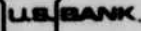


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
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
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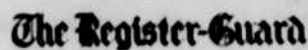
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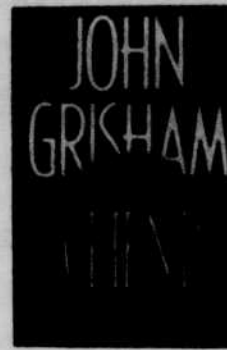
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'Client' equal to others Grisham has written



THE CLIENT
By John Grisham
Doubleday
422pp., \$23.50

Although skeptical at first, I've concluded that John Grisham's latest novel *The Client* is as good as his previous books.

Grisham — a master of the genre known as the legal thriller — has had two previous books on the best seller lists, and *The*

By John Fleischli

Client has also sailed into the top 10 list for fiction.

His exciting second novel, *The Firm*, was made into a movie and is playing in theaters currently. *The Client* would also be great on the big screen. It has a cinematic quality to it and plenty of dramatic action. While reading the novel, I couldn't help but picture Robert Patrick (of *Terminator 2* fame) as the tough, yet cool, main character.

The main character in this book is a young boy named Mark. He, like the characters in other Grisham novels, is wanted by people who want to kill him.

In the beginning of the book, Mark finds out some information that he is not supposed to know. He witnesses the suicide of a lawyer, but not before the lawyer tells him the secret location of a dead body. The body is that of a Southern senator who was killed by the mafia, and this information haunts Mark for the rest of the novel.

Mark hires a competent lawyer named Reggie Love. She is street-smart like Mark and a survivor who truly cares about

her clients — mostly juveniles gone astray. With her help, Mark works his way through the legal proceedings he is suddenly thrown into.

The book moves along at a nice clip and becomes quite good and hard to put down during the last 100 pages. The plot lines developed through the story head to a riveting climax and the book concludes with a satisfying resolution.

The book uses situations similar to those in earlier novels by Grisham. In both *The Firm* and *The Pelican Brief*, the main character is on the run. The mafia in all three is the villain wanting to snuff out the protagonist for something they have accidentally found out.

On the other side is the supposedly benevolent government agency, such as the FBI, trying to protect the character and get them to tell what they know so they can act. But their inability to provide the needed assurances of safety makes the hero(ine)s wary of turning to the authorities for help. So they end up running.

The author ably conveys the fear and anxiety the protagonists go through in their search for a way out of their predicament. In *The Client*, Grisham vividly describes the scene when Mark and his lawyer are literally running through the back yards of a suburb in New Orleans trying to evade the mafia, which is hot on their tail. They need to get the evidence before their would-be assassins do in order to save themselves.

The legal thriller was made popular by the lawyer-turned-novelist Scott Turow, author of the book *Presumed Innocent*, which was made into a recent movie. With the glut of lawyers this country has it is no surprise that some of them would turn to writing novels about the law. This is good because when they add the humanizing elements of characters, settings and a well-developed plot it makes the law more interesting and real for the reader interested in legal issues.

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