Chapter 3 Assignment 3-1

If I were to pick one film out of the twelve that shares similarities in story or tone or what have you, the I would choose Blood In Blood Out. The reason why is because it’s a crime genre and how it has a story involving street and prison gangs and the type of people all tied up in the entire situation of either being related to someone in one or being a person that experiences that life first hand. Considering the film is unconventional, I will do my best to break down the major characters’ archetypes in the story using the book *The Writer's Journey* as a guide.

In Blood In Blood Out, the character that would fall under the archetype of a ‘Hero’ would be Miklo Velka. He is a half white-half Mexican 17 year old at the beginning of the film whose journey takes him through a series of experiences with street and prison gangs; he feels left out from both sides because of his mixed ethnicity and is willing to do anything prove himself to his Chicano (Mexican-American) cousins and acquaintances by any means even if it means taking a life to join. He is not a hero in the traditional sense considering as the story progresses, he ends up becoming pretty much an evil person who is willing to take lives through lies and deceit in order to take hold of power over the prison gang he joined.

The ‘Mentor’ character in this story is Montana Segura. He is the leader of the Chicano prison gang named La Onda in San Quentin State Prison. Montana agrees to let Miklo in their gang under the condition that he kill a member of the Aryan Vanguard, a White Supremacist gang in the same prison; blood in, blood out. After he succeeds, Montana starts to teach Miklo how to budget the money they obtain through their illegal activities in their prison in order for them to live comfortably, pay off the right guards, and also the money regarding the business deals between them, the AVers as they refer to them, and the BGA (Black Guerilla Army) which consist of Black Americans. He also stresses to Miklo to get his parole and make something out of himself outside of prison because he never wants to see him in San Quentin again; he becomes sort of a father figure to him. Unfortunately, Miklo goes back to SQ with a prosthetic leg; Montana places him as someone working in the library because he can’t be a ‘soldier’ anymore with that leg. He also let’s Miklo be the one to head La Onda in his absence when he temporarily transfers to another jail in order to see his 14 year old daughter. Montana more or less makes Miklo his right hand man. Oh, what a mentor.  
 The Herald isn’t a person as the new challenge in this film for Miklo but rather the outside world after spending around 6 years in prison. This is about midway in the film. Miklo had it good in prison and was living along with his fellow gang members like kings compared to the average inmate so what’s next? He comes out thinking one of top guys in La Onda, Popeye, who had gotten parole before him had an apartment just for him. However, he comes to find out from Popeye that the entire building is filled up and will have to live with him and about 3 other guys. Popeye manages to get him a ‘good job’ as he states at what seems to be a tire factory. He struggles to sleep, dislikes his job and the fact that he doesn’t make a lot of money and even deals with a boss that steals his money to pay back debts. He’s placed in a situation where going back to his previous lifestyle seems better than where he is now.

The Shadow is in fact La Onda which includes Miklo, the Aryan Vanguard, & The Black Guerilla Army; in essence, the prison gangs themselves. The AVers and the BGA do serve as proper antagonists to La Onda, but these are not good people nor are they heroes. They are their own enemies and represent a side of evil in humanity even though you can understand somewhat where Miklo or Montana is coming from. La Onda was formed to go against a system they felt was a White system & a system interested in only money in which they felt a direct effect from it.

The final archetype part if we use *The Writer's Journey* as a guide would be the Ally and the character that encompasses that in the film is Cruz who is Miklo cousin but not by blood for most of the first half and Magic, his fellow La Onda partner, during the 2nd half. For most of the beginning, Cruz is the one protecting Miklo from Paco who is his cousin and Cruz’s step brother; Paco gives remarks and makes jokes about him being white or is being a little hard on him. Cruz was also the one who tattooed their Vatos Locos gang logo on Miklo’s hand. He also killed, accidently, the person that broke Cruz’s back earlier in the story and probably feels he has an underlying debt to him. Once Miklo got out of jail, Cruz was the person who was with him after getting out and even offers his place instead of the apartment that he was going to stay at. They're much more closer than Paco was to Miklo. When Miklo decides to enter heist, Cruz implores him to ‘stay straight’ which he goes against. Even though he was involved in a crime that involved the killing of people, Cruz feels disgust at Paco because he shot Miklo’s leg; this led to him getting the prosthetic I've mentioned in a previous paragraph. Even by the end of the film, Cruz still accepts Miklo as his family even though he’s committed horrific crimes. Next, I’ll discuss Magic and what makes him the ally in the 2nd half.

Magic is more of an ally to Miklo because he actively helps him with his goals in San Question during the 2nd half of the film. The drug business is booming in the U.S and, as we see, prison as well. Montana doesn’t feel La Onda should get into it because it’s too dangerous, it can ‘destroy them’ as he says, and because people in that business don’t last very long. Carlos, a La Onda member, leaves them in order to make money with the AVers and Miklo felt he was right in that whoever controls the drugs will then control the prison. He didn’t feel it was smart to go with the AVers. Magic is the person that Miklo asks to stand with him on this and attempt to somehow convince Montana into entering the drug game. He’s also the one that assists Miklo in the secret assassination of Montana since he felt Montana wouldn't come through or do what was necessary for La Onda to obtain power and survive; they falsify evidence to make it seem like it was BGA which leads to La Onda and them having a meeting with them concluding that it was really the AVers and they decide to murder them in half a year. Nobody except Miklo and Magic know the truth behind the death of Montana. Magic also tells Miklo he was right as well about what they needed to do no matter how they felt about Montana and accepts him as his leader.

It’s not a conventional story nor does it follow the conventional archetypes, but it is possible to categorize the characters in Blood In Blood Out. However, there is nothing wrong with this. It’s all about creativity and breaking rules to create one’s own and make them work. This story is also loosely based on actual history about the 3 main prison gangs rising in power during the 70s and 80s the movie portrays; so, it's appropriate knowing how real life can be as opposed to fiction; it's stranger than fiction.