



Courtesy photo

Steve Guttenberg, Tom Selleck and Ted Danson find a baby that changes their perfect yuppie lives in "Three Men and a Baby."

'Three Men' uses recycled plot

Baby films were not an uncommon genre in the classical Hollywood days. Debbie Reynolds and Jerry Lewis are just two of the unweds to inherit a toddler left on a doorstep (or whatever) and face the problems of single parenting (problems were solved easily then — get married).

Review by
Sean Axmaker

Yet I'm at odds to explain how the genre has resurfaced in two films within a month. In "Baby Boom," "Tiger Lady" Diane Keaton, a successful executive in a huge ad firm, inherits her cousin's child and can't make motherhood mesh with a career, and in the self-explanatory title, "Three Men and a Baby," Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg and Ted Danson are a trio of professionals sharing an impressive bachelor penthouse who find a basket on the proverbial doorstep.

The two films have a striking number of similarities. Certainly the humor revolves around expected bits: changing a diaper, holding a baby, stopping a bawling infant from crying, etc. The themes are remarkably consistent as well. It is almost impossible to balance

a professional life with parenting, they find, and despite the hardships parenting is too rewarding to give up.

Finally they share a very interesting commonality — the respective parents of each film are fabulously successful, wealthy yuppies with what they believe to be a full life. The conclusions of both pictures find an almost too pat solution where almost nothing is given up; despite all of the filmmakers' insistence, there is no real conflict, merely a life adjustment. Literally, our characters begin with having it all and conclude with even more.

This observation doesn't deny the charm or humor of the respective pictures. Though "Baby Boom" isn't as funny as it likes to think it is, Diane Keaton is entertaining as a flustered corporate executive who can't change a diaper. The film's problem may be an over-reliance on Keaton to mug through some rather mundane scenes and hold together a script that is episodic at best. It is strongest while in the city; when Keaton moves to Vermont the writers replay old Green Acres scripts and can't seem to get over conventional bumpkin stereotypes to create a community of real people.

"Three Men" is somewhat

more successful. It has more characters and character interaction on which to base gags, and even with the stupid drug

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Realistic setting, cast make 'Wish' appealing

"Wish You Were Here" is a poignant character study of a British "schoolgirl" who flouts middle-class conventions with her salty language and her wanton behavior. In spite of her rebellion, Linda (Emily Lloyd) is essentially an innocent. Emotionally wounded by the death of her mother, and lacking any intimacy with her detached father, Linda lashes out against her dull, stifling environment by flaunting her charms and engaging in two unsatisfying sexual encounters.

Review by
D. M. Holiman

But in spite of her brazen front, Linda is a young woman yearning for not only attention and excitement but for some emotional connection. Unfortunately, the men she meets are interested primarily in her physical attributes.

Eventually Linda becomes pregnant, but instead of having an abortion or giving the

baby up for adoption, she decides to keep it. The film, which shifts from low-key drama to whimsical humor, suggests that Linda may finally have found that emotional connection, but at what price we're not sure.

"Wish You Were Here" features a memorable performance by Lloyd. Her portrayal of Linda is always engaging, even when her character reveals less appealing characteristics. The rest of the cast, headed by Tom Bell as her middle-aged lover, give fine performances as well.

David Leland, the writer and director of the film, creates an authentic post-World War II world, where most of the lives of townspeople are dull and dreary. The film works on a small scale. It keeps close to its subject, never drifting away for dramatic impact or artificially comic complications.

As a character study, "Wish You Were Here" is satisfying. However, the small scale of the film limits the impact.



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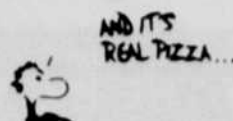
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