

Entertainment

This Pelican really soars to entertainment heights

By Patrick Freestone
Special to HHTW

While on vacation this past summer, a friend loaned me a copy of The Pelican Brief by John Grisham. Having heard great things about the best-selling novel, I plunged in headfirst.

Over the next day and-a-

half I became quite disappointed. I found Grisham's writing style to be convoluted, simple and above all, dull.

Later, upon learning The Pelican Brief was about to be brought to movie screens, I cringed in pain. I remembered what a terrible mess The Firm (another

Movie Review

Grisham novel) was on the silver screen.

After seeing the film, The Pelican Brief, all I've got to say is "Thank God John Grisham doesn't direct films".

The Pelican Brief, as presented by Alan J. Pakula, is

a sharp, taut and riveting suspense film.

Pakula, who directed such notable suspense films as "All the President's Men", "The Parallax View" and "Presumed Innocent" is right at home in this tale of white collar corruption in

Washington, D.C.

Julie Roberts stars as Darby Shaw, a Tulane law student who, after hearing about the murder of two Supreme Court Justices, writes a paper called "The Pelican Brief".

In the Brief, she outlines a possible connection between the murders and who may have committed the crime. Needless to say, the Brief falls into the wrong hands, placing Shaw in danger.

"The Pelican Brief" marks Roberts' return to movie screens after a two-year hiatus. She nary misses a beat as the young, innocent law student plunged into a game of deceit and murder.

Denzel Washington brings an authenticity to the role of Gray Grantham, a Washington Herald reporter who helps Roberts unearth the truth.

The original story by Grisham is flimsy to say the least. However, Pakula with his fluid camera and confident direction doesn't allow the material to completely sink back to its pop-literature roofs.

The comparisons between "The Pelican Brief" and "The Firm" are unavoidable.

What makes "The Pelican Brief" the superior film? Simple, there is an earnestness and sincerity in the performances by Roberts, Washington and Pakula that was not present in "The Firm". That makes "The Pelican Brief" a successful suspense thriller and worthy of your time and money.

Rating: A solid ★★★ (out of 4 stars)

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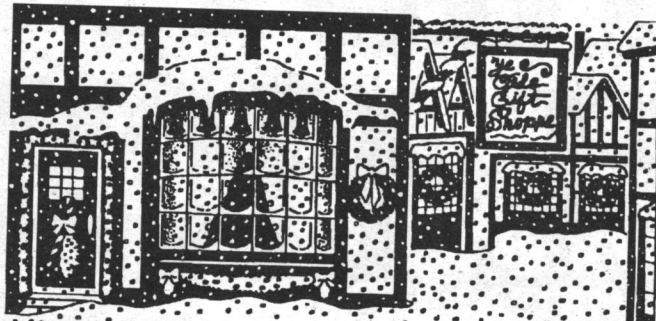
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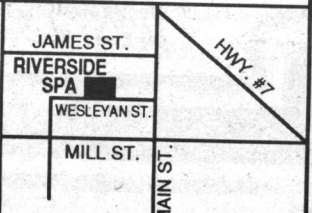
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