

Film Title: *Pawn Sacrifice* (2014)
Length of Film in Minutes: 116 minutes
Film Genre: Drama

Reviewer Name and Grade: Sophia S., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: March 29, 2021

Pawn Sacrifice is a film that portrays Bobby Fischer's many games against Soviet Union chess players, most notably his matches against Boris Spassky. It is set in various locations, most importantly in Iceland and the United States. The time period is majorly throughout the Cold War. *Pawn Sacrifice* begins with Bobby Fischer's childhood, describing his competitiveness and emerging talent. Bobby Fischer is shown receiving various achievements throughout his childhood years, including becoming the top player in the United States and a Chess Grandmaster. When the flashback ends, Bobby Fischer is a young man, playing against the Soviets. This is when his paranoia begins to appear. It is first prominently shown when he suspects that the Soviets are working against him in secret, to which he responds by saying that he will quit chess. Quite soon, a lawyer contacts him, agreeing to argue for Fischer's demands for reform. Fischer reluctantly steps back into the world of chess, where we begin to see his demands get greater and greater, as his paranoia starts to grow. Throughout the movie, the audience sees a progression of slight annoyance to full-blown paranoia, as it almost consumes Bobby Fischer entirely.

How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?

I found the film on Kanopy by casual browsing.

Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested?

Yes, the plot certainly kept me very intrigued. The tension in chess scenes was done wonderfully, and the portrayal of Bobby Fischer's paranoia was executed very well.

Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the film was slightly too slow. Though the plot was certainly interesting, I did feel as though the film slightly dragged on, which was slightly irritating. However, this was not that significant of a factor.

What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?

I believe that this film is appropriate for mature 6th graders and up. It had some mature content as well as the use of strong language, though very infrequent. The film also tackled heavy mental subjects, such as paranoia, but it wasn't too disturbing.

I would rate this movie *4 stars*. As mentioned above, Bobby Fischer's paranoia was shown tremendously well, and the progression of slight nervousness to a complete mental disorder was done expertly. In addition, the acting was fantastic, and the characters were very believable. Nevertheless, the film did slightly drag on. In addition, although Fischer's paranoia was portrayed well, the audience never fully understood the reasons for it. There are scenes in which, if scrutinizing the details, the audience can figure out possible reasons for Fischer's mental state. However, this is not fully explored or developed, though certainly having the potential to. Overall, this movie was a marvelous portrayal of how paranoia almost cost Fischer the title of World Champion, but it does have several noticeable flaws.