

APPENDIX 1. SYNOPSIS OF AMERICAN BEAUTY FILM

American Beauty is a drama genre film that was released in 1999. Almost 20 years have passed since the release of this film, but American Beauty has not lost its popularity.

This film can still be enjoyed today because of various problems that are still relevant to the social conditions that we experience in this era. American Beauty tells the story of two things, namely the gloom of life in a sub-urban environment full of competition and the mid-life crisis experienced by adults.

American Beauty was written by Alan Ball and the film was directed by Sam Mendes. Apparently, American Beauty is one of their best works. Evidenced by the 5 Oscars won in 2000. American Beauty won the categories of Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor (Kevin Spacey), Best Original Screenplay, and Best Cinematography.

The main character in this film is named Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey). The story of American Beauty is told by Lester himself through a narrative that we can see throughout the film. At the beginning of the story, Lester introduces his family, the environment he lives in, and also the fact that he is dead. Lester's death is not told at the beginning of the film, so we are curious about the cause of his death.

Lester has a wife and a daughter. However, Lester felt that he had lost his authority as a father in his family. His wife, Carolyn (Annette Bening) is a perfectionist, workaholic, and ambitious figure. She always tries to be the perfect woman in front of other people. Even though the perfection he craved for caused the estrangement of the marriage relationship.

Besides having a wife who often ignores him, Lester also has a daughter named Jane (Thora Birch) who hates him very much. Even in the narrative, Lester says that he is often seen as a coward by Carolyn and Jane. Then, his family problems are exacerbated by the midlife crisis that Lester feels.

The mid-life crisis makes Lester feel that he is missing something in his life. The strained relationship with his family and the boring world of work made Lester feel that his life was very empty and had no purpose anymore. Until finally he meets Jane's best friend, Angela Hayes (Mena Suvari).

Lester feels a sexual attraction to Angela who is a minor. For Lester, Angela is his new obsession and the starting point of his rebellion as the new Lester. Lester quit his job and spent all his income to buy a sports car in order to get a new essence in his life.

However, pedophilia is not the main theme in this film. Angela's character is presented only as a means for Lester to change his life. Lester, who has lost his way in life, has finally found a new purpose. He wants to return to his youth and escape from his old age.

In general, American Beauty tells the story of a dysfunctional family and how each character solves each of its problems. Then, which aspect actually shows the 'beauty' in this film?

When it was first released in the market, this movie poster depicted a woman's belly with her hands and a red rose. If you have never seen the film, maybe we will assume that this film will tell the beauty of a woman. However, this film tells of an unexpected beauty.

We will find beauty in this film through the character of Ricky Fitts (Wes Bentley). Ricky is described as a strange teenager who has a hobby of videography. In a scene, Ricky shows Jane a plastic video that is repeatedly blown by the wind. Then, he explained that beauty and beauty can be found in every aspect of life, even in the smallest aspects that we often ignore, such as the plastic video they are watching.

The ending of the film is executed very beautifully. Although we are confused in the last 30 minutes before the film ends, the impression given is very meaningful. At the end of the story, Lester realizes that something he's been looking for is right around him. The emptiness he feels can actually be filled with what he already had before. Lester teaches us to be grateful and appreciate all the 'beauty' that is around us.

American Beauty may feel like a tragedy until we forget that the genre of this film is comedy-drama. Actually, the comedy in this film contains a lot of satire. Ironically, we can still be made to laugh when we listen to the various sarcasm that is thrown in each character's dialogue. That's why Alan Ball deserves an award for his skill in writing such a brilliant script.

The cinematography in this film is also very beautiful. Almost every scene in this film we can find aspects of red, especially roses. Carolyn loves to fill her yard with red roses. In fact, in every corner of the room there is always a vase filled with red roses.

Thousands of red rose petals also appear every time Lester fantasizes about Angela. Red roses look a stark contrast when compared to the dull and boring tones that appear in every scene. Lighting, color selection, and every angle taken in this film gives a charming impression. Also supported by musical compositions that have a big impact on the emotions of the audience.

