

## Film Review: Nicole Kidman is Unique in Fluttery ‘The Paperboy’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 5, 2012 - 2:42pm

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CHICAGO – With all the steamy heat, and the thick, gluey southern accents from mostly non-southern actors, the audience for “The Paperboy” might need to wear lawyer-like suspenders and flap a funeral home fan to take it all in. The sweaty new film features Nicole Kidman, Matthew McConaughey and John Cusack, all chewing the scenery.



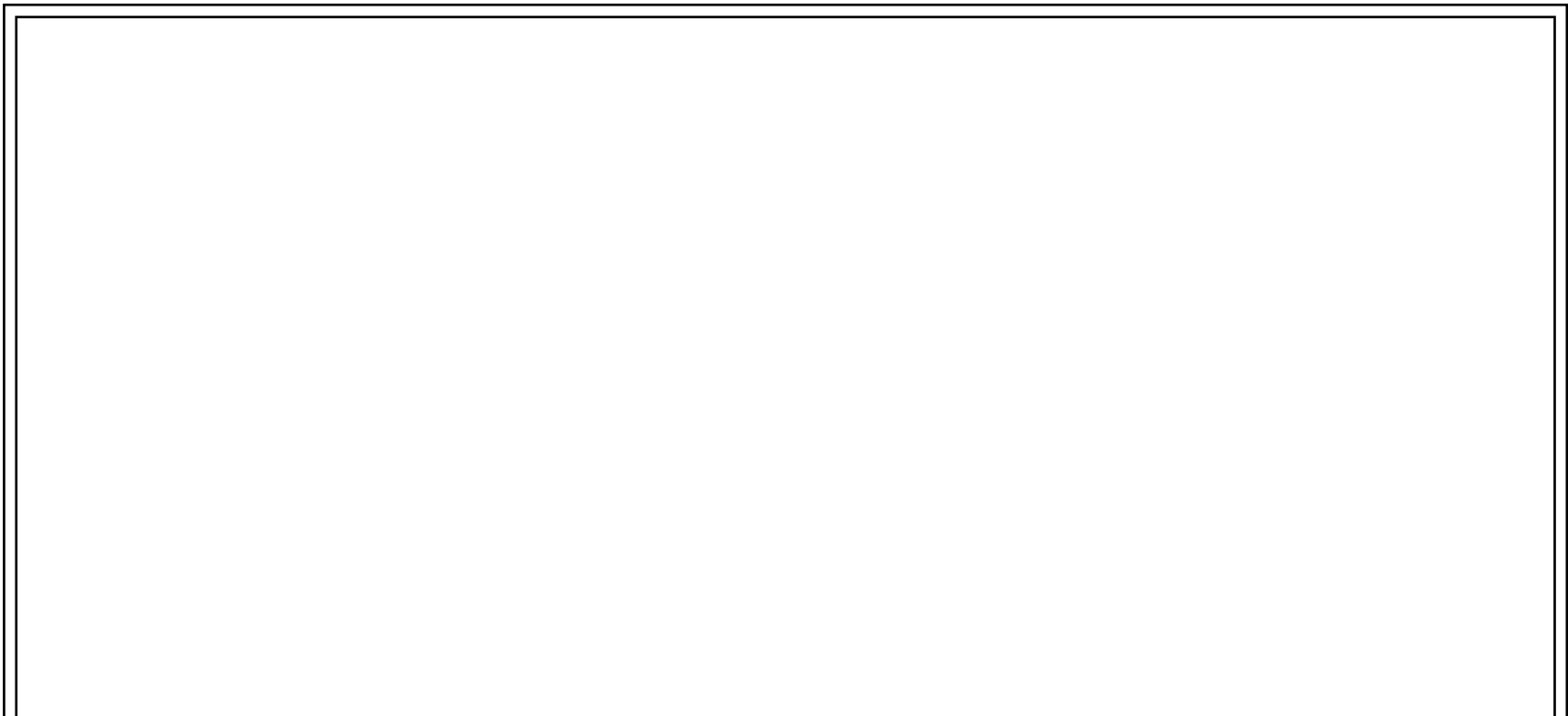
Set in the 1970s past – complete with a vague timeline – “The Paperboy” involves a mystery that in the end still may need to be solved, if taking in a coherent narrative is a consideration. The actors are sweating their performance, literally, and there is enough hyperbole and speechifying for several awards-style clips. Director Lee Daniels (“Precious”) does add some touches that harken back to the late 1960s-era “In the Heat of the Night” visual hook – like brightening the daylight scenes – but the loose, bizarre narrative structure and predictability of the story subtracts from this style distinction.

Nicole Kidman is Charlotte Bless, whose early 1970s letter writing campaign for her incarcerated boyfriend, Hillary Van Wetter (John Cusack), lures big-time Miami newspaper reporter and hometown hero Ward Jansen (Matthew McConaughey) back to Lately, Florida. Van Wetter is sitting on death row for a 1969 murder of a big bellied Lately sheriff, and Charlotte hopes Ward can investigate the case and free her lover. Ward will also clash with his family, for his father W.W. Jansen (Scott Glenn) is the publisher of the local paper.

Complicating matters is Ward’s brother, Jack (Zac Efron), a college dropout who volunteers to help the investigation, but instead falls in love with the older Charlotte. Also causing problems is Yardley (David Oyelowo), Ward’s African American reporter assistant, whose presence in this small-town Southern town is less than welcome. Observing the situation and narrating the film from the future is Anita Chester (Macy Gray), the housekeeper of the Jansen clan, and she reveals some secrets involving everyone.

*“The Paperboy” continues its limited release in Chicago on October 5th. See local listings for show times and theaters. Featuring Matthew McConaughey, Nicole Kidman, Zac Efron, John Cusack, David Oyelowo, Scott Glenn, and Macy Gray, Screenplay adapted by Lee Daniels and Peter Dexter (from his novel). Directed by Lee Daniels. Rated “R”*

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Sultry: Charlotte (Nicole Kidman) in ‘The Paperboy’  
Photo credit: Millennium Entertainment

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