

The Pitch

Fortune Defies Death, a new film from Surround Idea, is a dark, *Clue*-esque mystery-drama from director Jennifer Hulum that capitalizes on the long standing American mystery tradition and pays it forward into the new millennium. A unique and entertaining film with a well-rounded ensemble cast, *Fortune Defies Death* blends classic elements of the great mystery *whodunits* with arousing cinematic skill and exceptional performances. This clever cinema treat puts the audience in a front row seat at the reading of wealthy patriarch George Woods' (G. Larry Butler) ten-year-old last will and testament. Populated by contemporary characters, laced with compelling dialog, clever dashes of dark satirical parody and well-placed moments of burst-out laughing humor reminiscent of *Murder by Death*, *Fortune Defies Death* delivers suspense, intrigue, family drama, secrets galore and a whole lot more.

As the contentious Woods' family gather at a secluded cabin in the mountains under the presumption that they will finally get what's coming to them, they quickly discover that the family attorney, Mr. Pearson, has lured them into an investigation to uncover the mysterious disappearance of Wood's adopted daughter, Mona (Emily Anila Shah). Before Pearson (Jack G. Davis) reveals five letters containing instructions for the untimely investigation, Woods' granddaughter, Nadia (Shelby Lyon) and her cousin Jeff (Josh Madson) discover an old picture at the cabin from a Halloween party years ago that takes the audience back in time.

As the family reminisces through carefully crafted flash backs, the audience discovers that Mona (Bluebelle Saraceno) was abandoned by her mother Rima (Aneela Qureshi) at a young age. Wood's and his uptight sister Stacy (Jane Edwina Seymour), raised Mona into an intelligent and desirable young woman. But when Mona begins a seemingly sordid romance with a young artist and her eventual husband Scott (Evan Boymel), Woods, critical of her new flame, hires his nephew Charlie (Mike Maolucci), a coke snorting, dirt-peddling, preppy with his own agenda, to dig up something on Mona's new beau. As the years pass, Scott's career falters creating stress and frustration that members of the Wood's family believe boiled over in to violence. Without warning, Mona disappears leaving behind her mother's family heirloom and her precious young daughter, Nadia (Kaitlyn McCormick).

Back at the cabin, Mr. Pearson skillfully establishes that all the Woods' family members had motive and means to kill Mona because she, an outsider, was best positioned to snare the family fortune. The pendulum of logic and reason swings from suspect to suspect including Woods' nephew Randy (Justin Ray) a successful psychologist with an eye on his uncle's money to fund his political aspirations, Mrs. Jordan (Debbie Sheridan), Woods' ambitious mistress who has already secured the family cabin and is out for more, and his lovely niece, Katharine (Julie R. Ølgaard), an eccentric socialite whose royal wedding plans were spoiled by a tawdry tabloid affair. As the family's dirty laundry airs, tensions mount taking the audience on a "who dunnit" rollercoaster ride with shocking twists and turns that keeps them guessing until the very end.

Fortune Defies Death is the perfect film for mystery genre fans looking for an updated rebirth that packs a serious punch. Mostly, it is a refreshing and entertaining film that reaches back into this great American film tradition and pulls out a fresh new tribute to the genre that will never die.