

# Complex drama saved by key performances

NEW YORK (CNS) — Harrison Ford portrays a man whose actions entrap him in a web of deceit and disloyalty in "Presumed Innocent" (Warner Bros.).

As the film opens, Rusty Sabich (Ford) and his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) are struggling to sustain their marriage, which was nearly shattered by his affair with Carolyn (Greta Scacchi), an attorney on his staff. Rusty's boss (Brian Dennehy) assigns a rape-murder investigation to him — the victim is Carolyn and Rusty says nothing about his past intimacy with her. Ignoring this conflict of interest he also asks the detective assigned to the case (John Spencer) to overlook the record of phone calls he has made to Carolyn's home.

Shortly thereafter, mounting physical evidence leads to his arrest, and his boss, who is infuriated by Rusty's deception, agrees to testify against him.

The trial unravels layer after layer of complicity and corruption as all concerned exploit the system to achieve their ends.

Director Alan J. Pakula has turned this best-selling novel into a darkly absorbing courtroom drama that commands close attention to follow the increasingly intricate plot.

The sober visual design of the film is as tightly controlled as the simmering Rusty, who grimly confronts the likely loss of his career, family and freedom.

For a story that hinges on his obsession with Carolyn, however, their affair — shown in flashbacks — seems strangely passionless. Her calculating motives are clear but his are muddy. Given his lifelong righteous standards, his risking all for what he swears was a loveless relationship is unconvincing. They seem more in sync as professional colleagues, as in the flashback of their trial scene together where a little boy who was abused by his mother is gently led to testify against her. This



Lawyer Alejandro Stern (Raul Julia) confers with his client, Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), and his wife, Barbara (Bonnie Bedelia), during the trial in which Sabich is accused of murdering a colleague with whom he was having an extra-marital affair in the thriller, 'Presumed Innocent.'

interlude is especially well-acted by Ford, Scacchi and the pitiful, doe-eyed child (Joseph Mazello).

In this gritty drama of ever-shifting loyalties, the subtle performances play a key part in sustaining interest in the labyrinthine plot. Dennehy's soured politician delivers unexpected menace while Raul Julia as Rusty's lawyer is equal parts sleek and smug.

Other notable cast members include Paul

Winfield, who in his pivotal role as Judge Lytle brings relish and a sly glee to the tense trial proceedings, and Bedelia as the wronged wife, still pained by the sight of her husband's tears as he studies Carolyn's death photos.

The film's ambivalent perspective regarding right and wrong is disturbing. By the conclusion most of the protagonists have successfully manipulated the justice system in one way or another, and it is too easy for the viewer to simply blame the system, or

worse admire those who were so devilishly clever in subverting it. "Presumed Innocent" is better seen as a character study than an assessment of our courts.

Due to ambiguous treatment of the theme, rough language and scenes of an adulterous relationship, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

## Disney classic provides fun for the whole family

Freely adapted from Rudyard Kipling's stories, "The Jungle Book" (Disney) is a re-release of Disney's 1967 animated feature detailing the adventures of Mowgli, who had been found as a baby and raised by a pack of wolves in the jungles of India.

When the boy turns 10, the wolf elders decide that Mowgli must return to a village with people since a fierce man-eating tiger has come back to the jungle and it is no longer safe for their little "mancub."

Sadly, Mowgli sets out on his journey with Bagheera, his loyal panther guardian. En route they are beset by beasts who range from ferocious to fun-loving, including a hungry python and a herd of blimpish elephants.

Mowgli is subsequently kidnapped by a jealous ape king, befriended by vultures and teams up with a carefree bear named Baloo before he makes his big decision about whether to stay with his beloved animals or join the human community.

Director Wolfgang Reitherman's animated feature owes much to excellent vocal characterizations: Phil Harris as the lovable Baloo, George Sanders as the suavely menacing tiger, Sebastian Cabot as the steadfast panther, Sterling Holloway as the highly mischievous python, and Louis Prima as the swinging king of the apes.

The story leisurely meanders along, sprinkled every so often with sprightly tunes from an assortment of appealing animals. The jazzy scene with the cartwheeling apes is the most memorable while

the four vultures' vocals sound suspiciously like a take-off of the 1960s most famous Liverpoolian rock quartet.

The animation often has a flat look to it which, by comparison, makes the occasional shots of moonlight glimmering on water or gently swaying jungle flora and fauna stand out.

Genial humor abounds with many a pratfall to delight the younger set and some imaginative use of animal anatomy, such as the python's clever coils and sudden staircase shape.

Though geared to young children, the movie has the potential to amuse the entire household.

The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is G — general audiences.



Whenever Mowgli (left) needs a helping hand there's always a jungle friend around to lend a paw, including a bear named Baloo in Walt Disney's classic animated adventure 'The Jungle Book.'

## Fans of series will appreciate 'Jetsons: The Movie'

George gets promoted and the family takes off for a new home in outer space in "Jetsons: The Movie" (Universal).

Mr. Spacely, George's boss, decides to reward Jetson's lazy ways by promoting him to vice president and shipping him off to his malfunctioning sprocket factory far from Earth. The Jetson family — wife Jane, teen-daughter Judy, spunky son Elroy, and of course Astro the dog and Rosie the robot — are at first dismayed but soon delight in the many goofy gadgets to be found at their new destination.

Elroy starts making new furry friends while Jane and Judy head straight for the shopping mall. George, meanwhile, discovers he is the only employee at the factory, which is constantly being sabotaged.

When the Jetsons find out why, they end up defending the saboteurs and teaching mean Mr. Spacely a lasting lesson.

Fans of the TV series will find the producing-directing team of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera has faithfully preserved the upbeat personalities of the gadget-crazy Jetsons. A few of the wacky inventions and sight gags are fun to watch.

Some new additions to accommodate the feature film length, however, are not as successful. Two very differing animation styles — the characteristically flat Jetsons look and the more dimensional appearance of computer animation — are married, but not very happily.

The half-dozen musical interludes sung by pop stars Tiffany and Shane add little to

the story and seem to exist mostly as fillers. One in particular is a complete departure from the visual design of the cartoon and looks like it was created specifically for MTV.

The characterizations of Jane and Judy are somewhat strange. Considering it's set in the late 21st century, it is disconcerting that the two characters are very dependent on male approval and seem absorbed solely in shopping and housekeeping.

On the whole though, the movie is cute and may provide some harmless fun for the little ones.

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