



Music

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SLPA 1555 | Section 01 | Professor Wendy Georgan



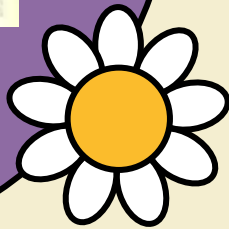
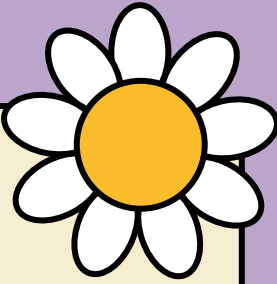
01

Background/ Synopsis



Background

- Released in 2021
- Written and directed by Sia
- Musical Drama
- Features neurotypical actress Maddie Ziegler – Sia's Muse



Accolades

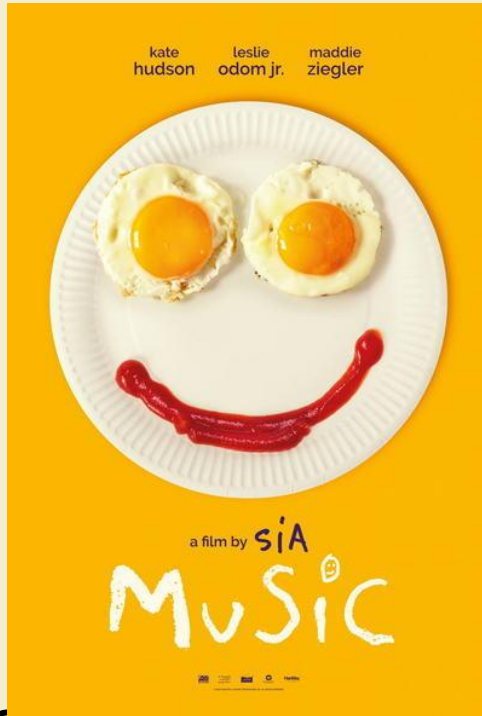
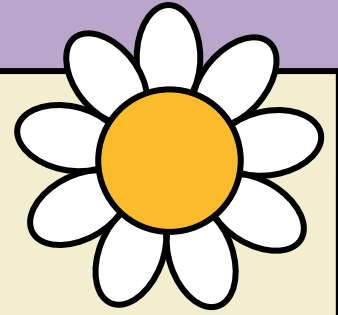
Award ⇅	Date of ceremony ⇅	Category ⇅	Recipient(s) ⇅	Result ⇅
Golden Globe Awards	February 28, 2021	Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	<i>Music</i>	Nominated
		Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	Kate Hudson	Nominated
Golden Raspberry Awards	April 24, 2021	Worst Picture	Sia and Vincent Landay	Nominated
		Worst Director	Sia	Won
		Worst Actress	Kate Hudson	Won
		Worst Supporting Actress	Maddie Ziegler	Won

Synopsis

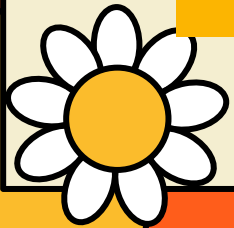
- After the sudden death of their grandmother, newly sober Zu must take guardianship of her autistic younger sister, Music
- Zu immediately moves into Music's apartment and must learn how to care for her sister
- With the help of their neighbor Ebo, Zu gradually forms a connection with Music and the three form a unified group



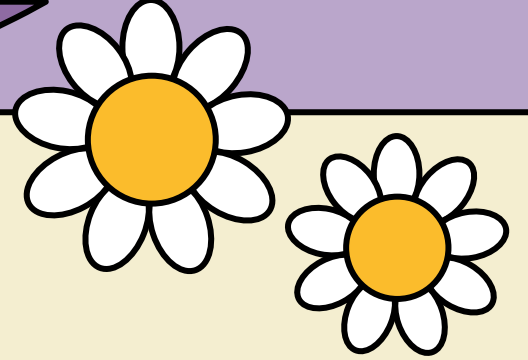
Synopsis



- Zu secretly continues to deal drugs with her friend Rudy
- One day, when the sisters go for a walk, Music gets stung by a bee. They rush to the hospital, and Zu leaves the drugs she must sell in the park
- Zu cannot pay for Music's treatment, and soon suffers a relapse
- Zu loudly knocks on Ebo's door while drunk, causing another neighbor to come out
- The neighbor calls the police, and Zu is on probation



