

Fracture (2007)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-4 1; L- 51; S/N-1 . Running time: 1 hour 52 min.

*The Lord has made himself known, he has executed judgement;
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.
Psalm 9:16.*

Anthony Hopkins' Ted Crawford plays a cat and mouse game with police Detective Rob Nunally (Billy Burke) in this fascinating tale of adultery, vengeance, and murder. When Ted discovers his wife Jennifer's (Embeth Davidtz) affair with Nunally, he shoots her in the head. Within minutes the police are summoned, and the house is surrounded. Ted will agree only to Nunally entering. He tells the detective that he shot Jennifer, and then, when the rest of the squad enter the house, manipulates the angry Nunally into attacking him. During the interrogation at police headquarters, the emotionally involved Nunally insists on being present, even though he is not a homicide officer. Thus far only Ted knows of his affair with the victim.

At the station Ted retracts his Fracture confession, claiming it was coerced because of Nunally's hostile pressure. To everyone's amazement, the weapon that Ted had with him, though identical in make, was not the gun that shot Jennifer, who is now comatose in the hospital. Several searches of the house fail to turn up another gun, and the interval between the shooting and the arrival of the

police allowed for no time for Hopkins to have disposed of the actual weapon.

During all this time the cocky assistant D.A. Willy Beachum (Ryan Gosling) is making plans to leave public service and take a high-paying position with a blue blood law firm. Wanting to tidy up his affairs, Willy resists the order to attend to Ted's arraignment. He gives in, seeing this as a routine open and shut case. Apparently sizing up the ambitious lawyer as too full of himself to handle the prosecution well, Ted asks that he be assigned to the case, and the judge agrees. In the next few days Willy's cocksureness is destroyed when it looks as if Ted has made a fool of everyone, there being no sign of the actual gun that shot the wife, and Ted's confession is now a matter of his word versus the detective's.

The possibility of losing the case sets Willy on edge, as his new position is now threatened. He visits Jennifer in the hospital several times, but the medical staff can give no assurance that she will ever regain consciousness in order to testify. Indeed, the longer she remains comatose with the brain scan showing little sign of activity, the sooner will come the moment when Ted will decide whether to continue treatment or to pull the plug. Ted is enjoying all the consternation he has caused, confident that he will go free thanks to his superior intelligence. Thus, the film is not a who-dunnit, but a suspenseful will he get away with it? affair. There was a time, during the old Code days, when the outcome would have been a foregone conclusion, but not any more. This is both a teasing film and a story, in the case of the assistant D.A., of character transformation

For Reflection/Discussion

Warning: wait until you have seen the film before reading further.

1) What kind of a person is Willy Beachum at the beginning of the film? What are his values, life goals? Compare him to Ted Crawford.

2) How does Willy's boss Joe Lobruto (David Strathairn) prove to be a staunch supporter? Who has served you in a similar way when you needed support? How does Joe's observation that Willy has the makings of a good prosecutor affect the latter?

3) How have Willy's values changed by the end of the film? Have you had an experience which caused you to reassess your values and goals?

4) How does the film bear out what the Psalmist asserts? What do you think of Willy's vocational decision at the end of the film?