

Waterboy not one of Sandler's best

By Duncan Dunn
FEATURES FILM CRITIC

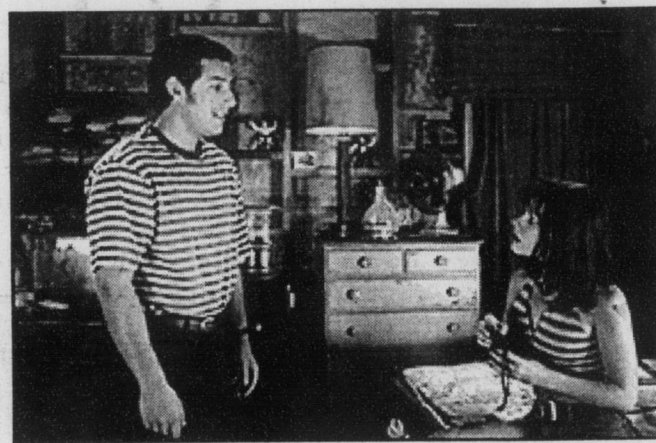
There's something really annoying about going to see a new movie and finding out you've already seen it. I realize how hard it is to come up with truly unique stories, but it seems as though all Hollywood can do is throw some old movies into a blender and hit puree. No one seems to want to write a new script. The latest movie smoothie to hit the silver screen is the new Adam Sandler vehicle, *Waterboy*.

In the film, Sandler plays Bobby Boucher, a 31-year-old professional waterboy for a Louisiana

college football team. Having grown up on that bayou with his overpowering mother (Kathy Bates) Bobby has not had a lot of time for education or social skills. As one might expect, he is not very popular with his team, or anyone really. He is the constant butt of jokes and torment. Then the sadistic Coach Red Beaulieu (Jerry Reed) decides he has had enough of the waterboy distracting his team, so he fires poor Bobby.

In desperate need of another waterboy position, Bobby finds himself working for the worst team in college football. They have not won a game in four years. Then their coach (Henry Winkler) discov-

ers a secret weapon in his waterboy. Bobby has bottled up a lot of rage throughout his years of ridicule, and when he is taught how to unleash it on the field, he is an unstoppable tackling machine. With the aid of Bobby, Coach Klein is able to turn his team around and make his waterboy a hero.

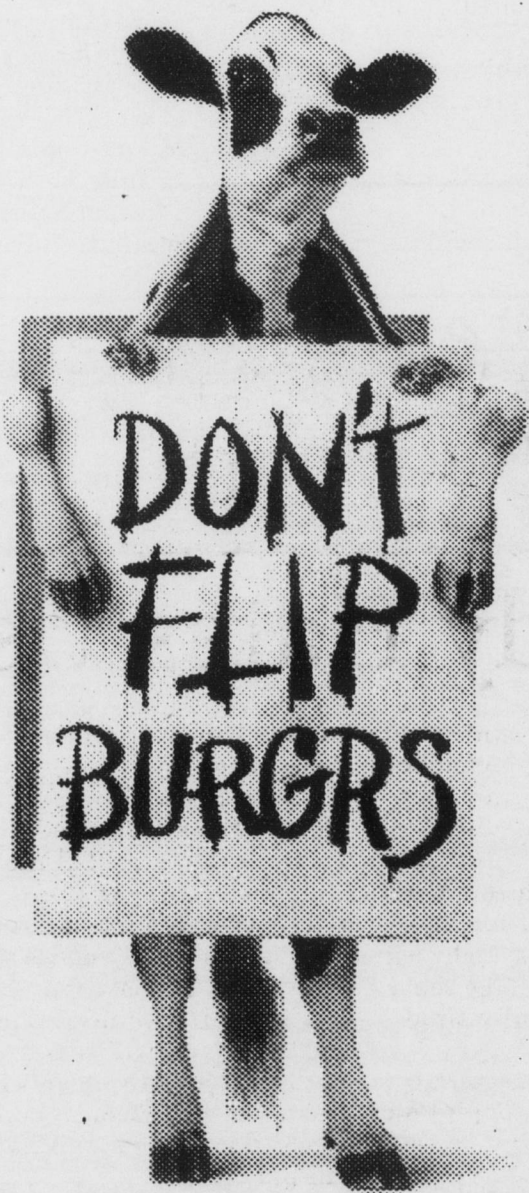


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Waterboy did not really seem like its own movie. It felt more like a strange mix of *Forrest Gump* and

Happy Gilmore. Sandler's Bobby is supposed to be a simple yet lovable character, but he is really just too annoying most of the time to really like. As the movie develops, we end up with a lot of difficult personal interaction between Bobby and some of the other characters, particularly his mother and Vicki Vallencourt (Fairuza Balk). The dialogue is strained, and the chemistry is weak. These scenes feel almost completely alien to the rest of the story. Though Bates does a good job portraying a deranged backwater mother, her character is just not developed enough to be interesting.

Perhaps that is what is wrong with the *Waterboy* in general. It just was not developed enough. If only Sandler and his co-writer Tim Herlihy had spent a little longer on the script, they might have been able to make a good movie. If you want my advice, I'd suggest you wait until the *Waterboy* makes it to video. If you want some good Adam Sandler material to tide you over, rent *Happy Gilmore* or the wonderful *Wedding Singer*.



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