

Unlikely ending harms visually pleasing movie



film

"Shattered"



By Mark Nemeth
Staff Reporter

A close-up of shattering glass is a beautiful, consuming sight. Though "Shattered", directed and written by Wolfgang Petersen, isn't quite as pleasing of a sight, it very often manages to captivate viewers. Through its dark, scenic cinematography and succinct editing, "Shattered" makes a mostly lame plot play out naturally and with a good respect for mystery and suspense.

Tom Berenger plays a Northern California architect who survives a serious car accident only to awake with amnesia. Though he remembers nothing, he is haunted by visions of his life before the crash and the crash itself — shattering glass and vertigo.

His wife, played by Greta Scacchi ("Presumed Innocent"), nurses him through recovery.

"After seven years of marriage,"

he tells her, "I can fall in love with you all over again."

Though she was in the accident with him, her injuries are mysteriously minor compared to his.

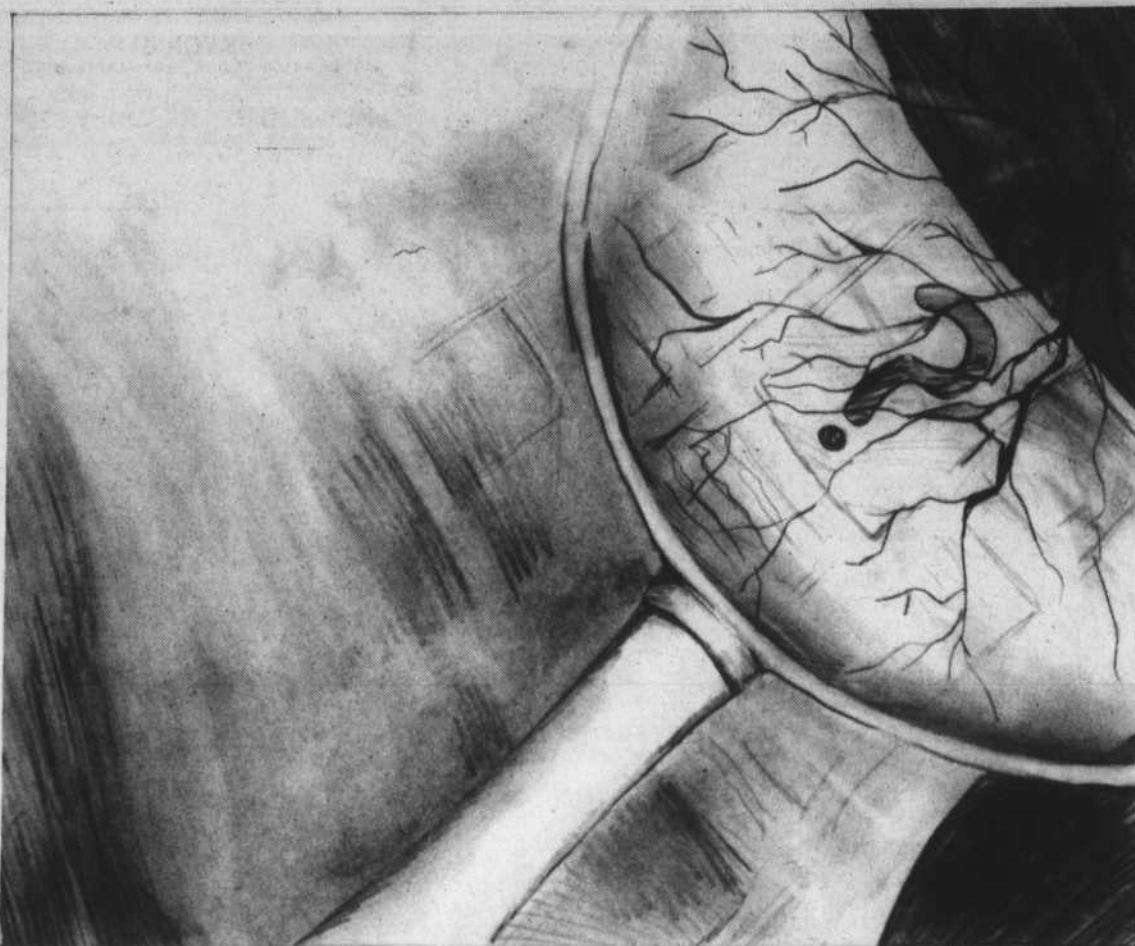
As Berenger tries to rediscover his previous life, he runs across a private investigator played outstandingly by Bob Hoskins ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?"). Berenger previously had hired Hoskins to follow his wife. Though he seems happily married, the audience is given clues that things weren't always as smooth.

The mystery unfolds slowly and yet is consuming, simple and repetitive for the beginning mystery viewer, entertaining for those more advanced.

"Shattered" is based on a novel by Richard Neely. Though neither the novel's plot nor dialogue are worthy of high praise, the film itself is not a failure. A combination of mystery, suspense, nicely arranged editing, fine acting from Berenger and Hoskins and excellent cinematography make "Shattered" often captivating.

Aside from Berenger and Hoskins, though, the cast is rather mediocre. At times the drama seems a little forced, which keeps "Shattered" from being a better movie.

This movie would have received an extra half reel had it not ended in such an unbelievable fashion.



Robert Borzekowski/DN



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Paradise

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story depends heavily on clichés and the pulling of heartstrings. There is substance, but often it is overshadowed by the hanky scenes. Donoghue moves things along at a nice pace, but the acting is really what pulls it all together.

Johnson is first-class as Ben Reed. There is no one-dimensional acting here. Ben has many layers to his

character and Johnson reveals them one at a time. There are scenes for which Ben's pain is visible, but he hides it under a gruff, grouchy exterior.

Griffith's performance is similar. Her Lily is multifaceted, warm but careful not to grow too close to either her husband or Willard. One of the film's most heartbreaking scenes involves Griffith alone on screen, lamenting the loss of her son.

Together, Johnson and Griffith are

equally wonderful. They demonstrate how Ben and Lily have forgotten how to love each other and are afraid of trying again.

Wood and Thora Birch are lovable as Willard and Billie. Their scenes inject much humor into the film, but also provide some sweet, tender moments.

"Paradise" isn't a masterpiece. It relies on some standard tear-jerking, but there are enough good moments to make up for it.

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Williams

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Despite being heralded as the next Jerry Lee Lewis, Williams isn't looking too far ahead.

"I just have to let the people be the judge because I'm always going to play the piano and entertain," Williams said. "I really have no set goal, I just have to follow what's going on now."

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