Synopsis

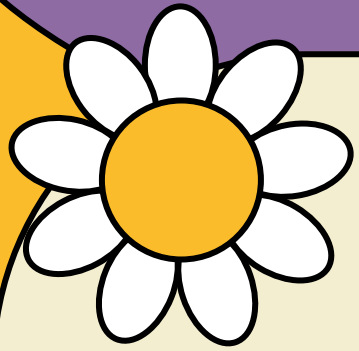


- After time has passed, Zu brings Music to an adoption center, but decides not to leave her there
- Zu attends Ebo's brother's wedding, and the three happily unite
- Music gets a support dog from her friend who passed away
- Zu, Ebo, and Music begin a life together as a family



02

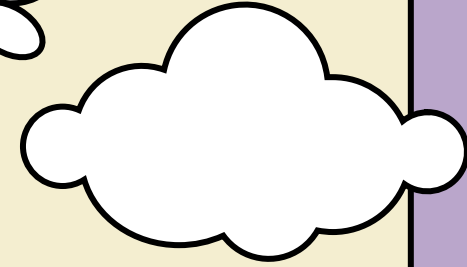
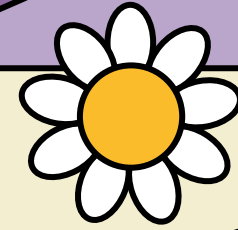
Description of Autism



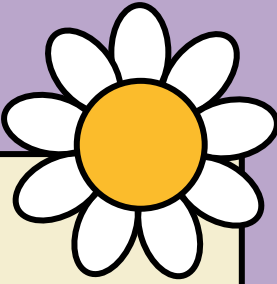
Definition

- What is ASD?
- Symptoms
- Development
 - Early Stage
 - Adolescence & Adults
- Treatment

Nonverbal Autism



- Background
 - Definition
 - Fact
- Symptoms
 - not spontaneously initiating or responding to conversation
 - using only a few words or not speaking in complete sentences
 - using sounds as opposed to words to communicate – although, in some cases, parents and caregivers may understand the meaning of these sounds
 - not relying on spoken language as a primary form of communication

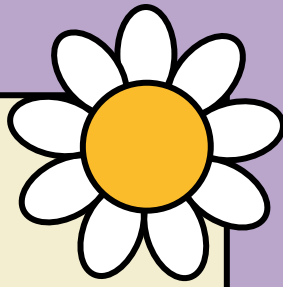


Treatment

- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- Treatment and education of autistic and related communication handicapped children (TEACCH)
- Other options

03

Effectiveness and Movie Review

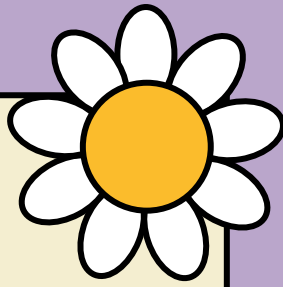


Scene 1

Music's relationship with her grandmother

Timestamp: 03:51-05:10

- Right off the bat, there is a clear misrepresentation of autism in the way Music behaves when she interacts with her grandmother
- In this scene, she wakes up and proceeds to the dining table for breakfast. This is the first major interaction that the audience sees Music having with another character
- As her grandmother is serving her breakfast and braiding her hair, she tells her stories and makes conversation
- However, Music's behavior is depicted as severely exaggerated and stereotypical. Some stereotypes that Music exhibits are **repetitive speech and motor movement, restricted interests, and general communication difficulties**



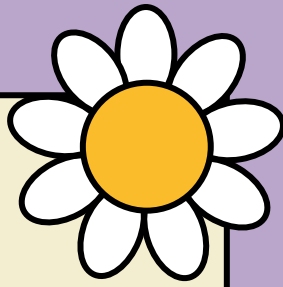
Scene 2

Prone restraint performed on Music to “calm her down”

