

BOOKS

The Appeal by John Grisham

average price €19.95

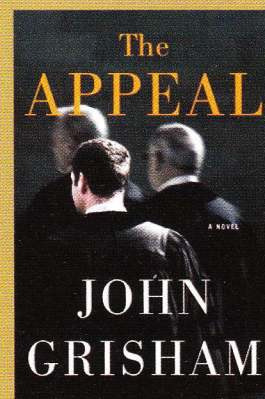
The Appeal, John Grisham's twentieth novel, was according to its description "... a shocking story of political and legal intrigue..." However, its focus on a court case that is so similar to the one seen in *Erin Brockovich*, almost takes away from the important focus of the novel and instead has you thinking of Julia Roberts, dead frogs and box office figures.

The Appeal is set in Mississippi following a large verdict against a major chemical company that has been accused of dumping toxic waste. The toxic waste has affected the local water supply causing Bowmore, Mississippi to be cruelly referred

to as Cancer County due to the unusual high number of cancer cases in the region. The appeal, which then follows, sets into motion a trail of propaganda, underhand campaigns and dirty tricks that puts the verdict in jeopardy.

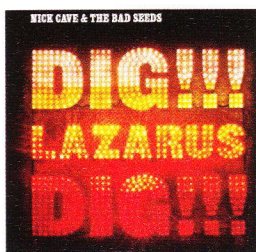
With his novel, Grisham, has obviously set out to highlight the role of politics and big company money that plagues parts of the judicial system and this he has done well. He is also careful to point out at the end of the novel that *The Appeal* is just that – a work of fiction - but one that reflects current practice and tactics in many locations throughout the world.

The detail outlined on the governmental campaign, one of the main focuses of the novel, encourages readers to re-examine the electoral processes happening around them. In addition, the wide range of tactics used by the big money companies to save stock prices and limit the amount of damages paid in cases where they have been found liable is at the very least surprising and in many instances shocking. Overall I was left waiting for the true shock and excitement to get started, which just never seemed to arrive.



DID YOU KNOW?
-In 2007 over 123,000 emigrants left the Netherlands

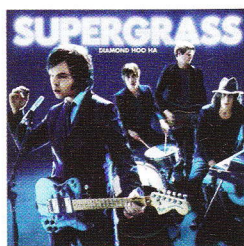
MUSIC



Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

Dig, Lazarus, Dig!!!

There was a while there when it looked like Nick Cave would release albums of piano ballads and love songs for ever more. Not such a bad thing, considering nobody writes a love song like Old Nick, but still, it's nice to have something with more of a stompalong vibe. With *Dig, Lazarus, Dig!!!* all the promise of last year's decidedly messy *Grinderman* project comes to fruition. Bass, guitar and drums are back on top, with Cave's piano taking a backseat to let some good rockin' through. Musically satisfying, lyrically challenging and often hilarious – this could be one of Cave's finest moments.



Supergrass

Diamond Hoo-Ha

Supergrass, as one of the few survivors of the Britpop wave of the mid-'90s, may never have scaled quite the same heights as Radiohead, Oasis or Damon Albarn, but they've never been boring. *Diamond Hoo-Ha* is the band's sixth album in fourteen years, and displays much of what made them so popular in the first place. Ebullient and fun-loving pop-rock as it is, songs like the title track and *Bad Blood* show they've matured a lot musically in that time. Channelling Bowie, The Kinks and even a hint of The White Stripes, Supergrass have produced an album as quirky and danceable as anything in their back catalogue.



Apes & Androids

Blood Moon

Apes & Androids are perhaps the most talked about band on the New York live scene today, garnering attention from all quarters with their OTT, Queen-esque performances. Musically they defy all attempts to pin them down, there's glam, there's rock, there's electro, there's funk... and a lot more besides. Tracks *Golden Prize* and *Radio* evoke *Midnite Vultures*-era Beck, *Goldfrapp* and the kind of frenetic synth-pop favoured by Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, while elsewhere *Franz Ferdinand*-style razor-edged guitars are the order of the day (*Johnny & Sarah*). A dizzying, bewildering and exhilarating collection of songs which will doubtless appear on many Best Of '08 lists come December.

