

Despite Smothered Direction, ‘Doubt’ Brings Out Best in Performers

Submitted by [Dustin](#) [1] on December 12, 2008 - 1:01am

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CHICAGO – The inherit drama of a Catholic priest accused of molesting an African American boy during the 1960s would be enough to make for an interesting film on its own. In “Doubt,” this is one of the less-explored themes writer and director John Patrick Shanley examines.



Instead, there is a tale of Machiavellian ethics, power struggles within the church, and of course the gray areas that encircle certainty and doubt.



[Read Dustin Levell's full review of “Doubt” in our reviews section.](#) [16]

Sister Aloysius Beauvier (Meryl Streep) is everything you could expect from a pre-Vatican II nun in 1964. Playing the strict disciplinarian at her Catholic St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx, Beauvier doesn't believe that the students should be coddled with things like ball point pens.

“Every easy choice today will have its consequence tomorrow,” she explains to her colleague, a cynically free and more hopeful Sister James played by Amy Adams. What seems to be a simple personality clash between Sister Beauvier and the younger, progressive thinking Father Flynn (Philip Seymour Hoffman), comes to a head when Sister James reports that Father Flynn might have “interfered” with school's first black student.

“Doubt” stars Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams, and Viola Davis. “Doubt,” which is written and directed by John Patrick Shanley, opened on December 12, 2008. In Chicago, the film opened at Landmark Century Centre Cinema and AMC River East.



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Philip Seymour Hoffman as Father Flynn and Amy Adams as Sister James in “Doubt”.
Photo credit: Andrew Schwartz, Miramax

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