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- One of the most controversial scenes of the movie – first occurrence
- Ebo, Music’s neighbor, restrains her face down on the floor after she becomes agitated
- Prone restraint is a **harmful, inappropriate, and ineffective** method of managing the behavior of an individual with autism
- Prone restraint can be very dangerous as it causes **suffocation and death**
- Individuals with autism may also experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to prone restraint
- Unrealistic, inaccurate, and, once again, highly exaggerated portrayal



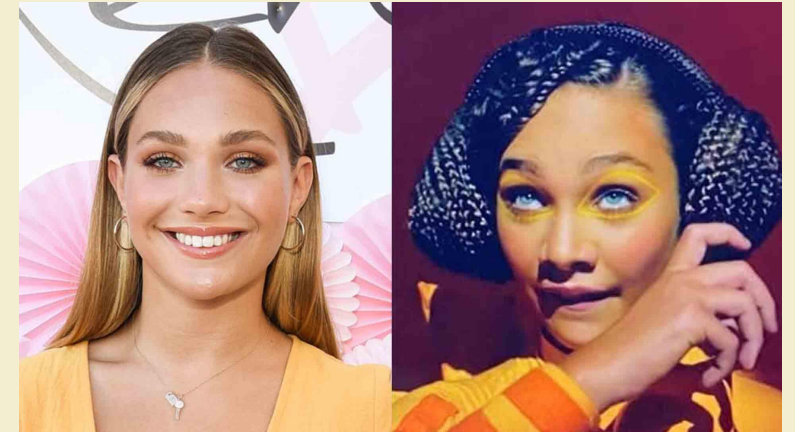


Scene 3

Opening dance scene

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- Music exhibits exaggerated facial expressions throughout the dance
 - Stereotypical; does not accurately represent individuals with autism and their diverse experiences
- Music's outfit is bright and colorful, which has been criticized for presenting a narrow and limited view of autism
- Maddie Ziegler and Sia were heavily criticized for the portrayal of blackface in the opening shot of the dance



Critical Reviews

New York Times

A Woefully Misguided View of Disability

- Neither Ziegler nor Sia are autistic, and their collaboration on this film reduces disability to mannerisms that look indistinguishable from mockery.
- This is a bizarre movie, one that parades confused ideas about care, fantasy and disability with a pride that reads as vanity. It is audacious, in the sense that making it certainly took some audacity.

Rolling Stone

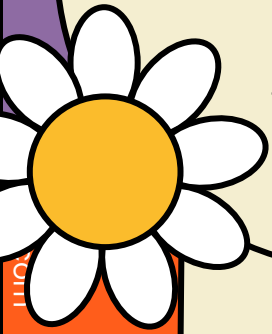
What the Hell Is Going On in Music?

- Out of context, these pieces might seem bold, inventive, exhilarating....But they are indeed shackled to a narrative, one that turns its heroine into a sort of neurodivergent equivalent of a Magical Negro, and therein lies the tragedy.
- Ziegler herself seems to treat the condition as an extension of her dancing, so that her physical tics and facial expressions come off as choreographed physical mimicry rather than a characteristic of autism, or a person.

Variety

Sia's Directorial Debut Waffles Between Romance, Autism Dreams and Florid Music Video

- There are so few disabled characters on screen that it feels wrong to say that "Music" is at its best when the title character is moved further to the margins...You might even find yourself wondering if the movie would work just fine if the music *and* Music had both gotten cut at the screenplay stage.
- Hudson deserves her own movie, and as "Music" increasingly turns out not to have any idea what do with its autistic character, (she) almost gets one.



Reviews from the Autistic Community

Geeks

An actually autistic person reviews Sia's movie *Music*

- Instead of watching an autistic girl trying to find her place in this neurotypical world, we are instead subjected to the story of a drug addict who wants to get rid of her autistic sister and make money to fulfill her selfish needs.
- *Music*, an autistic white girl, was actually based on an autistic black man who was a fan of Sia's work.
- Is this really what neurotypicals think goes on in an autistic person's mind?
- Not only are the music videos totally unwatchable, but the film as a whole dehumanizes us. Maddie's performance is painfully offensive....
- ***It was like this film was trying to shame us for not being normal enough, and I want everyone responsible for this project to know how broken they made us feel.***

