

Bruce Brooks

Piccolo tragedy makes for unjaded sentiment

As a judgment on "Brian's Song" after its spring telecast on ABC, sportscaster Howard Cosell nasaled dramatically "I wept unabashedly, unabashedly." Well, this film deserves a good deal more than tears, even Howard's unabashed ones, for its excellence cannot be appreciated in terms of sadness. It is sentimental Cinema with a hard edge of skill and style that makes it one of the least jerky of tear-jerkers, avoiding as it does the sob-oriented single-mindedness that is the first step towards banality in so many overdone melodramas.

"Brian's Song" is adapted from professional football player Gale Sayers' book "I Am Third", the true story of his friendship with fellow-rookie Brian

Piccolo beginning in 1965. The relationship lasts less than two years, for Piccolo died of cancer in 1967. The movie is split along the lines of the two extremes of emotional tone that are natural to these situations: the rollicking good-times of easy-going intimacy, and the sickly pallor of personal tragedy. Though the split makes for a slightly fractured effect relative to the tragedy, it allows the early half of the movie to survive in all its happy brilliance, as free as possible from the necessary heaviness of the decline toward Brian's death.

The presentation of the friendship is one of the most unashamedly warm bits of screen camaraderie I have seen since "Jules and Jim," comparable to

"Borsalino" in many ways. The acting was largely responsible for the natural effects of the witnessed affection: Billy Dee Williams as Gale Sayers and especially James Caan as Brian Piccolo were superb. Another factor in the success of this aspect is that director Buzz Kulick resisted the Great American Football Ethic and treated the sport simply as another piece of life rather than The Game of Life. The result is the characterization of two men who happen to be football players, instead of two football players who are *ex officio* super men. There are blessedly few spectres of Knute Rockne or Ronald Reagan hanging around banging lockers or waving star-spangled jockstraps, but on the other

hand the natural athletic personality of the men is not hidden behind a facade of liberal intellectualism.

The most important reason that the depiction of the friends succeeds is the sense of *clipped* sentimentality and *dry* affection perceptively effected by the script and the editing. The script is always one step ahead of the coldest of viewers: when Sayers, in close-up, delivers an undeniably sincere expression of affection and loyalty, Piccolo mutters "Yeh" and turns to something practical, without frigidity but with an arid acceptance that nips in the bud our unconscious twitch of discomfort at the necessary sentimental words. In the same way, the editing is done with a brilliant

sense of a shot's limited efficacy. The cuts are such that the shots are always crisp and sharp together, avoiding any extended visual mushiness.

The transition between this clipped style and the heaviness of the death contemplation is all the more difficult because the early style was not compromised by loaded foreshadowing of the latter. This is unfortunate for the tragic depth of the second half, for it is hard for the viewer to catch up to the sadness until well into the dying. The effect is not helped any by a poorly-cast, poorly-directed, and inanely-acted bubblehead of a beauty-full wife for Brian, played by the sweet Shelley Fabares. She damn near ruins a very good

and moving death-scene by Caan and Williams by throwing herself stiffly upon their wretched husband and sporting "I love you, Brian" through her lipstick as if she were begging for minks from a Sugar-Daddy. But, her part is graciously small, and by the end of the film the strength of the friendship's tone carries us well through the weakened emotional effect of the dying.

The movie, finally, should not be regarded as a part of the Football Film genre, or even the Cancer Killing genre, or classified in any literary way beyond its being "sentimental". Buzz Kulick worked hard to avoid the pitfalls of these jaded stereotypes, and his product is admirable and immensely enjoyable.

Bruce Mann

'Simon says laugh'

During one of those capricious game shows a la "Truth or Consequences" a decade ago — as I recall, it came just after Bill Cullen's "The Price is Right" — contestants were enveloped in an overgrown grocery sack and given one minute flat to punch their way out of the bag. Few succeeded. The problem and its solution seemed so simple. But the odds were continually against them.

Somehow the gods gave the odds to simple Simon, alias Neil Simon, Broadway's most successful current playwright and often called the laughing doc of the entire nation. Most of his plays have but one setting. His characters are few and not complex. His domain is merely the middle class. His allusions and images stem from un-eclectic sources such as television and old movies. But Simon, a former writer for Sid Caesar, has been around a good while. He likes to back himself into as tight a corner as he can and then like the Missouri Mauler, bound off the ropes into the center of the ring. He's determined to box himself out of the big sack into the big time with smooth, simon-pure humor. The result is not art. It's kitsch to conceal kitsch.

