To Kill A Mockingbird

There is an old adage, don't judge a book by its movie. One of the few exceptions to that I have ever found: *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Based on Harper Lee's novel of the same title *To Kill A Mockingbird* is the story of Scout and Jem Finch two children growing up in Maycomb, Alabama in the 1930's. Their father, Atticus, is a white lawyer assigned to defend a black man, Tom Robinson, of rape.

Deftly navigating in black and white from the opening scene panning over artifacts from the movie to the appearance of neighbor Boo Radley (Robert Duvall's first role) to help Jem, the film struck many as the greatest in history. If ever a film has deserved to be called the greatest in history, this is it. The idea of a white man, a prominent white lawyer none the less, defending a black man in a rape case in rural 1930's Alabama was sadly unheard of. Knowing that the film is based on the true events of Harper Lee's childhood as Scout Finch (Finch being her maiden name) is that much more inspirational.

The film was lauded for Gregory Peck's portrayal of Atticus, Mary Badham's of Scout, and Robert Duvall's brief put all encompassing role as Boo. To give an example, Harper Lee was so amazed by Peck's performance that she gave to him her father's pocket-watch (which is heavily linked to the story) after seeing the film. Used in conjecture with studies of racisms and moral issues in many Middle and High School English classes, *To Kill A Mockingbird* is a film deeply rooted in courage and morality. A white man implores of 12 white jurors to "do their duty" in the judgment of Tom Robinson, an innocent man's, case, and, regardless of their decision, the film gleams with the hope of a deliverance from the oppression that gripped much of America.
Grade B+/A-

By Dan Smith