

# Film looks at prejudice

A *Soldier's Play*, on which the movie *A Soldier's Story* is based, lends itself quite well to a cinematic interpretation. Through an involved series of lighting techniques, the play uses numerous flashbacks to tell the story of a black sergeant's murder.

Charles Fuller's powerful, riveting, Pulitzer Prize-winning drama may well be the most incisive exploration of racial prejudice ever written. Fuller has changed little in adapting the script from his play, and much of the dialogue, story and characters come to the screen intact.

*A Soldier's Story* opens with a black officer, Capt. Richard Davenport, arriving at a small Louisiana town in 1944 to investigate the shooting of Tech/Sergeant Vernon C. Waters. The whites in charge of the local army base resent Davenport not only because of his status, but also because he is involved in a case where whites may be guilty.

As Davenport proceeds with his report, however, he uncovers a shocking nest of racial hatred and bigotry that is just as prevalent among the black soldiers as it is among whites.

Howard E. Rollins received top billing for his role as Davenport, and he imbues his character with a mysterious, violent anger that seems ready to explode at any minute. While Rollins' characterization is interesting, though, his role serves only as a frame for the other characters.

The real star is Adolph Caesar as Sgt. Waters. Giving a brilliant performance of a man torn by the pride of his race and the shame he has for the "Southern Negro," Caesar's raspy-voiced portrayal is totally convincing and absolutely smashing.

Two monologues in particular present searing, multi-faceted depictions of internal prejudice.

The first is Waters' reminiscence of Paris during World War I and how a black man was paid to don a tail and parade through the streets as "King of the Monkeys." Waters describes the event with bitter resentment. Yet when he recounts how he and his fellow black privates slit the man's throat, his demeanor suddenly switches to passivity as he wonders why the victim asked what he did wrong.

Another shocking, revealing monologue occurs after Waters puts an innocent, ignorant black in jail. The sergeant explains that Nazis aren't so wrong, that the necessity for a master race means eliminating its weaker

## Steve Carr

### Review

members and replacing them with stronger, more educated ones.

Like Caesar, many of the cast are from the original Negro Ensemble Company production of *A Soldier's Play* and are uniformly fine. Denzel Washington gives a spirited performance as Melvin Peterson, the only soldier brave enough to challenge Waters. As C.J. Memphis, Larry Riley gives a warm, sympathetic portrayal of the type of black Waters so despises.

Despite Caesar's Oscar-caliber performance and a riveting, intelligent script, however, *A Soldier's Story* still falls short of the original play.

For one thing, Norman Jewison's direction is serviceable but nowhere near as sharp as Fuller's dialogue. Jewison adequately creates a black/white tension with many light and dark visual contrasts and such details as a "whites only" bench. He opens up the film with extended action and musical sequences, but these elements detract from Fuller's basic theme of prejudice as a universal reality.

Jewison also handles the flashbacks with a lack of imagination. Except for a few occasions, Jewison merely goes into the past and present by abrupt editing.

The most disturbing element of *A Soldier's Story*, however, is that in some ways it compromises an uncompromising play. Fuller is justifiably concerned in disseminating his work to the largest audience possible, yet he also sacrifices the dramatic pungency of his original.

Fuller eliminates aspects about the impotence of the NAACP or about the entire black outfit being wiped out in an offensive. These details are important to the play's perspective, and while they are not crucial, their absence, combined with Jewison's uninspired direction, makes *A Soldier's Story* seem a little more generic and glossy than it should.

Overall, however, the film is certainly one of the more successful screen adaptations. As a film or play it exists as one of the few works to explore bigotry as a basic human characteristic, not as a conflict between good and evil, and it is this quality that makes both dramas the great human statements that they are.

from page 1

## Barfield

Doodles from the prison canteen.

As the time drew closer for the 2 a.m. execution when Barfield would receive two doses of sodium thiopental intravenously, producing a deep sleep, and then two doses of procainium bromide, which relaxes muscles and stops breathing, the UNC Students Against the Death Penalty held a silent vigil outside the prison along with North Carolinians Against the Death Penalty and other groups opposing Barfield's execution.

Students Against the Death Penalty began preparing for the execution Tuesday night with a church service for Barfield in the Chapel of the Cross. About 15 people attended the service which was arranged by SADP and the Rev. David Stanford.

The service began on a somber note with a prayer for each of North Carolina's death row inmates. Guitar soloist Billy Barnes played and sang "Paul and Silas" and "Bridge Over Troubled Waters," while Rev. Stanford said "execution is not a way of deterring killing." He said the number of homicides had declined in Canada where the death penalty has been eliminated, while murder rates have risen in Florida where the death penalty has been rigidly enforced.

SADP member Karen Smith said that opposition to the death penalty among students is growing. When at one time student support for the death penalty was 80 "for" to 20 "against," she said the figure today is 60 to 40.

In conjunction with statewide execution alert activities of North Carolinians Against the Death Penalty, SADP held a noon vigil yesterday in the Pit and a march to the Chapel Hill Post Office.

