



Tough & Corny

An awkward tale of sibling rivalry

RUDO Y CURSI: Written and directed by Carlos Cuarón. Cinematography, Adam Kimmel. Editing, Alex Rodriguez. Music, Felipe Pérez Santiago. Starring Gael García Bernal, Diego Luna, Guillermo Francella, Adriana Paz and Jessica Mas. Sony Pictures Classics, 2009. R. 103 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

Somehow, it's been seven years since Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna were two sides of a gorgeous

love triangle in Alfonso Cuarón's *Y Tu Mama Tambien*. *Y Tu Mama* was written by Alfonso Cuarón and his little brother Carlos, who now directs *Rudo y Cursi*, a film that comes with a burden of expectation that's not all due to the presence of its stars. The film's producers include that glowing trinity of Mexican filmmaking: the elder Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro and Alejandro

González Iñárritu. Plus, it involves football (it would be wrong to call it soccer in this context). What could go wrong?

Well, plenty. *Rudo y Cursi* roughly translates to "tough and corny," and as many a viewer has already pointed out, the film has too much of the latter. It's a soapy story about the price of fame that comes liberally doused in cheesy metaphors about sport and life, most of which are delivered in voiceover by Guillermo Francella, who sounds slightly amused by what he's being asked to say. Francella plays Batuta, a football scout who claims a great love of the game but isn't above threatening coaches when they don't put in his players in. In a small village, he finds Beto (Luna) and Tato (García Bernal), half brothers who work at a banana farm and play football on a local dirt field. Beto already has his nickname, Rudo, on account of his aggression. Tato is dubbed Cursi after Batuta takes him to Mexico City and gets him on a team; Tato's play is a bit goofy, apparently, though all we really see of it is his post-goal ritual. For whatever reason (a comment in the production notes suggests García Bernal isn't much of a footballer), *Rudo y Cursi* skimps on actual game play, which leaches the story of some of its passion.

Getting on a team is a dream come true for Beto when Batuta summons him to the city. Like Tato, he finds football success, but where Tato would rather be a famous singer (a limelight-lover, he also dates a famous TV personality), Beto can't stop gambling. For the most part, *Rudo y Cursi* treads familiar narrative ground, its undisciplined characters the victims of their own personalities and desires. They're believable fuckups but not particularly sympathetic ones, and their cinematic plight is an off-balance mix of occasionally comic and, as the film progresses, increasingly dangerous. Naturally, everything comes to a head in the film's final game, a fraternal clash that outshines the rest of the film. Finally, the game itself means something to the story; whatever happens, the crashing arcs of Beto and Tato's stories will find some kind of resolution. *Rudo y Cursi* isn't an uplifting sports movie any more than it's a realistic slice-of-life film; it treads strangely, slightly awkwardly, in the middle ground. Is it dismissive of a small town kid's big dreams, or is Cuarón suggesting that if you try to live doing something that's not your passion, it's all going to go dramatically wrong?

EW

Rudo y Cursi opens Friday, June 12, at the Bijou.

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Great Directors Series: The LCC/DIVA series shows Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1973) and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978), 1 pm Sunday, June 14, DIVA. \$5.

Imagine That: Eddie Murphy is a businessman who has no time for his daughter until her imaginary world starts turning out the solutions to his work crisis. Can we use that imaginary world to create some more interesting movie plots? PG. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Rudo y Cursi: Carlos Cuarón doesn't quite come out from under the shadow of his older brother Alfonso (*Children of Men*) with this story of small-town half-brothers who find fame and disaster playing football (y'know, soccer) in Mexico City. Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna turn in solid performances, but the story is at once familiar and frustrating. R. 103 min. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Seventeen Again: Would Zac Efron really grow up into Chandler Bing? Er, I mean Matthew Perry? That's just one thing to consider in this comedy, in which washed-up former high-school hot stuff Mike O'Donnell (Perry) finds himself in his 17-year-old body again. With Leslie Mann, Thomas Lennon and Michelle Trachtenberg. PG13. Movies 12.

Sunshine Cleaning: Amy Adams and Emily Blunt carry this film about sisters (and their eccentric father – played by Alan Arkin, of course – and assorted acquaintances) whose job cleaning up crime scenes leads them to make some unexpected connections and deal with long-ago tragedy. It's a bit too quirky-sweet, but the leads are very good all the same. R. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (4/2)

Taking of Pelham 123, The: Denzel Washington is a New York subway dispatcher whose day gets a little weird when John Travolta hijacks a train and threatens to kill passengers if he doesn't get a hefty sum. R. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Tyson: Director James Toback (*Two Girls and a Guy*) lets Mike Tyson tell his own story in this documentary, which mixes footage of Tyson talking (and swinging between moods) with archival footage of the boxer in his prime. A "provocatively sympathetic, impressionistic documentary portrait," said *Entertainment Weekly*. R. 88 min. Bijou.

Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

WINK + KINK

Check out Eugene Weekly's Fun Local Personals Site.

FREE to Browse, Place a Profile, or an "I Saw You."

eugeneweekly.com • wink-kink.com





Eugene's newest media firm offers solutions for all your design needs.

541-359-2355

• burritos • bowls • quesadillas • home-made soups and salads • kids' menu • organic juices • real fruit smoothies • micro-brewed sodas and beers • home-baked cookies and pies • sustainable and locally grown produce • flash-steaming • a full dollop of humor and irreverence to aid digestion •

Good for You. Good for Your Wallet. Good for Your Planet too!



Laughing PlanetCafe

Out-of-this-world food that's wholesome, fast, affordable and portable.

760 BLAIR BLVD, EUGENE 541.868.0668

Open everyday 11:00am–10:00pm

www.laughingplanetcafe.com





Patisserie
755 monroe st