

SUBJECT INDEX:

KIDNAPPING ~ ABDUCTION

One of the many peculiarities of English law is an offence, seldom invoked, of “depriving a parent of their lawful possession of the child” – a charge equivalent to “taking and driving away” in motoring offences. It is a lesser form of “kidnapping”, without intent to retain permanent custody of the child or extort payment for its return. The over-riding assumption in all such laws, however, is clearly the right of possession. These are in no sense intended as safeguards for the well-being of the child, but as dispositions of legal ownership. The child’s welfare, safety, personal wishes and age – these are all entirely irrelevant to kidnap cases, and so the crime should be more properly equated to horse theft in the 19th century, or grand theft auto in the 20th. It defines the child as property.

Abduction stories fall broadly into three bands (or four, latterly):

- Custody disputes, where a child is taken away by the parent denied legal custody
- Children taken as hostages by fleeing desperadoes, or snatched to extort a ransom
- Kids who run away – usually voluntarily – with an adult friend not their legal guardian
- In recent times, a heavy concentration on children abducted for sexual purposes

Kidnap films are a hit and miss affair from this archive's perspective. In many cases, such as "THE BLACK WINDMILL" or "BIG JAKE", the child is glimpsed momentarily in the opening sequences and not seen again until the closing moments. For all practical purposes it may as well be a car, a racehorse, or Maltese Falcon which has been purloined (the child as prized object). Occasionally, as in "TIGER BAY", "STRANGER IN BETWEEN" and "MARTIN'S DAY", the kidnappee and his or her developing relationship with the abductor becomes more the focus of the drama (a juvenile expression of the “Helsinki syndrome”, if you will), and once or twice the kidnappers themselves are children. In “Pippi Långstrump på de Sju Haven” it was the young daughter who rescued her sea-captain father from the clutches of kidnappers.

Nevertheless, I can only think of a single title - the intriguing short TV film "MISSING" - in which a kidnapping is seen wholly from the child's perspective, has no ostensible profit or blackmail motive, and without the audience being invited to sympathise at all with the kidnapper. In that particular instance, the implication is strongly made at the outset that the abductor has sexual designs upon the boy, yet the boy is not molested, nor maltreated, and weeks later, when he gives annoyance to his captor, is unceremoniously packed into a car and dumped back home again, bewildered and offended at such a demonstrable act of rejection.

In the 1980s America lashed itself into a religious frenzy over the theme of "stranger danger", spawning numerous TV films suffused with a morbid and irrational paranoia about the wholesale pillaging of the nation's children by marauding “paedophiles”. One such title was "ADAM", but far more interesting was "I

KNOW MY FIRST NAME IS STEVEN", purportedly based on an actual case, in which a boy spent his entire adolescence quite literally in the hands of such a captor, only to discover he's just one in a chain of kids the man has plucked from the streets and "adopted" for his own selfish sexual purposes. It was an extraordinary story, yet plausible enough, and more concerned with the psychological effect upon the boy than the trauma of his parents or with demonising the kidnapper. On returning to his family, Steven is rejected by his father and many schoolmates as "soiled goods", having "allowed" himself to be regularly sodomised. It was a perceptive and unusual departure from the glib, angst-ridden tales of **parents** in crisis.

