

- (CAMERA MOVEMENT) The continual unbalanced camera movement (shoulder rig shake) in the film accomplished a few things. First, the camera literally takes on the emotional instability felt by our main characters. Second, it shows the effect that SHORT TERM 12 (ST12) has on those working there. This handheld technique is successfully used in most of the movie, (perhaps to further the idea that emotional instability for them lasts their entire lives), to give perspective to how deeply or erratic the character is feeling. To quote Grace in the film, “[Jayden] can’t talk about it. To her, [Jayden’s dad] is standing right behind her.” To further the notion that this technique serves a literal and metaphorical purpose, it could be said that the camera itself is being used to help these children, and in particular Jayden, talk about how they were abused. To support the idea that ST12 plays an effect on those that work there in their lives outside of the building, the beginning of the film, where Grace rides away on her bicycle is the perfect place to start. During the beginning of the film, the camera is still set to shaky movement, but not to the extent that will be seen in the rest of the film. It only starts to become more disrupted when Sammy runs out of the building for the first time. Thus, the lens with which Grace, Mason and Nate look at ST12 with instantly becomes obscured and uncertain. They’re literally being thrown into this environment, just like the kids. But it could be said that by showing Grace’s bicycle ride home after their first day in the film, the director showed first and foremost that Grace was taking some of the emotional pain from ST12 away with her. Her bike ride becomes shaky and the camera conveys that there are things in her life that are unbalanced, as well as the fact that ST12 day after day has an effect on her overall mood. Again, when Grace learns that her father is going to be released from prison, the camera immediately takes on this role again to show the instability in Grace’s life. Overall, the camera movement plays an important role in defining the emotional situations of those involved.

Through shaky, handheld movements, we understand the instability felt in ST12. On the other hand however, there are moments where the camera is relaxed and stable. Given that a film usually relies heavily on balanced and tight camera movement, and given that most of this film does not implore this common technique, times where the camera is resting carries even more of an impact. In these scenes, the camera's stability illuminates moments in Grace's life where she feels like she belongs. Grace's early life is illuminated later in the film, but it makes sense that she would only have brief experiences of stability. This is most prevalent in two different situations. The first being when Mason proposes to Grace at Mason step-parents' wedding anniversary, and she agrees to marry him. In this moment, we can only imagine what Grace is feeling emotionally, which is why the camera does so for us. For brief moments, Grace is experiencing the rare solemn happiness in slow-motion. Mason has changed her view of the world, and she now sees him as stable as is illuminated by the lack of camera movement. It seems that Grace is supposed to be in these situations, given that the camera movement becomes more conventional. When her life gets back to a more "conventional" one, without constant reminders of her abusive father, so does the camera becomes more conventional. The second time this instance of slow-motion happens is when Sammy runs out of ST12 at the end of the film and Grace is forced to once again run after him. This time however, Grace's perception is that of slow-motion, while still including the handheld shakiness. The slow motion reiterates that this is one of those moments when Grace realizes she belongs out in front of ST12. The slow-motion, like it was used in the scene where Mason proposed to her, illustrates her finding stability. The shaky movement of the camera shows the flux of emotion surrounding ST12. When Grace is seen running out in front of the building towards the end of the film, the shaky hand-held movement is still a metaphor for the emotional instability of ST12. She's running through it. And while she is, the fact that it's shot in slow-motion

suggests that she has found a stability inside of the unstable. The two camera techniques occur at once to show how Grace wants to help these kids, because she has finally started to deal with her own emotional issues. The last time this technique is employed, Grace is looking at the sonogram at her baby's heart beat. She is looking at that screen and the camera remains handheld and shakes; not because it represents the emotional instability of ST12, but because it represents the instability of the world. Grace finally understands that she cannot control the world or what happens inside of it (like her father's abuse) and therefor feels content with moving on. This technique now serves a new purpose, as does her "instinct". To dive deeper into how Grace was feeling at the time of this discovery, it could be said that her keeping the baby is representative of her finally letting someone inside the wall she's kept up for years.

The same wall that most abuse survivors have in order to protect themselves. When she realizes this, her only reaction is to be afraid and abort it. The instability of camera in this scenario also means that while she feels the ability to cope with the world, she feels the ability to cope with the world on an extreme personal level; by letting someone inside her walls.

- (BEGINNING AND ENDING) At the beginning of the film, we're meant to feel more connected to Nate as apposed to Grace. We the audience are new to ST12 as well as Nate and we're hearing these stories for the first time. We're experiencing chasing down Sammy for the first time. The fact that Nate is left alone under the title in the frame suggests even mores that the film is about him coming to ST12. By making Nate the center of focus early on, it provides an easy gateway into the main focus of the story. By doing so, we're meeting Grace on her own terms inside of the film. It also serves as a metaphor for the way that people approach those that have been abused. Those who have been abused also are not readily willing to share those facts with a stranger (the audience). The fact that the DOP chooses to introduce ST12 to

us this way suggests that they have planned the filming to follow this idea. To end a film with the beginning of the film is bold. They didn't repeat exactly what happened, but it was close enough that it felt like nothing had changed in the story. Maybe they were going for that though. This film was made with certain aspects representing what it's like to be an abuse survivor. Perhaps ending the film with the beginning, and leaving the audience with this sense that nothing has changed is important. Because in reality, the abuse never changes or goes away for the victim. The difference at the end of the film however, is that the survivor has accepted it, and has decided to work to heal some of the emotional damage. Which again, is all you could ask from a survivor coming from a relationship as abusive as her and her fathers'.