**

1. "The story centers on an unarmed political faction that kidnaps a six-year-old girl." (Schiller 1999:225, according to Internet poster [narlacat](#)).

- **Similar Phrases**

1. "The victim is told, "Listen to me very carefully.'" (Schiller 1999:225, according to Internet poster [narlacat](#)).

Ransom (1996)

- **Story Lines**

1. Specified denomination of bills and type of container for delivery of the ransom
2. The delivery of the ransom requires extreme physical exertion [The RN encourages John to be well-rested]
3. The child is bound with his hands placed above his head
4. Duct tape is used on the child
5. The child's parent is a wealthy businessman who can fly his own plane
6. The kidnapper employs counter-surveillance

- **Similar Phrases**

1. "Do not involve the police or the FBI. If you do, I will kill him."
2. "Do not inform the media or I will kill him."
3. "No tracking devices in the money or the cases or I will kill him."