Simon says laugh. That's the doc's prescription and panacea for our ills. Middle class America has responded by becoming addicted to his plays ("Plaza Suite" "Barefoot in the Park" "Last of the Red Hot Lovers"). For those who haven't made an appointment to see him yet, the Village Dinner Theatre is dispensing a new and good production of Simon's most popular trifle, "The Odd Couple." Here's a generous get-acquainted offer.

"The Odd Couple," voted most popular comedy by local patrons, returns after a three year absence. It is, to say the least, dinner theatre caviar. The characters are black and white and

familiar as can be — Felix the neatnik and Oscar the slob. The situation is stock — Felix separates from his wife and spouse-less Oscar welcomes him in as a roommate, that is, until Felix turns their relationship into a chain-linked marriage itself. (Felix sports a fetish for thrift, sanitation and efficiency. Sportswriter Oscar is a good-time Charlie. "Getting a clear picture on Channel 2 is not my idea of whoopee," he tells Felix who sees TV as economy entertainment.) But it's a perpetual "laugh-riot," instigated by masses of one-liners — each and every one tuned to fit the moment.

I'm told that "The Odd Couple" is the subject of at least two Ph.D. dissertations. Whatever else the grad students wring from the script, they should certainly tabulate Simon's debt to TV and movies. Oscar says he can't stand being "cooped up with Mary Poppins 24 hours a day." The card-dolphins who gather for Oscar's Friday night poker game describe Felix as a fellow who "wears a seatbelt at the drive-in movie." And Bill Hartigan, owner of the Village Theatre, keeps a running tally of Simon's references to "The Wizard of Oz."

W.C. Fields must have been on Simon's mind when he composed the scene with the "coo-coo" Pigeon Sisters. Oscar, feeling himself the last of the red hot lovers, engages these frizzy haired flibbertigibbets for an embarrassing dinner date. "I'll have a double drambuie over crushed ice," says Gwendolyn with a knowing wink to Oscar. "That is, unless you don't have the crushed ice," she adds giggling. Raising his eyebrows and swaggering slightly, Oscar replies, "I've been up all night with the sledgehammer."

There's more. Felix happens to write the news for CBS. One of the

bird-brained sophisticates asks, to crack the conversation ice, "Where do you get your ideas from?" And there's yet another TV allusion when Gwendolyn can't remember Felix's name — Cecily purrs, "Felix — like-the-cat."

Director Michael Davidson's cast is credible and creditable. On opening night the initial act trembled a bit from shaky lines. But the cast rescued the rest. They play Simon straight.

If Jack Darcy doesn't steal the show as meticulous Felix, he at least takes out a long term loan. Felix's most embarrassing moment is Darcy's most effective. When Felix would best be at a loss for words with the Pigeon Sisters, he forthrightly delivers a flaccid "They say it might rain on Friday," a line which lies dead in the water and anchors the evening date in a swamp of discomfort. Sloppy Oscar is Tony Preston, looking a bit young for the part but still quite convincing. Both leads should deliver lines with more decisiveness.

The Pigeon Sisters (Brueella Brunsworthy and Maxine Bernstein) ooze and slither and tee-hee through their cliché roles. A tad British, they delight and tickle our fancies.

These odd couples receive support from the crew of poker players (Bernard Taro, Arthur Taxier, David Freeman), whose ensemble timing will soon even out.

In screwball comedy people and things fly madly. In the curious genre of Neil Simon's oddball comedy the people stand still and the lines dart about. "The Odd Couple" is close to Simon's best.

An auspicious start for the dinner theatre's fall season. They'll follow this act with "Fiddler on the Roof" Oct. 3, a "Cactus Flower," and another Neil Simon script "Come Blow Your Horn" will round out the year.



Ecological progress

At last, an all too rare triumph of nature over progress. This ancient oak tree nestles into the angle of the new Hamilton Hall, and thanks to some enlightened souls on the staff of the University Physical Plant was not swept away during construction. Although several pipelines and cables had to be installed through the tree's root system, an ingenious

arrangement of gravel beds, and soil drainage channels was devised to allow the proper nutrients and moisture to reach the roots. In fact, preservation of this tree was an integral part of the planning and construction of the building, and its preservation is guaranteed for many years to come.

coupon

TAR HEEL CAR WASH
FULL SERVICE
SAVE THIS COUPON AND GET
25¢ OFF YOUR NEXT CARWASH
GOOD EXCEPT FRI. & SAT. UNTIL
SEPT. 15, 1972
ONE COUPON PER CARWASH.
CANNOT BE USED WITH GAS
PURCHASE DISCOUNT PLAN.

