OTNEMEM
By: Vivek Banapur, Chris Chao, Edward Chang, Jimmy Hsu, Janssen P., and Lance L.

Title/Opening credits
In the beginning the Polaroid picture is fading. It establishes that the movie is going backwards.
In the crime scene, time is also going backwards as all the blood goes back to Teddy’s head, and the bullet goes back into the barrel of the pistol.
The title of the movie is a pun. Memento means “I lie to myself” in Latin. Which we find out that he actually is as the movie progresses

Setting
The setting isn’t specified, but the film was shot in Long Beach, California.
Memento is meant to feel like they are in a small town because there are no big named companies or stores.
The abandoned house is needed because that is where he kills John G who says he is Teddy and Jimmy Grant who is the boyfriend of Natalie who helps him with his search for John G.
Scenes are mostly shot during the day to show he is more active in the day thinking about what to do next.

The motel is where Teddy told Leonard to go to so he can keep an eye on him. Because if he stayed at Natalie’s house, she could help him with his investigation.
Tattoo parlor is where Leonard got his tattoos so he doesn’t have to do it himself anymore

Characterization

Leonard Shelby(Lenny)- Leonard is one of the central characters in the movie. He is from San Francisco and he has
his condition called anterograde amnesia (He can’t make new memories). He is looking for a guy named John G who raped and killed his wife. He uses a Polaroid camera to take note and it helps him figure things out and it also reminds him of things that had already happened. He only remembers 5-10 minutes of a conversation and he have to concentrate on it or he will forgets it. He also writes notes on the back of the polaroid picture. He has a body full of tattoo to remind himself of who or what he is dealing with or to help him remember what people have done to him or what he owns. He only remembers everything up until the accident.

Casual/Temporal
- In the black and white scenes the room that the movie was shot was in room 21
- In the color scenes, the room that the movie is shot in is room 304.

Range and Depth
1. Restricted range is used in the movie as the audience’s knowledge is very limited. Also, the audience is forced to relate to Leonard’s situation due to this restricted range. Consequently, the audience is left to figure out details of the real plot.
2. The depth of the movie is very subjective as most of what the audience is seeing is through Leonard.
   - This reduces the ability of the audience to fully understand what is really going on because Leonard’s memories taints the reality.
3. Range
4. Depth

Nondiegetic
- The music in the beginning of the music and when the music is playing in the credits.
When he remembers Sammy Jankis, the black and white scenes and even the color. He Technically can't see Sammy sitting and doing anything.

Motif
- The License Plate – the license plate constantly appears throughout. Leonard writes the license plate as SG13 71U in his notes instead of SG13 7IU. As a result, he tattoos himself with the wrong license plate as well. This connects back to the theme of the movie that memory is unreliable. As Lenny puts it: "Memory can change the shape of a room; it can change the color of a car. And memories can be distorted. They're just an interpretation, they're not a record, and they're irrelevant if you have the facts." In this case, the small detail of an I instead of a 1 was distorted.
- "Remember Sammy Jankis" tattoo – aside from the tattoo being shown throughout, the Sammy Jankis story is also repeated. Lenny uses this tattoo to remember his condition, to remember the made-up story of Sammy and by contrast his story or what he has made of it. He has successfully projected part of his story onto Sammy and every time Lenny looks at this tattoo, he is reminded of how he is constantly making up his own world and reality. Also, this tattoo is written in cursive. By changing his handwriting, he knows that this information is incorrect.

Motif (cont’d)
- Mirror- the mirror is shown at Natalie’s house and at Leonard’s hotel room. Also, it is shown in Dodd’s hotel room and at the café restroom. Every time there is a mirror, Leonard momentarily stares at his reflection. This signifies the fact that he forgets his current situation every so often due to his condition, and it's almost as if every time that happens he forgets where he is and maybe why he is at a certain place. His bewilderment is portrayed by his facial expression in the mirror.

Story/Plot
- Leonard Shelby kills “Teddy”.
Leonard wakes up in an “anonymous room”

Has a conversation with Burt and tells him to keep a watch out for Teddy. Teddy comes and he brings him out and kills him.

Leonard mentions Sammy and how his system was flawed.

Takes a gun and starts walking to the counter to talk to Burt. He tells him to keep a look out for Teddy.

He mentions how you learn to recognize your own handwriting, writing it on your body is a permanent way of remembering.

He comes out of bathroom of the café where he writes down directions given by the waiter. He has new found information in his envelope in which he later looks at, discovering that Teddy is the one, and writes “He is the one. Kill him. On his picture.

The phone rings and Leonard begins explaining how “Sammy’s situation helps me recognize my own”. “I’m disciplined and organized”. Sammy has no system. Leonard does.

Leonard meets Natalie for information at the café. She traced the license plate number Leonard gave her. She gave him the address to an “abandoned place”, “it’s isolated”. We learn that she is helping Leonard because he helped her. “We are both survivors”.

