Understanding Media *Nightcrawler* Study Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[*Detective Fronteiri*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0404924/)*: You filmed him dying.*[*Lou Bloom*](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0350453/)*: That's my job, that's what I do, I'd like to think if you're seeing me you're having the worst day of your life.*

Before viewing, look up these terms and answer these questions (pair or group work).

Citizen Journalism:

Checkbook Journalism:

Ethics:

Journalistic Ethics:

Blood Sport:

Sensationalism:

Sociopath:

Conflict of Interest:

Manipulative:

Metamorphosis:

Skim this article. Discuss and clarify. “Ethical Considerations” [**http://schoolvideonews.com/Broadcast-Journalism/Ethical-Considerations**](http://schoolvideonews.com/Broadcast-Journalism/Ethical-Considerations)

Take this “quiz” and discuss your answers. View as many of the videos at the end as you can.

[**http://jea.org/blog/2012/09/04/hypotheticals-on-journalism-ethics/**](http://jea.org/blog/2012/09/04/hypotheticals-on-journalism-ethics/)

*Nina: If it bleeds it leads.*

Introduction

NIGHTCRAWLER is a thriller set in the nocturnal underbelly of contemporary Los Angeles. [Jake Gyllenhaal](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0350453?ref_=tt_stry_pl) stars as Lou Bloom, a driven young man desperate for work who discovers the high-speed world of L.A. crime journalism. Finding a group of freelance camera crews who film crashes, fires, murder and other mayhem, Lou muscles into the cut-throat, dangerous realm of nightcrawling - where each police siren wail equals a possible windfall and victims are converted into dollars and cents. Aided by [Rene Russo](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000623?ref_=tt_stry_pl) as Nina, a veteran of the blood-sport that is local TV news, Lou blurs the line between observer and participant to become the star of his own story.

Possible Themes

Perception is reality.

The media has control of society.

Humankind is savage.

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Characters  
Make notes on character traits and how (if?) they change throughout the film.

Lou Bloom (Jake Gyllenhaal)

Joe Loder’s (Bill Paxton)

Nina Romina (Renee Russo)

Rick (Riz Ahmed)

Frank the \_\_\_\_editor

Questions

1. We meet Lou as he is in the process of stealing fencing. The scene cuts ways, however, as he punches the guard. What does he steal from the guard? Do you think Lou kills the guard?

2. Lou then goes to sell the fencing. What do you think of his character as he asks for a job?

3. Why do think Lou stops at the burning car accident?

4. We are introduced to Joe (the cameraman and apparent boss). What do you think of him?

5. Lou asks Joe many questions. One of the things Joe says is, “If it bleeds it leads.”

6. What do you think of Lou’s reaction to the accidents and to meeting Joe? What does Lou learn?

7. The scene of Lou at Venice beach has him sitting and thinking and then going to pawn a stolen bicycle. What do these actions reveal about him?

8. What changes does Lou make in his second filming after his first one? What does he learn?

9. In the next scene, Lou goes into a local television station and we meet Nina. What do you think of her?

10. Nina calls him a “stringer” – a freelance reporter. Then she describes what “sells” on their station. What do you think of her? Her effect on Lou?

11. Lou begins to learn a lot about this new world of freelance journalism. What does this say about him?

12. Lou interviews Rick at a diner. What does Lou lie about?

13. Does Rick appear to be a drug user? Why or why not?

14. When Lou and Rick are on their first “assignment” Rick asks Lou if they “should go?” What does Lou respond?

15. Rick makes a mistake in giving Lou directions. When they arrive on the scene how does Joe make fun of Lou?

16. Lou quotes a lot of corporation rhetoric. How does this characterize him?

17. Lou makes a decision to cross police lines and enter the house. List what he does that you deem unethical.

18. Describe the visual impact of the scene between Lou and Nina in front of the skyline when he says, “On TV it looks so real.”

19. Why are the next scenes so fast (Lou working)?

20. What could the change of Lou’s car symbolize?

21. Discuss the following quote from the next scene: “Get that camera out of my face—get it out! I’m trying to talk to 911!”

22. What does Lou do in the next scene that crosses the line?

23. The music and filming as this occurs says a great deal about Lou’s character. What do you think the director is saying?

Possible Symbols

Full moon

Empty billboard

Amusement park

Smokestacks

Lou as thief

Lou’s apartment

Cords

Sunset