TAR HEEL CAR WASH
426 E. MAIN ST.
Midway Chapel Hill—Carrboro
8-5:30 p.m. Daily Except Sunday

**YOU'D BETTER
GET YOUR
BOTTOMS IN
103 EAST!**

**And Your Tops, Too
Tank Tops, Skinny Ribs,
Jeans. All Nice
And Affordable.**

103 EAST
tops 'n
bottoms
center for
him 'n her

103 E. Franklin St. (Upstairs)

**Win
this Honda.**

**Guess the number of Swingline
Tot staples in the jar.**
The jar is approximately square
—3" x 3" x 4 1/2". Look for the
clue about "Tot" capacity.

The "Tot 50" is an unconditionally guaranteed. It staples, tacks, mends and costs only 98¢ suggested retail price at Stationery, Variety and College Bookstores with 1,000 staples and vinyl pouch. Swingline Cub Desk and Hand Staplers for \$1.98 each.

Fill in coupon or send postcard. No purchase required. Entries must be postmarked by Nov. 30, 1972 and received by Dec. 8, 1972. Final decision by an independent judging organization. In case of tie, a drawing determines a winner. Offer subject to all laws and void in Fla., Mo., Wash., Minn. & Idaho. **IMPORTANT: Write your guess outside the envelope, lower lefthand corner.**

*Clue: (You could fill between 200 and 300 Tots with the Staples in the Jar.)
Swingline Honda G
P.O. Box 1
New York, N.Y. 10016

THERE ARE _____ STAPLES IN THE JAR

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Telephone No. _____

Swingline

37-00 Skutumpah Ave. Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

CLASSIFIEDS

McCleery Imports brings you savings on: cameras, lenses, watches, and binoculars. McCleery Imports, E-9 Crossdale, Durham, N.C. 27705, Eves. 383-1066.

Roommate wanted to share 2 bedroom apt. at Royal Park. Air cond., carpet, and pool. Rent \$70 plus utilities. If interested call Steve at 942-7366.

Stereo: Ripped off by stereo prices? Buy almost all brands components and systems at lowest discount prices; all price ranges; full warranties; agent for large distributor; call Ann 942-7172.

Sony TC366 reel stereorecorder with SOS, SWS, Echo, three heads, four tracks, two filters and clamped VU meters. New \$273. Used one year. Now \$175. Call 967-5723.

TV's FOR RENT: new portables, free delivery \$30.00 per month. Campus Electronics, 209 E. Main Street, Carrboro, 967-6356.

WANTED—Girls for barmaids and cocktail waitresses. Apply in person to the Electric Co. Nite Club, Eastgate Shopping Center, Chapel Hill. Call Barbara Kurian between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. No experience necessary—will train.

For Sale—72 Yamaha 250 Enduro, ex. cond., including fork brace, MX fender, other extras. \$550. Call 732-3389 Hillsborough.

1970 VW Fastback. Blue with sunroof, radio, cassette stereo, console, four good tires. Call 929-6777 after 5.

Oldsmobile '69 Cutlass, 4 door, air conditioning, etc. Low mileage, excellent condition, \$1875. 929-5031.

MUST SELL BMW R-60! Matrimony wins over motorcycle. 1971. Excellent condition. \$1050. Call 933-1073.

Part-time sales opportunity for UNC students only. NORTHWESTERN, your ABC-TV Olympic sponsor, famous for quality and low cost in its product. Car and 7 hours per week required. Apply personally 404 NML Bldg., 123 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill.

1963 Pontiac. New tires. Good transportation. \$275. Call 967-4936.

\$400 meal ticket for sale: any 2 meals, 5 days a week. Good till Dec. 21. Cost \$300. Call 933-5261.

ROOMMATE WANTED to share 2 BR apt. Contact Bob Davis, L-12 Royal Park, Carrboro. After 7:30 p.m., 929-4039; 9-5, 832-8824 (Raleigh), leave message.

For sale: Zenith portable stereo. New \$200.00. Now \$100.00. Excellent condition, good sound. Call 942-7571.

Needed: 1 or 2 roommates for 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath, air-conditioned apt. Rent \$155/mo split 2 or 3 ways. Call: 929-2719.

Wanted—Part time help between 5 p.m. and 12 p.m. Apply in person at the Chapel Hill Dairy Bar, 203 E. Franklin St.

Male Roommate Wanted to share 1 bedroom apartment \$65 a month, 2D Yum Yum Apts. or 933-7313. Senior or grad preferred.

RIDE TO BOONE: any weekend. Will help with expenses. Also need riders some weekends. Can leave any time Friday. Call 933-7002.

