

## Film Review: Story Choices Aside, Heart Matters in ‘Black or White’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 29, 2015 - 9:18pm

- [Andre Holland](#) [2]
- [Anthony Mackie](#) [3]
- [Bill Burr](#) [4]
- [Black or White](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jillian Estell](#) [7]
- [Kevin Costner](#) [8]
- [Mike Binder](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Octavia Spencer](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Relativity Media](#) [13]

CHICAGO – As race issues continue in the news, in the wake of Ferguson and “I Can’t Breathe,” the movies exhibit an extraordinary piece of timing with the new film “Black or White.” Oscar winners Kevin Costner and Octavia Spencer participate in a story of family and healing.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

The issue in the film involves “Black or White,” but mostly in the context of what the opposing families want for a biracial girl suddenly being raised by her white grandfather (Costner). Written and directed by Mike Binder (“The Upside of Anger”), the film explores themes of socioeconomic separation as much as opposing racial views, and mostly it shows that both sides care ultimately for the little girl. Kevin Costner also steps outside his usual character mode, playing the grandfather as a mourning and boozy figure of tragedy, and a morally vague arbiter of the racial issues that have been thrust upon him. However, the film does suffer from some easy clichés, including a crack-smoking biological father and a TV-law-drama type custody trial, although the setting does give Costner a defining and passionate moment regarding what the film is trying to communicate.

As the film begins, Eliot Anderson (Costner) is mourning the loss of his wife in an auto accident. He is left to raise their granddaughter Eloise (Jillian Estell), after he and his wife had adopted her when their daughter died in childbirth. Eliot’s daughter had hid the pregnancy, and the father was an African American man named Reggie (André Holland). Reggie’s activities involvement in gangs and drugs has estranged him from his daughter, and elicited wrath from Eliot.

The other side of Eloise’s family, led by matriarch Rowena (Octavia Spencer) – who is also Reggie’s mother – challenges Eliot for custody of Eloise, and retains Rowena’s high powered lawyer brother Jeremiah (Anthony Mackie) to process the trial. The trial opens old wounds, and includes the return of Reggie, and Eliot must control several of his own demons if he is to maintain custody of his granddaughter.

*“Black or White” opens everywhere on January 30th. Featuring Kevin Costner, Anthony Mackie, Octavia Spencer, Jillian Estell, Bill Burr and André Holland. Written and directed by Mike Binder. Rated “PG-13.”*



[Continue reading for Patrick McDonald’s full review of “Black or White”](#) [14]



A Sad Funeral for Eliot (Kevin Costner) and Granddaughter Eloise (Jillian Estell) in ‘Black or White’

Photo credit: Relativity Media



[Continue reading for Patrick McDonald’s full review of “Black or White”](#) [14]

**Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 3:50am*):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/25096/film-review-story-choices-aside-heart-matters-in-black-or-white>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/andre-holland>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/anthony-mackie>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bill-burr>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/black-or-white>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jillian-estell>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/kevin-costner>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mike-binder>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/movie-review>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/octavia-spencer>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/relativity-media>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/25094/story-choices-aside-heart-matters-in-black-or-white>