Clever scriptwriting, beautiful cinematography, and of course supported by talented actors and actresses, make American Beauty so worth watching and becoming a popular film of all time.

APPENDIX 2: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SAM MENDES AND ALAN BALL

1. Sam Mendes (Director of the Film)

Samuel Alexander Mendes was born on 1 August 1965. He is an English film and stage director, producer, and screenwriter. In theatre, he is known for his dark re-inventions of the stage musicals *Cabaret* (1993), *Oliver!* (1994), *Company* (1995), and *Gypsy* (2003). He directed an original West End stage musical for the first time with *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2013). For directing the play *The Ferryman*, Mendes was awarded the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play in 2019.

In film, he made his directorial debut with the drama *American Beauty* (1999), which earned him the Academy Award and Golden Globe Award for Best Director. He has since directed the crime film *Road to Perdition* (2002), the drama *Revolutionary Road* (2008), and the James Bond films *Skyfall* (2012) and *Spectre* (2015). For the war film *1917* (2019), he received the BAFTA Award for Best Direction and a second Golden Globe Award for Best Director, as well as his second Academy Award nomination for Best Director; additionally, he was nominated for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay.

In 2000, Mendes was appointed a CBE for his services to drama, and he was knighted in the 2020 New Years Honours List. That same year, he was awarded the Shakespeare Prize by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation in Hamburg, Germany. In 2005, he received a lifetime achievement award from the Directors Guild of Great Britain. In 2008, *The Daily Telegraph* ranked him number 15 in their list of the "100 most powerful people in British culture".

2. Alan Erwin Ball (Scripts' Writer)

Alan Erwin Ball was born in Marietta 1957, to Frank and Mary Ball. His father is an aircraft inspector and his mother is a housewife. His older sister, Mary Ann, died in a car accident when Ball was 13 years old. He was in high school in Marietta before going on to college at the University of Georgia and Florida State University. Ball graduated from the State of Florida in 1980 with a degree in theater arts. After college, he began working as a screenwriter at the General Nonsense Theater Company in Sarasota, Florida. Ball entered television as a writer and editor of stories about the events of the *Grace Under Fire* and *Cybill* situations.

Ball has written three films, *American Beauty* (1999), *Towelhead* (2007) and *Uncle Frank* (2020), the last of which he also produced and directed. He is also the creator, writer and executive producer of the HBO drama series *Six Feet Under* and *True Blood*. Ball was the showrunner for *True Blood* for the first five seasons.

Ball wrote the screenplay for *American Beauty*, for which he earned the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. He also created the series *Six Feet Under* and *True Blood*, works which won him an Emmy and accolades from the Writers, Directors, and Producers Guilds of America. He is an executive producer on the television series *Cinemax Banshee*. He also wrote and directed the film *Uncle Frank*.

In 2010 Ball began work on the television adaptation of the crime noir novel *The Mystic Arts of Erasing All Signs of Death* by Charlie Huston, entitled *All Signs of Death*. In December 2010, after several months of pre-production, HBO canceled production of the project.

In July 2016, it was announced that the family drama *Ball Here and Now* had been ordered for series by HBO. Starring Tim Robbins and Holly Hunter, the show was canceled in April 2018 after a ten-episode season.

Ball has discussed his Buddhist beliefs in various interviews, noting how it has influenced his filmmaking. In an interview with *Amazon.com*, Ball commented on the

plastic bag scene in *American Beauty*, stating: "I met the plastic bag! And I don't have a video camera, like Ricky. There's a Buddhist notion of magic in the mundane, and I think we certainly live in a culture that encourages us not to seek it. Ball has also discussed how his Buddhist teachings have shaped the themes in *Six Feet Under* and *True Blood*, both of which he has contributed substantially.

Ball is gay and has been called a "powerful voice for the LGBT community". In 2008 he made *Out* magazine's annual list of the 100 most impressive gay men and women.

For his work in television and film, Ball has received critical acclaim and numerous awards and nominations, including an Academy Award, an Emmy a Golden Globe, and awards from the Writers, Directors, and Producers Guilds.