

Latest Grisham Novel Has a Campy Twist

By Matthew McKeown

Capital Times Editor

The Brethren, the eleventh novel by John Grisham, is a campy attempt to liven up the usual lawyer/crime drama fare Grisham writes.

The book has two plots that intertwine as the story develops. The first plot involves three former judges, known as the Brethren, who are all in federal

prison for different reasons.

They devise a plan to ensure their financial security once their prison terms are over. With the help of a pathetic crooked lawyer, the Brethren place an ad in a gay magazine stating they are a young man in his 20s looking to correspond with older men.

The idea is to find men who have money and a reason to hide their sexual orientation and blackmail them into giving the Brethren money.

The plan works and the Brethren, with the help of their lawyer, extort hundreds of thousands of dollars from their victims and hide the money in an off-shore bank account.

The other plot involves the director of the CIA who wants to rig the upcoming presidential election.

He has carefully searched for a candidate who will show potential voters that there is a

need for a strong military defense.

He selects Aaron Lake, a relatively unknown U.S. representative with a clean past, to be that nominee.

When the CIA director tells Lake that he can guarantee the election if Lake uses the defense issue as his selling point, Lake agrees and runs for president.

The two plots become one when the Brethren learn that one of their pen pals is none other than Aaron Lake.

Lake, using a pseudonym, has been writing to who he believes is Ricky, a helpless drug addict in a Florida rehab facility.

The Brethren ultimately discover Lake's identity and attempt to blackmail him. Their attempts are intercepted by the CIA, however, so that the CIA can protect their hand-picked candidate.

The story culminates in a complicated plan that will ensure the Brethren will not be able to expose Lake's sexual orientation. The CIA gets their president and the Brethren get a reduced prison sentence and a lot of money.

For fans of Grisham novels, the plot is familiar territory. The protagonist gets himself caught up in some scheme that he has to get himself out of, often with clandestine government officials involved in some way.

The Brethren offers a similar theme but Grisham injects a certain amount of campiness with his descriptions of the crooked judges and their inept lawyer.

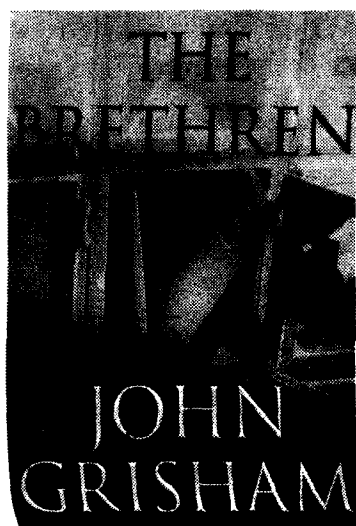
The lawyer is a drunk who often fights with his secretary. The judges speak among themselves in a slapstick manner.

Grisham tried to change his now-familiar formula by writing *The Brethren* with a lighter feel to it. It works to a degree but it doesn't make the reader believe the action.

Would three judges actually blackmail men by placing an ad in a gay magazine? Probably not.

And how is it possible that the CIA, an organization that can orchestrate foreign terrorism, not know that a man who they want to be president is gay?

It's a bit of a stretch but fortunately, *The Brethren* is still an enjoyable read. I give it a B-



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WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO HOLD ON TO?

Scream 3 a Yawn

By Nicole Burkholder

Capital Times Staff Writer

Yawn seems more like the appropriate title for the third and final chapter of the *Scream* trilogy.

As these movies have gotten progressively worse, a sigh of relief oozes out of us who do not scream at the non-threatening guy in a black sheet.

The cast and crew of *Scream 3* were definitely counting on a returning audience who already knew the story of Sydney Prescott (Neve Campbell).

Scream 3 has little-to-no new plot at all. The entire movie is based around the making of *Stab 3*, the faux version of the faux Woodsboro murders.

To quote *Interview With a Vampire*, "How avant-garde!" A film-within-a-film... but not really.

Stab 3 never really gets made. Instead, you are left with a bunch of actors playing actors playing characters played by more actors.

To put it bluntly, *Scream 3* is a muddled mess of overpaid actors with absolutely nothing to do but look

cute and of course, scream.

Okay, so the movie isn't supposed to have a plot. They are making fun of the slasher film.

The problem is that in all the valiant attempts to make the movie a "post-modern" commentary, it ends up looking more like director Wes Craven was

bored on a Saturday afternoon.

Worse yet, the sensitivity police seem to have gotten hold of the reels.

Don't be misled by the movie's R-rating for horror violence. Unlike its predecessors, *Scream 3* is about as violent as *Terms of Endearment*.

There is no visible slash in this slasher film.

Keep your eyes open for the extra large poster of Creed in Sydney's bedroom on the set of *Stab 3*. Such a terribly shameless plug! The website on the bottom of the poster is way too visible to be necessary.

Better yet, I doubt Sydney was listening to Creed in 1996, the year the bedroom scene is supposed to take place, considering their first album didn't debut until the following year.

There are a few redeeming qualities about this not-so-scary movie. A few great cameos by Carrie Fisher, Jason Mewes, and Kevin Smith are fairly amusing. All three

cameos, however, have a total screen time of about ten minutes.

Don't worry. Even though the revelation of the killer is not all that interesting, I won't tell you who it is. But beware. Wes Craven's last movie, *Music of the Heart*, has made him a sentimental sap.

MOVIE REVIEW

Scream 3

Starring Neve Campbell and Courtney Cox Arquette

Grade: C-

VCReviews

By Daniel Kane

Capital Times Staff Writer

E-mail your comments to: dmkl55@psu.edu.

Cruel Intentions (1999; 1 hr. 37 min.) Rating: 9

This film includes "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" as you've never seen her before. Sarah Michelle Gellar (Buffy) is wickedly entertaining in this definitely should-see film. The only reason the movie didn't score a "10" is because it ends just a little too neatly. Don't miss this one, though.

Species (1995; 1 hr. 48 min.) Rating: 3

Combine an unbelievable plot with uninteresting special effects and you've got this below-average thriller. Talen-

ted actors in a stupid movie.

The Mummy (1999; 2 hrs. 5 min.) Rating: 9

The special effects alone make this movie well worth watching. The movie, rated PG-13, won't thrill the hardcore horror fan, but it will definitely stimulate the senses of the general audience.

The Living Dead (1992; 1 hr. 32 min.) Rating: 1

Unquestionably the most mindless movie in recent history. Homosexuality, sophistication and intelligence don't mix during this pointless adventure. Devoid of plot and filled with stereotypes, this film earns the lowest rating I can give.