Leonard met Sammy through his work as an insurance investigator. He looked into people’s eye to tell if someone was telling the truth. “Yeah I was good, Sammy was my first real challenge.”
Teddy comes up to Leonard while he is in the car and offers to buy him lunch. And they have a chat. Teddy tells Leonard how “your notes could be unreliable”, with that Leonard says, “Memory is unreliable.” and tells him how he will go by facts not recommendations. He left his room keys in his room and goes to retrieve it. Burt shows him to his room but it was the wrong room. Leonard finds out he was checked into two rooms. “You’re not going to remember anyways”. “You don’t have to be that honest Burt.”

We learn new information about Samuel R. Jankis, 58 years old. Could do complicated things if he knew before the accident. Has Anterograde memory loss. He’s suspicious of Sammy, he “catches this look, a slight look of recognition.

He wakes up in Natalie’s bedroom. Her card is scribbled at the top and writes, “She has also lost someone. She will help you out of pity.” Leonard asks why she's helping. “I’m helping you.. Because you helped me.”

Leonard says that, “Sammy should still be able to learn through repetition.” He sent Sammy to get tests in which some objects were electrified.

Leonard is freaked out and confused. He goes to Natalie’s house demanded who Dodd is. Natalie tells him, “This is my problem, you offered to help, it has nothing to do with your investigation.” Leonard thinks something is fishy. Natalie tells him to trust himself. And Leonard follows up with, “There are things you can know for sure… certainties”. We learn that Jimmy is Natalie’s lover. It is here where he writes, “She has also lost someone. She will help you out of pity.”

They test Sammy for months trying to see if he could be conditioned using electrified objects. But it had no success. “Conditioning didn’t work for Sammy so he became helpless, but it works for me. I live the way Sammy couldn’t.”

A flash of his wife occurs before he wakes up in an anonymous room. In the drawer there is a gun and Dodd is
beat up in the closet. He calls Teddy over. It’s Dodd’s room. They walk him out to his car and make him go out of town.

Sammy’s wife is crippled at the cost of supporting and fighting the company’s decision. Leonard said, “I never said that Sammy was faking, just that his problem is mental not physically. Sammy’s wife kept trying to test Sammy.

He’s in the bathroom with a wine bottle. And decides to go take a shower, a person comes in and takes a piss and Leonard has the element of surprise and knocks him out with the wine bottle and duck tapes his mouth and puts him in the closet and calls Teddy.

Sammy’s wife kept trying to make him snap out of it. “You can’t bully someone into remembering.” He hangs up to phone to begin tattooing.

While running Leonard thought to himself, “Okay, so what am I doing, Oh, I’m chasing this guy. Nope he’s chasing me.” He runs back to his car and drives to Dodd’s room and hides in his bathroom with a wine bottle as a weapon.

Shows tattoo fact #5: Access to drugs

He is leaving the construction to be trailed by a car. He pulls over and is greeted by a gun. And Leonard runs out and the window gets shot.

Phone rings again and Leonard picks it up.

He drives to a construction site to burn his wife’s belongings, while it flashes back to times with his wife.

Writes Fact #5 on his thigh. And gets more information through the call. He looks at his notes and notices pages missing and things crossed out.

He is in bed and wakes up from a door slamming. He goes to the bathroom and finds the prostitute. And tell hers to leave. And then he gets in the car to head to the construction site.
Learns that there were drugs stashed in the car. Leonard thinks that John G. planted it there. Phone caller hints that John G. could be a drug dealer.

Leonard stops the car at Discount Inn and takes a picture of it. He gets checked into a room and settles in and calls the “Escort Service – personal”. He tells her to sleep with him and wait till he’s asleep and go to the bathroom and slam the door to wake him up.

Cops don’t take Leonard seriously. Sammy’s wife can’t take it anymore, and tries to snap Sammy out of it. She goes to Leonard asking if it’s “imaginary”, and Leonard replies, “I think Sammy should still be able to physically create memories”.

Leonard goes into his car, with Teddy inside there waiting. Teddy warns Leonard not to trust Natalie and tells him, “write this down, when she offers to help it will be for her own reasons”, “write this down, do not trust her”. But after seeing “Do not believe his lies” on teddy’s picture he crosses it out.

While talking on the phone, he stumbles across a “Never answer the phone” tattoo. He asks who’s on the phone, and they hung up.

He is trying to look for something to write with. And then Natalie comes through the door claiming to have been beaten up by Dodd after listening to Leonard. Because of this Leonard offers to help Natalie sort things out by Dodd and she gives him his information.

The phone keeps ringing while Leonard is avoiding it. He calls the front desk to ignore all calls.

He is in Natalie’s house. Natalie is complaining about Dodd to Leonard while going around hiding all the writing utensils. And then she begins to get on Leonard’s nerve to make him punch her. And then she waits in the car until he forgot.

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Leonard is freaking out, thinking that someone is out to get him. Burt from the front door knocks and tells him that a cop is on the phone wanting to talk to Leonard. And Leonard says that he needs to see him eye to eye.