	Abeltje	
	Act of Piracy	
	Adventures on Kythera	
	After the Promise	
	Atomic City	[= Lee Aaker, 9]
	Avonturen van een Zigeunerjongen	
	The Bandit of Sherwood Forest	
	The Bantam Cowboy	
	Black Island	
	The Black Windmill	
HOST	Blauvogel	W Germany 1979 : "Bluebird". Robin Jaeger as a white boy abducted by indians and becoming torn between two worlds.
	Blind Fury	
	The Boy Who Never Was	
	Breakout	
	The Carrington School Mystery	
	Children of the Forest	UK 1912 : Boy and his dog track gypsy who kidnapped his sister. With Roy Royston and Marie Royston .
HOST	La Cité des Enfants Perdus	The City of Lost Children
	The Deep End of the Ocean	
	Dennis the Menace	
RANS	Los 2 Golfillos	Spain 1961. "Los Dos Golfillos" ("The Two Little Ragamuffins"). Kidnapped prison governor's son Joselito (14) sings on the street for his supper, and teams up with younger urchin Pablo Alonso .
	La Drolesse	
	Ek het Jou Gesien!	S Africa 1991 : "I Saw You!" Short about a bullied boy (Andries Steenkamp , +/-12), taken on a hunting trip and stumbling across kidnappers who've murdered a child.
	Enid Blyton - Circus of Adventure	
	Every Little Crook and Nanny	
	The Flame and the Arrow	
	Fortress	
	Glasblåsarens Barn	
	Gojira Tai Megaro	[Godzilla vs Megalon]
HOST	Here Come the Nelsons :	Ricky Nelson , 11, snatched by escaping robbers from his hometown centennial rodeo. Rescued by dad.
	Hijack!	
	The Hostage	
	The Hostages	
	In a Glass Cage	
HOST	Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom	
	The Island	
RANS	Jimmy the Kid	US TV 83 : The brilliant son (would you believe Gary Coleman ?) of a wealthy singing duet is kidnapped by bungling crooks who teach him "what it means to be a kid". Yeeukk!
	Kidnapped	
	Kidnapped (94 TV)	
	The Kidnapped King	UK 1909

	The Kidnappers	
	Kidnap Syndicate	
	Kid Vengeance	
	Lightning Jack[Australia]	
	Little House on the Prairie –	
	"The Aftermath"	[US TV soap]
	Little House on the Prairie – "Bless	
	All the Dear Children"	[US TV soap]
	The Little Kidnappers	
	The Lost Volcano	
	La Mágica Aventura de Oscar	
	La Mano Della Straniero / The Stranger's Hand	
	Man on Fire (87)	
	Me and the Kid	
LUST	Nightmare	US TV 91 : Exploitation tale of a mother's angst when the man who kidnapped and assaulted her young daughter threatens to return to the neighbourhood.
	No Deposit, No Return	
	O. Henry's Full House	
	Oliver!	
	Oliver Twist	
	Over the Top	
	Patrik Pacard	
	Phatikchand	India 1983: "Phatik and the Juggler". 12-year old boy (<i>Ranjiv Ganguly</i>) is kidnapped, suffers amnesia, and is befriended by a Calcutta street-juggler.
	Pim Pandoer in het Nauw	Netherlands
	Pippi Långstrump på de Sju Haven	
	Prelude to Fame	
	Problem Child	
	Professional Soldier	
	Ransom [1955]	
	The Ransom of Red Chief	('11)
	The Ransom of Red Chief	(TV '77)
	Rescued by Rover	[early British silent]
	Sans Famille	(12)
	Sans Famille	(25)
	Sans Famille	(34)
	Sans Famille	(57)
	The Scarlet Pimpernel	
	The Secret Agent Club	
	El Secuestrador[Argentina]	
	Secuestro en la Ciudad	Spain
	Senza Famiglia	
	Senza Ragione	[Redneck]
RANS	Snatched	US 1975 : aka "Little Girl, Big Tease". Repellent example of mainstream heterosexual pornography featuring a "schoolgirl" who is kidnapped, raped repeatedly, and loves every minute of it. Odious trash.
	Sonar Kella	
	Space Raiders	
	The Strange Case of the Disappearance of Adelaide Harris	
	Stuart Little	
	Switchback	
	Three Kids and a Queen	
	Tiger Bay	
	To Grandmother's House We Go	
	Tottisalmen Perilinnen	Finland
	Wenn der Vater mit dem Sohne	

Where's Johnny?
The Whipping Boy
The Window
The Wonder Kid
The X-Files: "Invocation"

~ 94 titles ~