

“Kidnap”

By Helen Lutz

“Ready” ... “Fire” ... “Aim”! Have you ever been in a position where you are frantically doing something with little or no regard as to how things may come to fruition? When my husband was active duty Air Force, he worked a lot of shift work. I remember one night when we were stationed in Colorado Springs, my husband working the night shift. About three o’clock in the morning I was awakened by sounds at my front door. Jumping out of bed I ran to the top of the stairs (we lived in a front to back tri-level). Seeing a shadowy figure coming through my front door I shouted “Who’s there!” This would be a very short story had it been some dastardly fiend; instead it was my husband who had been sent home early on a quiet night. He looked up at laughed, “What were you going to do? Flash me to death?” I had jumped into action with no clear plan as to what I would have done to protect myself or our girls.



One of a parent’s greatest fears is that their child turns up missing – kidnapped. In Halle Berry’s new film “Kidnap” her character Karla lives that nightmare. As the movie opens we watch a little boy grow up. Karla’s six year old son, Frankie, is the apple of his mother’s eye. Divorced, Karla struggles to pay the bills while working as a waitress, but it totally devoted to Frankie. Insisting that she can’t work a double shift, she manages to get away from the diner so that she and Frankie can go to a fair. It’s a little piece of heaven for a six year old boy with ice cream, cotton candy, carnival rides and entertainment.

While watching a band Karla’s phone rings. Stepping away momentarily to take a call from her attorney, it seems her ex-husband is seeking sole custody of Frankie, the unimaginable happens. Frankie disappears. Frantically looking for him and asking people if they’ve seen a little boy Karla spots Frankie being forced into an old, beat up Mustang in the parking lot. Grabbing on to the door handle definitely does no good as the car speeds away – and interestingly enough, no one lends her a helping hand. Jumping into her minivan she takes out after the kidnappers; she must keep them in sight. It would have been extremely helpful had she not dropped her phone in the park while chasing the bad guys, not taking the time to stop and pick it up.

For the next 90 minutes we watch as Karla chases the car carrying her son. Who are these people and what do they want? Neither Karla nor the kidnappers have any regard for safety as they speed through the highways around New Orleans and through the Louisiana back roads. It’s amazing to me that both cars, which look like participants of a demolition derby, remain operable.

We see a mother’s love for her child and her willingness to do anything to protect him, no matter the cost. However, Karla’s panic overshadows her ability to know what to do when she finally confronts the bad guys. Indiana Jones showed us that it’s not a good idea to take a knife to a gun fight, yet she can be quite vicious with a shovel. “Kidnap” takes us on a sit-on-the-edge-of-your-seat chase, and could she really ever run out of gas? At one point she talks with a local sheriff and is told to stop and they’ll get to work on the case right away – Amber Alert and the whole nine yards. Yet when she sees a bulletin full of missing children in the office, she knows those parents followed instructions and stopped. There’s no stopping her.

“Kidnap” provides non-stop action from beginning to end. As the chase continues, Berry’s conversations with herself give us good insight into the determination of her character and love for her son. Nothing will stop her and only the movie’s ‘R’ rating might slow the rest of us down; but the rating is for the violence, not for any of the other sultry things which usually accompany ‘R’ rated films. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats ... I give “Kidnap” THREE HARTS. My best suggestion is to visit the restroom before the movie starts and buy a small soda; you won’t want to miss a single minute.