

The Visit

This is a contemporary prison picture but a far more nuanced and measured variety than shows like HBO's over-the-top "Oz" series. Alex (Hill Harper) is an AIDS sufferer who has been in the slammer for 25 years for a rape he said he did not commit, and he's also estranged from his family. The film shows him finally beginning to reconnect with them.

He finally, after some wait, sees his successful brother (Obba Babatundé), his forgiving mother (Marla Gibbs), and his unyielding father (a prickly Billy Dee Williams). Helping with his psychological case is the prison psychiatrist (Phylicia Rashad) and an old neighborhood friend (Rae Dawn Chong).

Not much happens in terms of action, and we never really learn of Alex's guilt or innocence. Based on a play and inspired by a true story, *The Visit* is a pure "relationships" picture kept alive and spirited by the acting of its solid ensemble cast.

The Visit is the first film by Jordan Walker-Pearlman, who also edited it and wrote the screenplay (based on a play by Kosmond Russell). It's a welcome debut.

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