

Ozark

Season 3

Editor's 6 Core Questions Analysis



1. What's the Genre?

Global Genre: Thriller

Internal Genres: Morality, Worldview

2. What are the Obligatory Scenes & Conventions of the Global Genre?

Thriller (Global) obligatory scenes

- **Inciting Crime indicative of a master Villain** - Navarro cartel waterboarding Helen, shows how bad the cartel is. It shows what they will do to their own. The general violence of their rivals the Laguanas gives us an idea of the ruthlessness of these gangs.
- **There must be a victim and a perpetrator:** In this season, Ben is the victim and the Cartel remains the perpetrator with Helen as the main perpetrator as she pushes Wendy to kill her own brother
- **A clear "point of no return," the moment when the protagonist knows they can never go back to the way things used to be** - Wendy has been trying to get on an equal footing with Navarro and tells him off for gelding the horse. His response made her realise she has made a mistake trying to expand the empire and trying to befriend him
- **Speech in praise of the villain** - this is laced throughout. We see the far reach of the cartel and what they are willing to do, they even know that Marty is bugging Wendy's phone
- **The protagonist's initial strategy to outmanoeuvre the antagonist fail** - Marty's attempt to spy on Wendy and Navarro fails dramatically he is
- **The protagonist discovers and understands the antagonist's external object of desire, what the antagonist wants** - During the kidnapping, Marty and Wendy understand the ruthlessness desire to win, to survive against the Laguanas. While they knew this before, it's even more apparent.
- **Hero becomes the victim** - Maya calls and tells Marty about the signed confession Helen has forged
- **Hero at the Mercy of the villain** - Marty and Wendy are at Navarro's mercy in Mexico, and just before they leave they realise that Helen has been playing them and is possibly going to make a move against them

- **False ending** - When they land in Mexico there is a tense welcome and then Helen is killed right in front of them. Navarro greets them, hugs them and tells them that it's time for new beginnings.

What are the Conventions of the Thriller

- **MacGuffin** - Navarro wants safe, clean money for his family in case he dies
- **The inciting crime must contain a clue about the villain's MacGuffin** - The villain's Macguffin is power, there is a loose link between Helen being waterboarded and his desire for utter control (and his fear for his life)
- **Red Herrings** - Helen with signed confession, FBI is the biggest danger/ biggest friend (Maya); Helen as a shapeshifter;
- **The antagonist makes their actions personal to the protagonist: The antagonist must victimize the protagonist in order to get their MacGuffin** - Navarro kidnaps and tortures Marty to get him to prove that he's essential to the operation. He's also testing Marty
- **There is a limited time for the protagonist to act (Clock)** - no time to downgrade the signed confession as they get closer to Mexico; limited time to ingratiate themselves with Navarro after Ben tells Erin what Helen does
- **The atmosphere is portrayed in considerable detail, becoming alive and immediately threatening** - this is ever-present in Ozark, we never know who we and Marty & Wendy can trust
- **The protagonist actively investigates and chases clues** - The Bryds are always trying to fix something - whether it's the Big Muddy, Shutting Ben up, moving against Darlene, fighting Frank Jr
- **Lives depend on the protagonist defeating of the antagonist** - The antagonist is Helen and the Cartel. They cannot be defeated but by appeasing them, Wendy can save her family
- **The story contains elements of suspense** - yes, we don't always know what's going to happen. The Lagunas attack on the men on US soil, Marty's kidnap and the murder of Helen are shocking surprises
- **The antagonist can't be reasoned with.** They are intent on annihilation, devastation, or power at the expense of others.
- **There is a speech in Praise of the Villain:** The cunning or brilliance of the antagonist must be praised by one or more characters or shown in a revelation.
- **The protagonist is the final victim** - in the final scene Marty and Wendy are the final victims but escape death
- **There is a clear threat of escalating danger, even if the danger is limited to the psyche of the protagonist, in a cause and effect chain of events** - Wendy's betrayal of Ben, his death and the after-effects show escalating danger, both for the family and then for Wendy
- **There is at least one shapeshifter or hypocrite character capable of directly impacting the protagonist** - Helen turns out to be a shapeshifter

Morality (Internal Genre)

The protagonist faces an All Is Lost Moment and either discovers their inner moral code or chooses the immoral path. Whether or not the protagonist ultimately accepts the call depends upon the subgenre, the kind of story you want to tell.

In the last Season Marty faced constant all-is-lost moments - does he kill Mason?

In this season Wendy faces an all-is-lost moment, does she allow Ben to be killed by Helen

To illustrate the presence of morality in this story, look at the showdown. What's the showdown for Morality?

- **The Showdown - protagonist actively sacrifices self in service of an individual, a group, or humanity (positive) or consciously chooses to remain selfish (negative)**

Wendy sacrifices her brother for the family.

- **The protagonist faces literal or metaphorical death and either loses the battle but gains self-respect, meaning, and peace; or wins the battle but loses those things a great sacrifice. In all internal genres, there is a paradoxical ending.**

Wendy wins the battle to stay in Navarro's favour but has lost her chance to find peace.

3. What's the point of view?

3rd Person - Mostly Wendy and Marty's family, some from the bad guys POV.

4. What are the objects of desire?

- Marty and Wendy want to survive and need to help Navarro find a legitimate enterprise for this money. They need to keep Ben out of trouble
- Most characters in this series want money and power. Navarro wants to keep his dominant power but also secure his children's legacy. Darlene wants to regain power and get revenge on the Byrds. Wendy wants to expand her power (which she says she does for the family)

5. What is the controlling idea/theme?

It's a combination of Thriller and Morality. Lives are lost when the hero gambles with power. Wendy tries to expand the enterprise, Marty tries to turn an FBI agent. Marty and his family survive but at a huge cost. They lose Ben, Marty nearly loses his life

For viewers, it's an exciting thriller but the community has suffered loss and darkness has taken hold, the cartel's power is strong and dangerous.

6. What is the beginning, middle and end payoff of the story?

Beginning Hook:

The Navarro cartel is under attack from the Lagunas Cartel. Wendy makes Navarro an offer to buy the Big Muddy and provide a legitimate business for his legacy, isolating Marty who tries to sabotage the deal.

Middle Build

Marty is kidnapped but escapes when he proves that he is an essential part of the operation. Meanwhile, Darlene rising up against the Bryds with Wyatt by her side. Wendy chastises Navarro for interfering with her stud farm and feels Navarro chilling response. She realises he is not her friend.

End Payoff

With Navarro's permission, Helen starts to make deadly moves against the Bryds. She kills their therapist Sue and forges Marty's confession for the FBI. Navarro orders the Bryds to Mexico, and before the call, Marty receives a warning from the FBI. Faced with a crisis he makes a split-second decision to continue. On arrival, Helen is shot dead by the cartel and Navarro embraces them in their now bloody clothes.