About 20 marchers participated, some wearing shirts saying, "Why do we kill people who kill people to teach people that killing people is wrong?"

"There has to be an alternative to the problem," Smith said. "Putting someone to death is like saying we give up."

Another marcher carried a sign which read, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

Other execution alert activities included church services in Charlotte, Lumberton, Asheville and a vigil outside the state capitol in Raleigh and a church service at the Sacred Heart cathedral.

Barfield had confessed to poisoning St. Pauls farmer Stuart Taylor with ant poison slipped into beverages Taylor drank Jan. 31, 1978. He died Feb. 3, 1978. She also confessed to poisoning her mother and two elderly Lumberton residents who employed her as a live-in housekeeper.

# Whatever its origin, Chipwich is heavenly

By MICHAEL DeSISTI  
Staff Writer

Perhaps it was an accidental acquaintance, a page out of the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup book of close-and-eventually-lucrative encounters, but nobody knows for certain.

Imagine two men, one unthinkingly savoring a chocolate chip cookie and the other equally engrossed in a dish of vanilla ice cream, walking toward each other on a city sidewalk.

Eyes don't meet, but bodies do. "You've got ice cream on my chocolate chip cookie," says the one.

"You've got chocolate chip cookie in my ice cream," says the other.

In unison: "Hey, this is good!"

No. This is gold. And so it was May 1, 1981, when Richard LaMotta introduced what soon would be the nouveau riche of the ice cream novelty world: 3.5 ounces of vanilla ice cream sandwiched between chocolate chip cookies and dotted around the sides with chocolate chips, the brand name carefully chiseled into the soft cookie's surface.

Chipwich. A star was born that day when 60 vendors descended upon the streets of New York City with their mobile ice cream freezers.

Within hours, Chipwich a La Cart Inc. had sold its entire inventory of 25,000 chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwiches at \$1 a crack.

Within weeks, production was up to 40,000 Chipwiches daily.

And within months, a new plant had opened in Lodi, N.J., output had more than tripled, Chipwiches were appearing in supermarket freezers and the number of vendors had jumped to 160.

It was a case of The Right Stuff at The Right Time in The Right Place.

And it still is. But now The Right Stuff has more than one mass manufacturer, and The Right Place has grown enormously. The Right Time, of course, has simply been extended a few years.

"I was so in awe of that guy (LaMotta) and how he sold his first day's supply in a half hour," says Bradley Stanley, owner and manager of Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream Shoppe and The Cookie Jar at 112 W. Franklin St. "The first time I saw a Chipwich cart it was on a street in New Jersey. I said to my friend, 'You have to stop. I have to get a Chipwich.'"

Stanley, like so many other ice cream parlor proprietors these days, sells her own version of LaMotta's Chipwich. Customers can ask for any Haagen-Dazs flavor between two of the chocolate chip cookies that are baked fresh and sold for \$5 a pound next door in Stanley's gourmet cookie emporium.

The combination appears to be an American classic, which suits Stanley just fine because she has considerable stock in its components.

"Americans eat junk food all the time," she says, "and what better junk food than ice cream and cookies."

"It's Outrageous!" and "It's a Miracle in Your Mouth!" were among the slogans stenciled on the sides of the carts that began appearing at Kenan Stadium in the fall of 1982 during UNC football vending units were later seen inside Carmichael Auditorium, where Dean Smith and his Tar Heels were defending their national basketball championship.

Soon Chipwiches came to local supermarkets, convenience stores and seven of the University's snack bars. Imitations were spawned, and the few predecessors that existed thrived.

"We can't keep enough of 'em," says Walter Winfrey, manager of Time-Out at University Square. "We'll make 75 to 100 at a time, and the next thing you know, they'll be gone."

"We already sold chocolate chip cookies, and we already had an ice cream machine and a freezer. So we put 'em together and they sold real well."

They sold real well a few hundred yards down the street, too, where Chocolate Chip Chilly Burgers have been a mainstay in the cake case at Baskin-Robbins, 145 E. Franklin St., for years.

Phil Berkowitz, owner and manager of the Chapel Hill store, says that the worldwide franchise has sold Chilly Burgers for at least 15 years now.