Stereo: Dynaco stereo 120 power amp and PAT4 preamp, best over \$200. Norelco 202 turntable, B&O Sp 12 cartridge \$95. 929-8870 after 5:30 weekdays, anytime weekends. Keep trying.

Female roommate wanted for apt. in residential area w/in walking distance to campus. \$50.00/month. Call Barb 929-6858.

People who have never been licensed to drive are needed as subjects for a vision and driving study conducted by the Highway Safety Research Center—\$2.50 per hr. Subjects must be female, 18-21 yrs., and have normal uncorrected vision. Please call 933-2202 and mention the vision and driving study.

Need extra money? Roy Rogers' Restaurant is now hiring for the fall semester. We have openings available immediately for full or part-time, day or night. Apply in person Roy Rogers' Family Restaurant, 106 Mallett Street, Chapel Hill.

WANTED: Used five or ten speed bike—Call Phillip Price, 933-0421 Granville South.

Male & Female Help Wanted. Full & part time. Apply in person, Burger Chef, 337 W. Rosemary, between 1 & 5 p.m.

Wanted: Babysitter. Wife will work from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. for 1 wk., from 3 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. the next. Would like someone to keep baby (1 yr., 10 mos.) accordingly in Chapel Hill area. If interested in either set of hours or both, please call collect in Raleigh after 5:30 p.m. 876-3952.

Motorcyclists. Do you want to help your sport and earn money too? If you are a male 18 or older and have a motorcycle call the Highway Safety Research Center at 933-2202. Please mention you are calling for the motorcycle study.

DRUMMER needs work: 15 years experience in clubs, shows, jazz, rock. Also double on piano and voice. Can read anything. 967-4491.

FOR RENT: 1 large room with half bath and one small room near high school. 967-4491.

Flight Instruction: Learn to fly this year with UNC student Gus Gray. Individual instruction from beginning through private through commercial licenses. For information on types of aircraft, programs, costs, requirements, and scheduling, call 929-3601 after 6 p.m. or 967-6304 during day.

HONDAS: Three bikes for sale: '71 CL & SL 250's. Both immaculate. '66 305 Scrambler, mechanically sound. Yard sale Saturday, 119 Pine St. Carrboro. Clothes, furniture, etc. 967-5617.

Hundreds of oldie but goodie 45's for sale. 1955 to 1964. Also some old albums. Mono Sony TC-95 Portable Cassette Player-Recorder for sale. 942-6635.

Refrigerator for rent. 7 cu. ft. Call 942-8666.

HELPI! Cute kittens will have to be put to sleep if not given away. Litter trained, have shots. 942-1830.

Roommate Wanted: Graduate Female. Furnished two bedroom apartment in Carrboro. Call 967-7596 after 5:00.

Room Available: Third roommate needed for mobile home. Private room, kitchen privileges, etc. Call 942-8125.

Roommate Wanted to share two bdrm. trailer 5 minute drive from campus. Call 933-8733.

1971 Honda 350 SL—Less than year old, low mileage, must sell. \$550. Call Mike 929-2502.

Crossword Puzzle

Answer to Yesterday's Puzzle

ALT	HA	SCOOP
LADDER	PAINED	
PSYCHOLOGISTS	SO	
SH	BEAN	BATS
PERE	LISP	ALE
AERIE	DOOR	ED
ONES	ROOT	
RA	TRET	ROARS
OPA	YARD	FLEW
APSE	SIRE	EM
ME	BROMIDE	OE
SALOON	ENACTS	
RENDS	SA	PES

ACROSS

- Sunburn
- Balance
- Large tub
- Mohammedan name
- Later
- Girl's name
- Expels from country
- Chief artery
- Top of head
- The osama
- Let it stand
- Vague
- Brief
- Roman tyrant
- A state (abbr.)
- Abstract being
- Shovel
- Room in harem
- Conjunction
- Command to cat
- Stage extra (colloq.)
- Settled by intervention
- French for "father"
- Knocks
- Winglike
- Trumpeter bird
- Fortelli
- Republican party (init.)
- Birds' homes
- Sailor (colloq.)
- Dutch town
- Ground grain
- Organ of sight

DOWN

- Youngster
- Beverage
- Fingers
- Separate
- Frequently
- Possessive pronoun
- Compass point
- Anything rubbed out (pl.)
- American bird
- Emmet
- Chinese pagoda
- Grain (pl.)
- European capital
- In bed
- Vapor
- Taut
- Growing out of
- Beneath
- Portion
- Eluding
- Strokes
- Manage
- Country of Asia
- Javanese tree
- Arrange in folds
- Arrows
- For fear that
- Mature
- Deity
- Greek letter
- Merry
- Before
- Teutonic deity

Distr. by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.