



A STRANGER IN THE KINGDOM PRESS QUOTES (1998)

“Riveting. A delight to see.” –Boston Globe

“I’ve seen nearly all of the selections and *A Stranger in the Kingdom* is one of two gems in this year’s Taos Talking Pictures Festival. It’s so refreshing to see a picture for a change that is not simply targeted at “indie demographics.” Instead, *Stranger* conveys the richness you experience in the literature of writers like Faulkner and Eudora Welty.”

“Set in the 1950’s and based on a Howard Frank Moshier novel, *A Stranger in the Kingdom* seamlessly blends rollicking comedy with morally-charged drama and taut suspense. The film is, by turns, lyrical and haunting, hilarious and hard-hitting. Filmmaker Jay Craven revels in the pastoral setting even as he exposes the hypocritical wrinkles in its craggy inhabitants.”

–John Bowman, *Santa Fe New Mexican*

“There are plenty of things to recommend this film, but similarity to *To Kill A Mockingbird*—in any but the most circumstantial sense—isn’t one of them. For one thing, scoundrelly, skirt-chasing, cockfight-loving Charlie Kinneson is definitely no Atticus Finch. Nor do the issues of bigotry and interracial sex, for all their intrinsic heat, really dominate the way they do in *A Time To Kill* and other films of the *Mockingbird* family. Instead, Craven, working from Howard Frank Moshier’s novel, seems to have hijacked this familiar movie genre primarily for use as a sort of character laboratory in which stress is applied to a collection of lovable, quirky country folk and forces all sorts of unsuspected weirdness and malevolence to the surface.

Mind you, there’s nothing as campy or outre as *Twin Peaks*. Instead, as with Craven’s excellent previous film, *Where the Rivers Flow North* (1994), the nostalgic appeal of rural life and people are presented unironically—but with enough hard, unexpected edges and imaginative characterization to engage even those who generally bolt theaters at the sight of old tractors silhouetted against golden sunsets. With the added virtue of first-rate performances from relative no-names like Lansbury, Hudson, and Nelson, *A Stranger in the Kingdom* is one of those delightful periodic reminders that the term “independent” still can say as much about a film’s content as its financing and distribution.”

–Austin Chronicle

A Stranger in the Kingdom is a rollicking powerhouse of a picture bristling with lyricism, darkness, and devilish wit next to which many a tinseltown courtroom drama would look emptyheaded and predictable. The film is framed and lit with a painterly sense of composition — never mallbright like most Hollywood productions. The mood swings at a refreshingly human pace between lighter and darker tones. Its feel for customs, speech and clothing, its sense of the time, place and people it portrays possess a satisfying authority. As they did for *Where the Rivers Flow North*, *The Horse Flies* cast a poetic spell over the proceedings with a hauntingly lovely score.”

–Rick Kisonak, *Seven Days*

“Poignant.” – Boston Herald

“Understated and even-keeled...brave and clear-eyed.” –Michael Magras, Vermont Magazine

“One of the ten best films of 1998” — Stuff Magazine (Boston)