

REVIEW

'Nickel Boys' is as gripping as its literary counterpart

Gautaman Bhaskaran Chennai

The film adaptation of Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer prize-winning novel, "Nickel Boys," hit Amazon Prime Video last week — and it is as gripping and powerful as its literary counterpart.

Directed by RaMell Ross, the film comes from the author behind "The Underground Railroad" (also a Pulitzer winner).

"Nickel Boys" is based on the disturbing stories of how boys were abused at Florida's Dozier School, which closed in 2011. At its peak in the 1960s, 500 boys were housed at the reform school, most of them for minor offenses. In recent years, hundreds of men have come forward to recount brutal beatings, sexual assaults, deaths and disappearances.

Ross, who is best known for the Oscar-nominated 2018



The film is now available on Amazon Prime Video. Supplied

documentary "Hale County This Morning, This Evening," uses his first-ever feature film to poignantly capture the lives of two Black teens in "Nickel Boys." Dividing his movie into three segments, the Jim Crow era of the 1950s and 1960s is portrayed with stomach-clenching realism.

Elwood Curtis (played by Ethan Cole Sharp as a boy and Ethan Herisse as a teen) lives with his grandmother and

faces prejudice and humiliation. Nobody notices his angst except a teacher who gifts him a record of Martin Luther King Jr's speeches — whose passion and dedication to the African American cause provokes Curtis to convert his own oppression into a weapon to fight injustice.

Ross transforms our perception of the world we live in today in a marvellous work that borders on a sociological study.