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Like the Ones I Used to Know

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Like the Ones I Used to Know

Abstract

This is a review of the short film, *Like the Ones I Used to Know* [*Le Grand Claques*] (2020), directed by Annie St-Pierre.

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Author Notes

Rubina (Ruby) Ramji is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Cape Breton University. After serving as a Chair of the Religion, Film and Visual Culture Group for the American Academy of Religion and then on the steering committee, Rubina continues to serve on the Executive Committee for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion as President and is the Film Editor of the *Journal of Religion and Film*. Her research activities focus on the areas of religion, media and identity, religion in Canada, and religion and immigration.



Like the Ones I Used to Know [Les Grandes Claques] (2020), dir. Annie St-Pierre

It's late Christmas eve, 1983, and Denis is parked outside of his ex-wife's family home, where they are all celebrating Christmas and having fun. Denis has come to pick up his children, so that he can have them for his half of Christmas, but he has his phobias. Once inside, he is forced to participate in the festivities even though he is thoroughly uncomfortable. Eventually, his young son declares that he does not want to spend Christmas with his dad because it's "boring" at dad's home. Although his ex-wife tries to remind her son of the fun way dad makes pancakes, it is not enough to convince him to leave with his father. Panic sets in for Denis as he flees to the bathroom and escapes through the window, leaving behind his 8-year-old daughter Julie. Denis is sitting alone in his car, on Christmas eve, when Julie comes running out of the home to hug her father. She is going to spend Christmas with him; although then the car gets stuck! Thankfully, Santa comes to the rescue and pushes the car free. This is a story of childhood and maturity, as a young

girl sees her father's frailties and comes to empathize with him. She supports her father, claiming "You can do it, Denis," and with a little help from Santa, Denis gets to enjoy the spirit of Christmas with his daughter.