

A Little Game

US TV : 1971 : dir. Paul Wendkos : Universal : 73 min
 prod: George Eckstein : scr: Carol Sobieski : dir.ph.:
[Mark Gruner](#); [Christopher Shea](#)
 Ed Nelson; Diane Baker; Katie Jurado; Howard Duff

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3746a	1.5	3	0	449	-	-	-	-	-	No	<i>unseen</i>

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"A man suspects that his 11-year old stepson may be homicidal. Quite a chilling little melodrama. Wr: Carol Sobieski, from a novel by Fielden Farrington * "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Eleven-year old son may be responsible for a murder, but his father thinks on the contrary he'll be the next victim. Unusual idea made ludicrous by an over-explanatory script and lacklustre direction. **Average** "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
 review:

"A paranoid man wonders whether his 11-year old stepson is a murderer, and hires a private detective to find out. ***1/2** "

[**no listing** in "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "The Universal Story", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Nothing else is known of Mark Gruner, who presumably plays the 11-year old, although he isn't even mentioned among the cast given by these sources. Christopher Shea, elder brother of Eric, featured in TV series such as "**Shane**" and "**My World and Welcome To It**", as well as the films "**YOURS, MINE AND OURS**" (68) and "**SMITH!**" (69).

Well, it's "**THE BAD SEED**" all over again, isn't it, which idea was reworked for "**ALICE, SWEET ALICE**" (77) and "**THE GOOD SON**" (93, Macaulay Culkin as Patty McCormack, but without the pretty frock) to name but two. The "unusual" idea of psychotic (and/or demonic) kids was worked to death in the 1970s, as a matter of fact, producing such titles as "**BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW**" (70), "**NIGHT HAIR CHILD**" (71), "**SOMETHING EVIL**" (71), "**UNMAN, WITTERING AND ZIGO**" (71), "**PEOPLE TOYS**" (74), "**LOS NIÑOS**" (Spain, 76), "**THE OMEN**" (76), "**THE SAILOR WHO FELL FROM GRACE WITH THE SEA**" (76), "**DAMIEN, OMEN II**" (78) and "**BLOODY BIRTHDAY**" ('80). That's how unusual it was. It's often supposed that "**THE EXORCIST**" (73), a box office sensation in its day, first broke the tabu on

portraying children as quintessentially evil, but it merely brought the sexual explicitness of the seventies to bear on a well-worked theme.

See subject index under **THE CHILD AS EVIL IN OUR MIDST** and **STEPMOTHERS / STEPFATHERS**.