He is at Natalie’s house and he explains to her about the incident and how her wife got “raped and murdered”. He believes that there has to be a second man but the police doesn’t believe someone with his condition.

The phone ringing stops and an envelope is slipped under his door. Inside it has a picture of Leonard pointing at himself.

At Ferdy’s bar Natalie gives him a “drink on the house”. After seeing that he actually drank it, Natalie gets him a “fresh” cup.

Leonard answers the phone call with the cop. Asking him what he wanted with him. “You don’t believe a guy with a condition like mine”.

“Ferdy’s bar, come by after, Natalie.” Leonard parks outside and waltzes in to meet Natalie. “Oh, you’re that memory guy”. We learn that Jimmy was her boyfriend. And she wants to test him.

Leonard complains about how nobody believes him. “It’s amazing what a little brain damage can do to you”. He talks about how the wife gave her final test to Sammy, and went into a coma from too many does of insulin. Leonard now realize that you fake recognition.

He gets fact #6, the license plate number tattooed onto himself at Emmy’s tattoo. And Teddy stops by and tells him it’s not safe here and that he should leave town. Leonard slips through the back and finds the “Ferdy’s bar message” in his pocket.

Leonard heads down to the lobby to meet the cop, Officer Gammell. He takes a picture of him and is told to put him down as “Teddy”. He gives him a lead on the culprit, John G.
and sends him off to the abandoned house. Leonard goes there and meets Jimmy, who’s expecting to see Teddy. Leonard assaults him, resulting in Jimmy’s death after he took his clothing. He takes a picture of Jimmy.

He drags him to the basement. He saw Teddy driving in, and asks him for help. And then he hits him. Teddy then explains the “truth” to him, that he already killed the real John G. He then takes Teddy’s key and throws them into the bushes. He takes out the ammo out of the gun. Writes, “Don’t believe his lies”. And wrote down his license plate as tattoo fact #6. He takes Jimmy’s car begins to drive to the tattoo parlor. “We all need mirrors to remind ourselves who we are”.

Subplot

The Sammy Jankis story.
- Leonard investigated Sammy Jankis condition (anterograde amnesia)
- Sammy Jankis remembers everything up to the incident.
- They run some test on Sammy Jankis to see if he could condition himself, but he couldn’t.

Leonard Shelby ends up not covering Sammy Jankis case because Leonard said that Sammy’s condition was mental, not physical.
- Sammy’s wife did not want to face the fact that Sammy could not remember anything so she tested him one last time, which end up costing her life.

Point of View

The movie is mostly in Leonard’s point of view.
- This affects the credibility and what we are shown. We later find Leonard is not credible at all.
- There are many times during the movie when Leonard shows his thought explicitly to the audience.
Parallelism is part of the main structure of the film.

Sammy Jankins and Leonard’s condition

Leonard Shelby has the same condition as Sammy Jankis, but he said that Sammy Jankis was not organized, he had his notes all messed up and that is the difference between Sammy and Leonard. Leonard say that he has his notes all organized.

Motivation

Leonard's motivation is to avenge his wife whom he loved very much. He wants to take the man’s life who took her life away and his will to live away from him. To Leonard, he has lost everything from his wife to his memory.

Theme/Message

Memory is unreliable

Throughout the film, Teddy is actually telling the truth, and Leonard is just lying to himself to be happy.

“Memento” = I lie to myself.

Important Scenes

Important Scene

When Leonard Shelby gets his head smashed into the mirror. This scene is important because it shows the audience how Leonard got his condition.

Important Scene

Another scene that is important is the scene where the scene switches from black to white. It is when Lenny was killing Jimmy Grant.

Important Scene

The last scene is pretty hard to notice, but it is when Sammy Jankis was in the hospital and after a person pass by him, we
see that it was Leonard sitting in his place.

**Important Quotes**

- Teddy: You don't know who you are anymore.
- Leonard Shelby: Of course I do. I'm Leonard Shelby. I'm from San Francisco.
- Teddy: No, that's who you were. Maybe it's time you started investigating yourself.
- Leonard: “You don’t believe a guy with a condition like mine.”
- Leonard: “We all need mirrors to remind ourselves who we are.”

**Is It A Good Story?**

- Unified Plot – Although the plot is complex, it is very much unified, and there are very few loopholes.
- Credible/Plausible? – The movie is credible because many people live today with Leonard's condition, so similar events are plausible.
- Internal Truths of Human Nature – Humans can be very impulsive and can do rather questionable things as a result.
- Suspenseful Action – Suspense is created throughout the movie in that the movie is going in reverse order, so the audience is constantly trying to see what will happen next in order to understand the movie.
- Handles Emotional Material with Restraint – Deaths in the movie are “watered down” just as in the first scene where the camera focuses on Teddy’s glasses rather than his head to make the scene less grotesque. Additionally, when Leonard kills Jimmy Grant, he chokes him and doesn’t kill him in a violent way, so this shows a level of restraint with emotional material.