

# Film Review: Oedipus Wrecks Tilda Swinton in ‘We Need to Talk About Kevin’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 27, 2012 - 10:34am

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CHICAGO – The mother and son relationship is perhaps one of the most complicated ever invented. In giving birth to an opposing gender, the woman must then deal with a maturation process foreign to her own, with all the potential psychosis attached. Tilda Swinton and Ezra Miller play the game in “We Need to Talk About Kevin.”



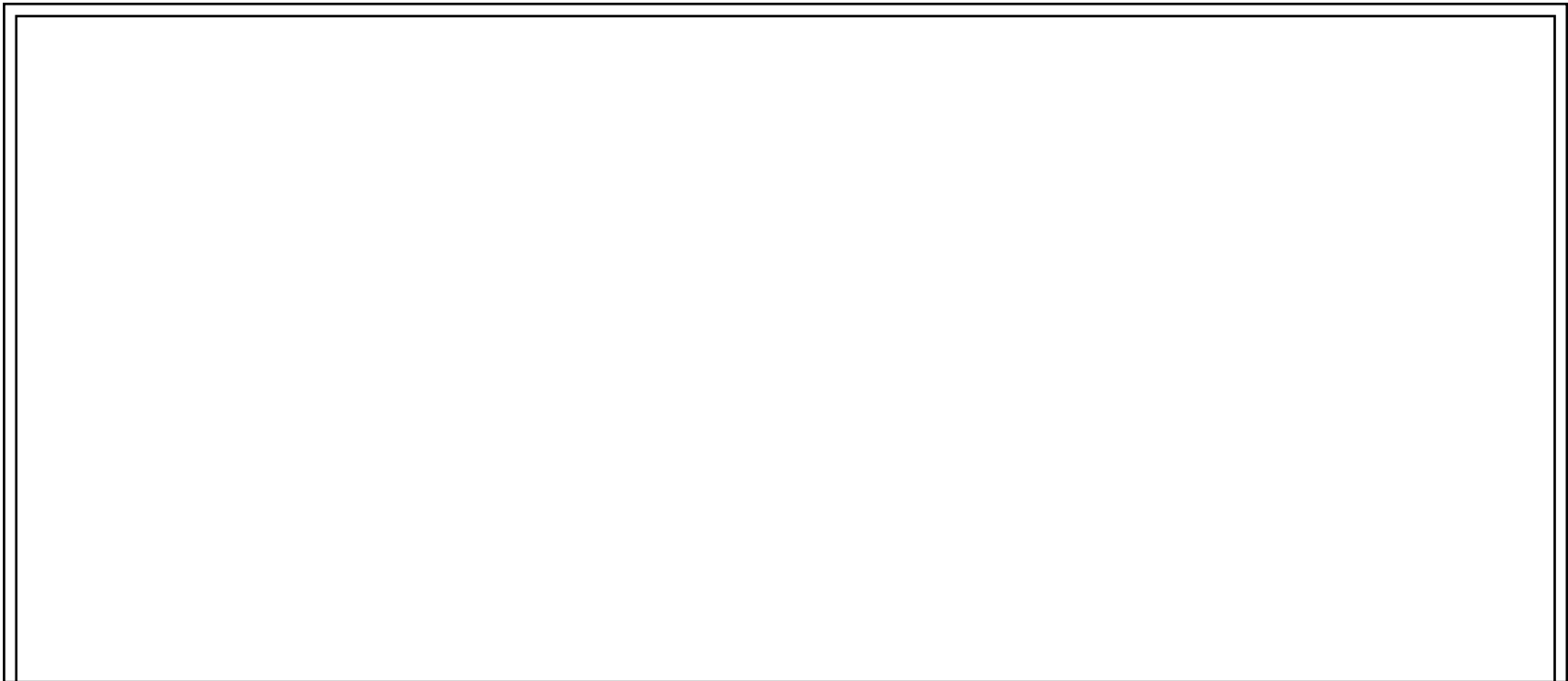
Adapted from a novel in bold emotional detail by director Lynn Ramsay, “Kevin” pulls no punches in following the mother/son conundrum from birth to adolescence, chronicling a born-to-be-bad social misfit and the desperate means he practices in the push-pull of dear old Mom. The Oedipal Complex – boy wants to have his mother and kill his father – is also thematically on display, with stark ramifications for a combination of that theory with a modern, violent society.

The story is told in flashback through Eva Khatchadourian (Tilda Swinton), a woman who is living in a rundown house in a nondescript town. As the narrative unfolds, we learn that Eva has a son named Kevin (Ezra Miller), who is currently incarcerated for a vicious crime. The town actually acts out toward Eva and in essence blames her for the event that caused Kevin’s arrest. As she wallows in her own purgatory, Eva remembers the relationship with her son.

The memories consist of the American Dream Scenario, with Eva meeting the rambunctious Franklin (John C. Reilly), falling in love and starting a family. There is evident upper middle class success, as they welcome a son in their lives named Kevin. Except Kevin is not a normal good boy. He makes Eva’s life a living hell, acting out virtually in every way against her. The mother’s sorrow and anger builds, and the plea to her husband to “talk about Kevin” falls on deaf ears. The boy child becomes more monstrous as adolescent Kevin, and moves toward a destiny that seemed predetermined by his erratic life.

*“We Need to Talk About Kevin” continues its limited release in Chicago on January 27th. See local listings for show times and theaters. Featuring Ezra Miller, Tilda Swinton, John C. Reilly, Jasper Newell and Ashley Gerasimovich. Adapted screenplay by Lynn Ramsay and Rory Kinnear. Directed by Lynn Ramsay. Rated “R”*

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Tilda Swinton (Eva) and John C. Reilly (Franklin) in ‘We Need to Talk About Kevin’  
*Photo credit: Oscilloscope Pictures*

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