



'THERE WILL BE BLOOD'

ZOOM

Over-the-top obsessions

Whether it's a source of pain to a spurned lover, a spur for an investigator, or a green-eyed monster for the less talented, obsession makes for memorable characters.

In "Quid Pro Quo," opening Friday, the characters' fixation is particularly bizarre: Paralyzed reporter Nick Stahl is led by Vera Farmiga into a subculture of people who yearn to be disabled. Here are more movies about obsession driving people to the edge of despair.

JFK (1991)

Obsession: New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison (Kevin Costner) takes it upon himself to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy, unearthing a slew of wild conspiracy theories.

Redemption or despair? Redemption. Garrison is roundly blasted as a nut or a fool — except by the growing number of Americans convinced something was rotten in Dallas.

VERTIGO (1958)

Obsession: Jimmy Stewart is hired to follow his friend's wife (Kim Novak) and becomes utterly obsessed with her beauty — even forcing another woman to dress, walk and act like her.

Redemption or despair? Despair. Characters get what's coming to them in a typically twisted, Hitchcockian way. But the real fun is watching the typically heroic Stewart play a sexually twisted antihero.

AMADEUS (1984)

Obsession: Acclaimed composer Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) has it all — so why is he so bothered that the vulgar Mozart (Tom Hulce) can toss off angelic melodies in his sleep?

Redemption or despair? Despair. Mozart is indeed a genius and Salieri realizes he isn't — which drives him mad.

THERE WILL BE BLOOD (2007)

The Obsession: Nothing can distract Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis) from constantly seeking out what matters most — oil.

Redemption or despair? Both. Plainview becomes fabulously wealthy, but drives away the only person he ever loved (his son) and sinks to murder. Still, he does live in a very nice mansion.

Michael Giltz