



***Seen Also in Men***  
**A Study Guide for Social Work Educators and Students**

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## **Foreword**

This guide has been developed to assist social work educators and students in using films from the CSWE film festivals in their classrooms. It is one in a series of CSWE curriculum resources designed to enhance the teaching and learning of social work concepts.

We welcome your comments as the library of these resources is refined and expanded.

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## Overview

### *Seen Also in Men*

#### Film Information

Title: <i>Seen Also in Men</i>	A Film by: Velissa Robinson
Running Time: 27 minutes	Distributed by: USC School of Cinematic Arts

**Context:** The story of the paternal instinct held by three young Black men that pushes them to fight for meaningful relationships with their children. Under the weight of broken relationships with their own fathers and the negative stereotypes of what a Black father does not do, these men rise to the occasion.

#### Overall Themes:

1. Fatherhood
2. Black Fathers
3. Custody
4. Father Importance

Time Code	Topic	Central Quote	Salient Themes
00:00–1:55	Introduction	“If you’re a young man and you’re Black, people expect that you don’t take care of your children.” (01:20)	Historical Remnants, Black Family Structure
01:56–8:35	Three Fathers	“It could impact us.” (03:46)	Parental Relationships, Divorce, Parental Responsibility, Fatherhood Rights
8:36–15:36	Commitments	“I think he’s winging it.” (09:14)	Clothes Shopping, Parental Agreements, Co-Parenting, Parental Separation Anxiety
15:37–22:20	Cringing at His First Name	“It would have been cool to have a dad.” (15:56)	Generational Loss, Mother Couldn’t Teach, Adolescent Need for Father, Lessons From Father to Girls
22:21–25:57	View of Fathers	“I will always look for them... those are my kids.” (22:37)	Legal Issues Father-Mother Strife Relocation

## Topics

### Introduction

Time Code: 00:00–1:55

**Central Quote:** “If you’re a young man and you’re Black, people expect that you don’t take care of your children.” (01:20)

**Themes:** Historical Remnants, Black Family Structure

**Abstract:** The film opens with glimpses of Black men reflecting on their relationships with their fathers. An historian is briefly interviewed to provide a basis for a cultural discussion on fatherhood. The opening highlights the fact that a stereotype exists suggesting that Black men do not take care of their children.

### Learning Objectives

1. Explore the myth of Black fatherlessness.
2. Trace the historic pressures on Black families.
3. List some common reasons for the separation of Black fathers from their children.

### Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast reasons for father separation among Blacks and another ethnic group.
2. What is your explanation for the importance of fathers within the family unit?
3. What deficits do you expect from a child who grows up without a father in the home?
4. Do the identified deficits persist if the father is involved in the child’s life, although living outside the immediate home?
5. What should be the community’s response to the lack of fathers in homes?

### Suggested Readings

Dickerson, Cory. (2014). *The lived experience of fatherlessness in male adolescents: The student perspective*. Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. Paper 914. <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/914>

Hubin, D. C. (2013). Fatherhood. *The international encyclopedia of ethics*. doi: 10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee483

National Fatherhood Initiative. <http://www.fatherhood.org/>

## Three Fathers

Time Code: 01:56–8:35

**Central Quote:** “It could impact us.” (03:46)

**Themes:** Parental Relationships, Divorce, Parental Responsibility, Fatherhood Rights

**Abstract:** We are introduced to Dean, Prentice, and Alonzo. Each father has a unique story regarding their intention to be better fathers and their experience with their fathers. As we meet each of them, we learn of their relationships with their children.

### Learning Objectives

1. Compare three stories of fatherhood.
2. Explore the impact of parental relationships on childhood development.
3. Identify varying ways that parents share responsibility for child-rearing even when they do not reside in the same home.

### Discussion Questions

1. What training and support for divorced couples and their children exist in your area?
2. What is the value to the family and the society of postdivorce training and support?
3. Do you believe that Prentice deserves more time with his son? Why or why not?
4. What factors are included in a custody decision?
5. Does society have an incentive to ensure the involvement of responsible parents in the lives of their children? Does it matter if the parent wants to be involved or not?

### Suggested Readings

Flood, M. (2012). Separated fathers and the “fathers’ rights” movement. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(2–3), 235–245.

Hubin, D. C. (2013). Fatherhood. *The international encyclopedia of ethics*. doi: 10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee483

Oakman, B. N. (2014). Unready for sudden fatherhood. *Eureka Street*, 24(6), 48.

