

Film Review: Philip Seymour Hoffman Lives Again in ‘God’s Pocket’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 20, 2014 - 11:37am

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CHICAGO – Watching Philip Seymour Hoffman perform, now that he has passed on, is a bittersweet reminder of his ability and power to embody his deeply felt characters. He does it again in one of his last roles, adding his special brand of acting to the messy story within the gritty noir drama, “God’s Pocket.”



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

The film is directed and co-written by John Slattery (who portrays Roger Sterling on TV’s “Mad Men”), and is based on a 1983 novel by Peter Dexter. The director has an eye towards recreating the dark depression of the dying industrial landscape in America during the late 1970s/early ‘80s. The story is full of union thugs, small time hoods, abused wives and the frustrated working class, but as a whole they are not stitched together with any proper authority. Although there are many obvious holes in both the story and characters, the film works enough to provide a glimpse as to what could have been. And some of the performances – especially from veterans Hoffman and John Turturro – are worthwhile.

In a working class neighborhood in Philadelphia, nicknamed “God’s Pocket,” lives a sad sack small timer named Mickey (Philip Seymour Hoffman). He has money troubles, which worries his wife Jeannie (Christina Hendricks). His stepson Leon (Caleb Landry) is a loose cannon who works at the brick yard. When Leon’s mouth gets him in trouble, the situation leaves him dead.

The neighborhood both gossips and mourns their lost son. God’s Pocket had recently been highlighted by a famous Philadelphia newspaper columnist named Shelburn (Richard Jenkins), and Jeannie thinks the alcoholic reporter can find out what happened to her boy. In the meantime, Mickey is trying to get enough money for the funeral, and turns to his friend Bird (John Turturro) to help him out. Time and money is running out for the working class in America.

“God’s Pocket” continued its limited release in Chicago on May 16th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christina Hendricks, John Turturro, Richard Jenkins, Joyce Van Patten and Caleb Landry. Screenplay by John Slattery and Alex Metcalf, from a novel by Peter Dexter. Directed by John Slattery. Rated “R”



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Neighborhood Guys: Mickey (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and Bird (John Turturro) in ‘God’s Pocket’

Photo credit: IFC Films



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