Slate

Sia Asked Critics to Watch Her Controversial New Movie Before Judging It, so I Did

- I was expecting to be offended. Instead, I felt intense secondhand embarrassment, because *Music* is 107 minutes of unadulterated, unintentional cringe.
- (Sia) discussed how uncomfortable Maddie Ziegler felt playing *Music* ...“She cried on the first day of rehearsals and she was really scared. She just said, ‘I don’t want anyone to think I’m making fun of them.’”
- It doesn’t appear that Zu needs to do all that much for *Music*, beyond cooking breakfast and braiding her hair. *Music* dresses herself, brushes her own teeth, and walks from her home to the local library and back unattended every day.
- *Music*’s autism is unrecognizably sanitized, her life miraculously, dazzlingly easy.

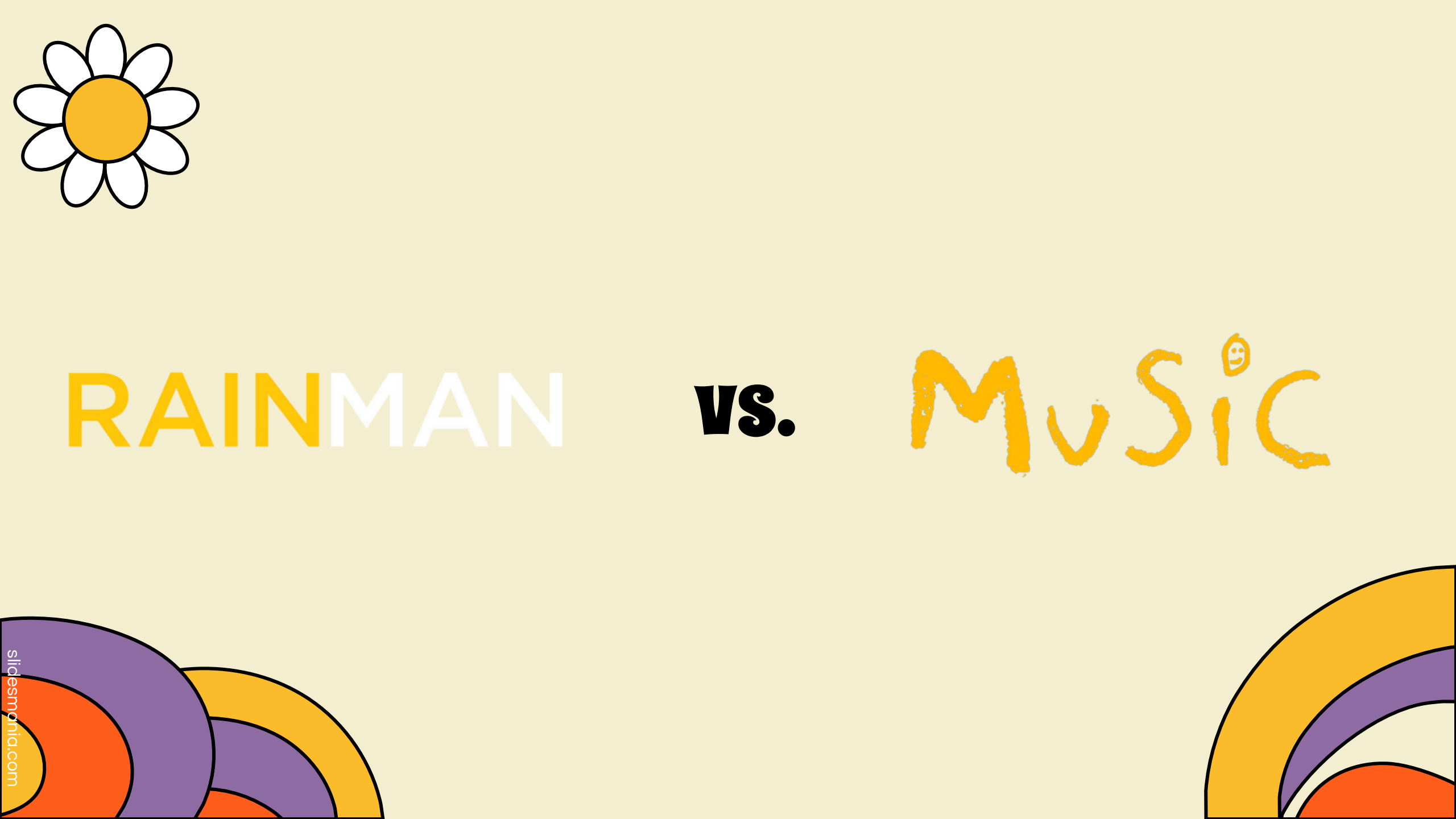
Controversies



- Prone restraints are featured in two scenes as a method to calm Music during when she's overstimulated
 - **Prone restraints are not only illegal in thirty states,** which includes the state of New York that the movie may or may not be set in, but **they are also extremely dangerous and have killed autistic people.**
- When outrage over the movie's casting of neurotypical actors began to spread in November, Sia tweeted, "**Fuckity fuck why don't you watch my film before you judge it?**"
 - She further tweeted "**I cast thirteen neurotypical people, three trans folk, and not as f*cking prostitutes or drug addicts but as doctors, nurses and singers. F*cking sad nobody's even seen the dang movie. My heart has always been in the right place.**"