## Commitments

Time Code: 8:36–15:36

**Central Quote:** “I think he’s winging it.” (09:14)

**Themes:** Clothes Shopping, Parental Agreements, Co-Parenting, Parental Separation Anxiety

**Abstract:** Dean takes his girls clothes shopping and stumbles upon a teachable moment. Dean learns about a potential disagreement between him and his ex-wife concerning ear piercing. Prentice talks about the separation from his son as his visitation time ends. Prentice also attempts to communicate co-parenting during the drop-off of his son.

### Learning Objectives

1. Explore the needs of children from infancy through teenage years.
2. Define parental agreements as contracts for co-parenting.
3. Explore separation anxiety among children and among noncustodial parents.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that Dean has feelings of giving up? But, he “has a commitment to always be there.” (11:47)
2. Compare and contrast Dean’s apparent relationship with his ex-wife and Prentice’s relationship with the mother of his child.
3. What impact do you think the differences will have on the children?
4. How do you explain the connection that Prentice feels for his son? (13:29)

### Suggested Readings

Baxter, J. A. (2013, July). *Fathers as co-parents: How co-parenting perceptions are linked to Australian couples’ sharing of childcare, other household work and paid work*. Paper presented at the 5th International Community, Work and Family Conference, Sydney, Australia.

Hayes, S. W. (2011, June). *Mom’s hates, Dad’s hates: An analysis of parental conflict and co-parenting education programs*. Paper presented at the 48th Annual Conference of the Association of Family Conciliation Courts, Orlando, FL.

Starnes, C. L. (2012). Lovers, parents, and partners: Disentangling spousal and co-parenting commitments. *Arizona Law Review*, 54, 197–239.

## Cringing at His First Name

Time Code: 15:37–22:20

**Central Quote:** “It would have been cool to have a dad.” (15:56)

**Themes:** Generational Loss, Mother Couldn’t Teach, Adolescent Need for Father, Lessons From Father to Girls

**Abstract:** We hear the stories from each of the fathers as they discuss their fathers. Each discuss some trepidation in the consideration of meeting with their fathers. Dean walks into a discussion between his daughters about sex and dealing with the opposite sex.

### Learning Objectives

1. Explore the impact of absent fathers on fathers, including motivations of parents based on how they were parented.
2. Explore parenting roles with respect to the gender of the child.
3. Explain reasons why parents choose to remain separated from their children or children remain separated from their parents.

### Discussion Questions

1. Create a psychosocial profile of each father, detailing their choice behavior and reasoning based on the stories of their fathers.
2. Do you believe there are lessons that a mother cannot teach, lessons for children that require a father to teach them?
3. Does your answer to the previous question change when the child is a male versus when the child is a female?
4. What do you think has become of Alonzo’s son?

### Suggested Readings

Johansen, S. (2014). *Family men: Middle-class fatherhood in early industrializing America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Levin, K. A., & Currie, C. (2010). Family structure, mother-child communication, father-child communication, and adolescent life satisfaction: A cross-sectional multilevel analysis. *Health Education, 110*(3), 152–168.

Wilson, K. R., & Prior, M. R. (2011). Father involvement and child well-being. *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health, 47*, 405–407.

## View of Fathers

Time Code: 22:21–25:57

**Central Quote:** “I will always look for them ... those are my kids.” (22:37)

**Themes:** Legal Issues, Father-Mother Strife, Relocation

**Abstract:** Alonzo promises to never give up on finding his son. We find out that Prentice’s son has moved from California to Florida. The film concludes with a refusal of the stereotype of Black fathers as absent.

### Learning Objectives

1. Explore court’s jurisprudence in child custody and visitation cases.
2. Explore the impact of divorce on children of different ages.
3. Identify organizations that actively support fatherhood in their missions.

### Discussion Questions

1. List factors that contribute to a decision to award, structure, or change custody mandates.
2. Do you think it is okay for a child to reside across country from a noncustodial parent? Why or why not?
3. What economic and employment factors impact child custody and the ability of a parent to care for a child?
4. In what ways does this film change or support your views of Black fathers?
5. In what ways has your view of fatherhood changed after watching this film?

### Suggested Readings

George, R. H., Judd, Q. C., Garrido, D., & Worwood, A. (2013). *Relocation: A practical guide*. Bristol, UK: Family Law.

Kay, E., Tisdall, M., & Morrison, F. (2012). Children’s participation in court proceedings when parents divorce or separate: Legal constructions and lived experiences. *Law and Childhood Studies: Current Legal Issues*, 14, 156–173.

Koel, A., Clark, S. C., Phear, W. P. C., & Hauser, B. B. (2014). A comparison of joint and sole legal custody agreements. In E. M. Hetherington & J. D. Arasteh, *Impact of divorce, single parenting and stepparenting on children: A case study of visual agnosia* [e-book]. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor & Francis.