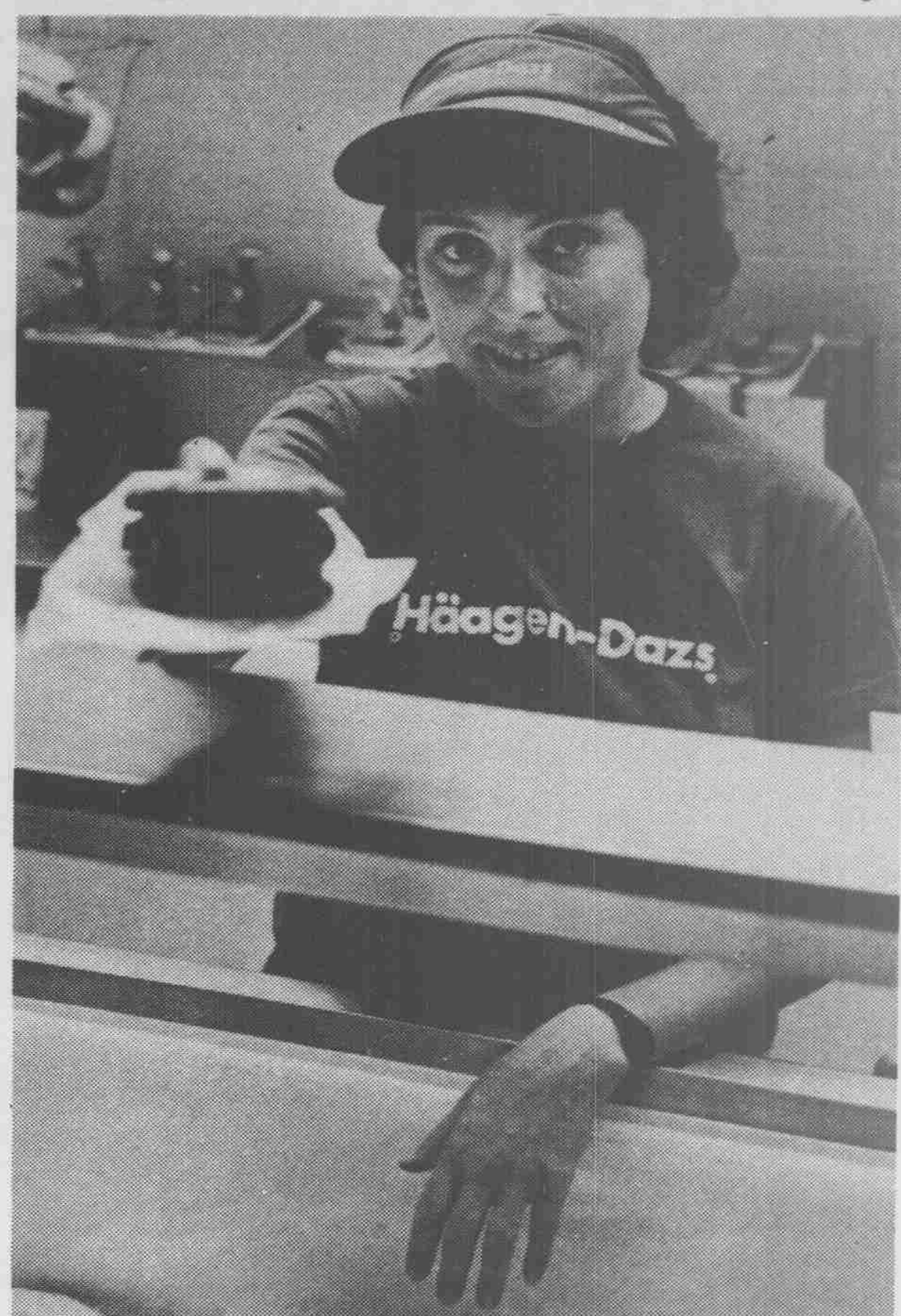
The homemade chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwich also is in vogue. Raynor Cassey, a senior chemistry and anthropology major at UNC from Greenville, made one in September that was 12 inches in diameter and filled with three half-gallons of ice cream.

"Chipwiches are the 'in' thing with the 'in' crowd," says Cassey, who says he can triple the size of his Monsterwiches with the use of a pizza oven.

Baskin-Robbins' Chocolate Chip Chilly Burgers are not the only chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwich to outdate the Chipwich. But it's safe to say that the Chipwich's imitators by far outnumber its predecessors, and for a simple reason.

Unlike the chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwiches that came before it, the Chipwich was mass-marketed: tested, advertised, packaged and pushed to some 79 major markets across the continental United States, Hawaii and Canada.

"They put it in a package, and they



DTH/Jeff Neuville

### Cold and chewy: Chapel Hill residents can get Chipwiches at Haagen-Dazs

can ship it all over the country," says Leon Todd, the owner of Swensen's Ice Cream Factory at University Square, whose chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwiches — called Munchies — are served on a stick and enrobed in chocolate. "They can order 10,000 Chipwiches from their factory, put them in a freezer truck and ship them out to Kenan Stadium."

Sam Metzger, president of Chipwich, Inc., says the imitations upset him at first, but he has since come to see their importance in his product's prosperity.

"It's the copies that created a lot of awareness and allowed Chipwich to grow as rapidly as we grew," Metzger says. "At this stage, I would prefer not to have them. But they helped create an awareness."

Metzger says it was this rapid

growth that last spring necessitated his signing a joint managing and licensing agreement with three major dairies, which turned over all production and distribution to Borden's Inc., Knudsen's Dairy and Southland Inc.

"We were classic entrepreneurs attempting to bootstrap the development of this product, but it just took off," Metzger says. "We sort of outstripped our financial capabilities early on."

But through it all, the Chipwich has remained: offspring of the ice cream renaissance and gourmet cookie craze, father of numerous imitations.

Chocolate chip cookies and ice cream.

"It's a marriage," Metzger says. And all the anniversaries have been golden.

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