 - When someone clapped back at her, stating they and several other actors had expressed interest in being cast, she wrote, "**Maybe you're just a bad actor.**" Sia added, "**I actually tried working with a beautiful young girl non verbal on the spectrum and she found it unpleasant and stressful. So that's why I cast Maddie.**"
- Though most autistic organizations condemned the film, there were a few that supported it
 - One supportive organization was NCSA, the **National Council on Severe Autism.**
 - It was founded by a handful of parents hostile to the idea of neurodiversity, a branch of the disability rights movement centered on the idea that cognitive disabilities like autism are normal parts of the human experience—essentially, it's the idea that autistic people are different than our typical peers, not less.
 - The parents of NCSA take issue with neurodiversity because **they see their children's autism as an affliction.**
 - NSCA chose to praise the movie's decision to portray "severe autism" based purely on the fact that some autistic adults online were offended by the premise and movie trailer.

04

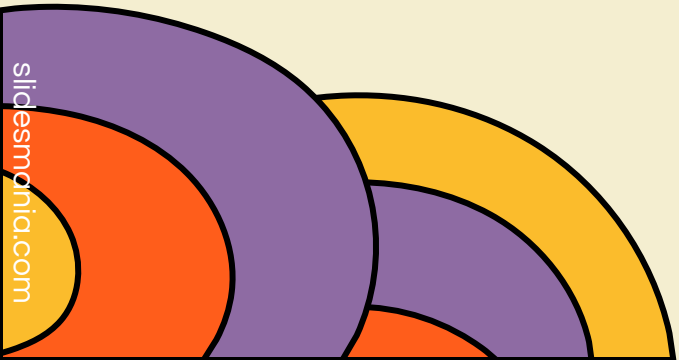
Activity

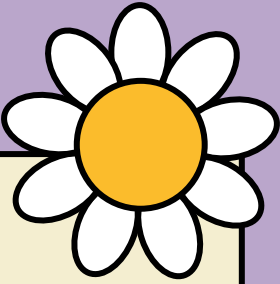


RAINMAN

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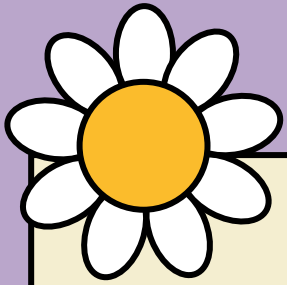
Music





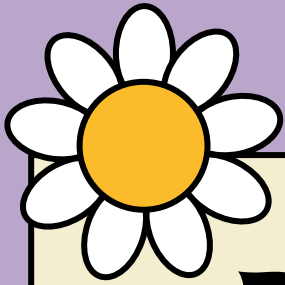
RAINMAN





Music

Time Stamp 19:45-21:20



Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_autism#References

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/non-verbal-autism>

<https://psychcentral.com/autism/autism-nonverbal#support-options>