## 'Snow Falling on Cedars' a disappointment

Associated Price Warren

The 1995 novel by David Guterson, "Stow Falling on Cedars," proved an immediate hit with readers and critice. It was an engaging story of young lovers-non white, the other Japanes-American—on a fishing and farming island in Puget Sound.

The love story was played against the backforp of World War II, when the islanders of Japanese deacent were sent to detention camps. Tensions between the two ethnic groups remained after the war, especially after a white fisherman was found dead at see. A young Japanese farmer was accused of murder.

The film version of "Snow Failing on Cedars" held great promise. Australian Scott Hicks, who directed Geoffrey Rush to an Academy Award in "Shine," was chosen to direct his first American Him. He shares the writing credit with Ron Bass, an Oscar winner for "Rainman" A distinguished cast was assembled, and attunning locations were found in the state of Washington and British Columbia.

The end result, however, is a disappointment.

The photography lapses into moody sopis as though the Northwest was totally lacking in color. The portentous musical score resonates with pounding drums, swirling strings, smashing crescendes and a chorus reminiscent of the Mormon Tabornacle Choir.

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Choir.

Hicks direction calls for moodsatting close-ups of raindrops
folling from leaves, the inner
workings of a newspaper type
machine, dead fish, etc.

The film begins in total darknoss. Amid the creaking sounds of
a beat at sea, a faintly visible
scene emerges. It is a fishing beat
in a dense fog. Something violent
has happened.

Thereafter the plot is told in

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shifting time frames. The most moving aspect of the story concerns the relationship of the two young lovers: Hatsue, daughter of a Japanose strawberry farmer, and Ishmael, the son of a local white newspaper editor. They must play and love in secret because of the pressures of society.

The most tragic sequence comes when the Japanese are sent to the Manzanar internment center in California after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The underlying tensions between the two elements of the island population become

intensified.

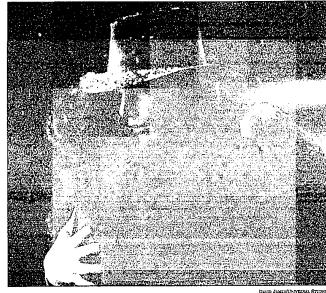
Hotaue's romance with Ishmael is discovered, and she must vow never to see or write him again. She marries another childhood friend, also an internee.

The murder trial, replete with flashbacks, provides the climax of 'Snow Falling on Codara.' Ishmael (Ethan Hawke), badly wounded in the war and editer of the newspaper since his father's death, is still haunted by his love for Hatsue (Youki Kudoh). He struggles over whether he should help save the scrused man, who is Hatsue's hus-

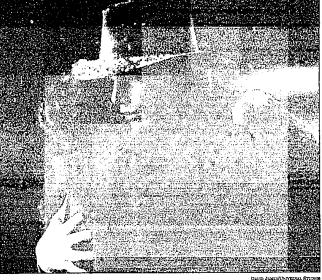
band.
The casting is faultless. Among the standouts: Max Von Sydow, the gentle defense attorney; James Cromwell, the resolutely fair judge; Rick Yune, the murder suspect; Ethan Hawke and Youk; Kudoh, the thwarted lovers; Sam Shopard, the fair-minded newspacer dilter.

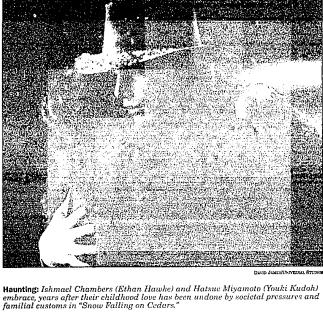
Shopard, the interminated newspa-per editor.

"Snow Folling on Cedura" is a Universal Pictures release pro-duced by Harry J. Ufland, Ron Bass, Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall. Running time: 128 minutes.



Haunting: Ishmael Chambers (Ethan Hawke) and Hatsue Miyamoto (Youki Kudoh)





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