

Cynical Willis Satisfies

In Country
Warner Bros.
Famous Players Theaters

review by Arthur Kingston

In Country is a contemporary drama set in the small rural town of Hopewell, Kentucky. It stars Emily Lloyd as Samantha Hughes, a naive, Southern belle whose father died in the Vietnam conflict before she was born. The film deals with Samantha's obsession to discover the nature of her father, a mysterious figure whom she has never known. At the same time it explores the angst rooted in the lives of Vietnam veterans and their families.

Samantha has recently graduated from high school and is under pressure from her mother, Irene (Joan Allen), to enter college and move to Lexington, where she has started a new life. However, Samantha has chosen to remain behind and live with her uncle, Emmet Smith (Bruce Willis), a grizzled and cynical Vietnam veteran. Samantha locates a cache of her father's personal effects, most notably his letters. Her attempts to gain more information from Emmet generates friction between them, while he stonewalls her efforts.

Undaunted, Samantha turns to the local veterans in pursuit of more information at a dance held in the veteran's honor, the first official recognition of them. The decor in the dance hall is reminiscent of the inside of a military bivouac, with camouflage netting and olive drab canvass hanging from the ceiling and draped from the walls. The event is awkward and uncomfortable, with all parties involved feeling uneasy and tense.

Samantha observes the disheartening after-effects of the war in these veterans — that of once proud men who are now disillusioned and alienated. The deepest wounds that they carry are not so much physical, but emotional and psychological as well. These were brought about after the hostile reception and animosity veterans were given upon their arrival home.

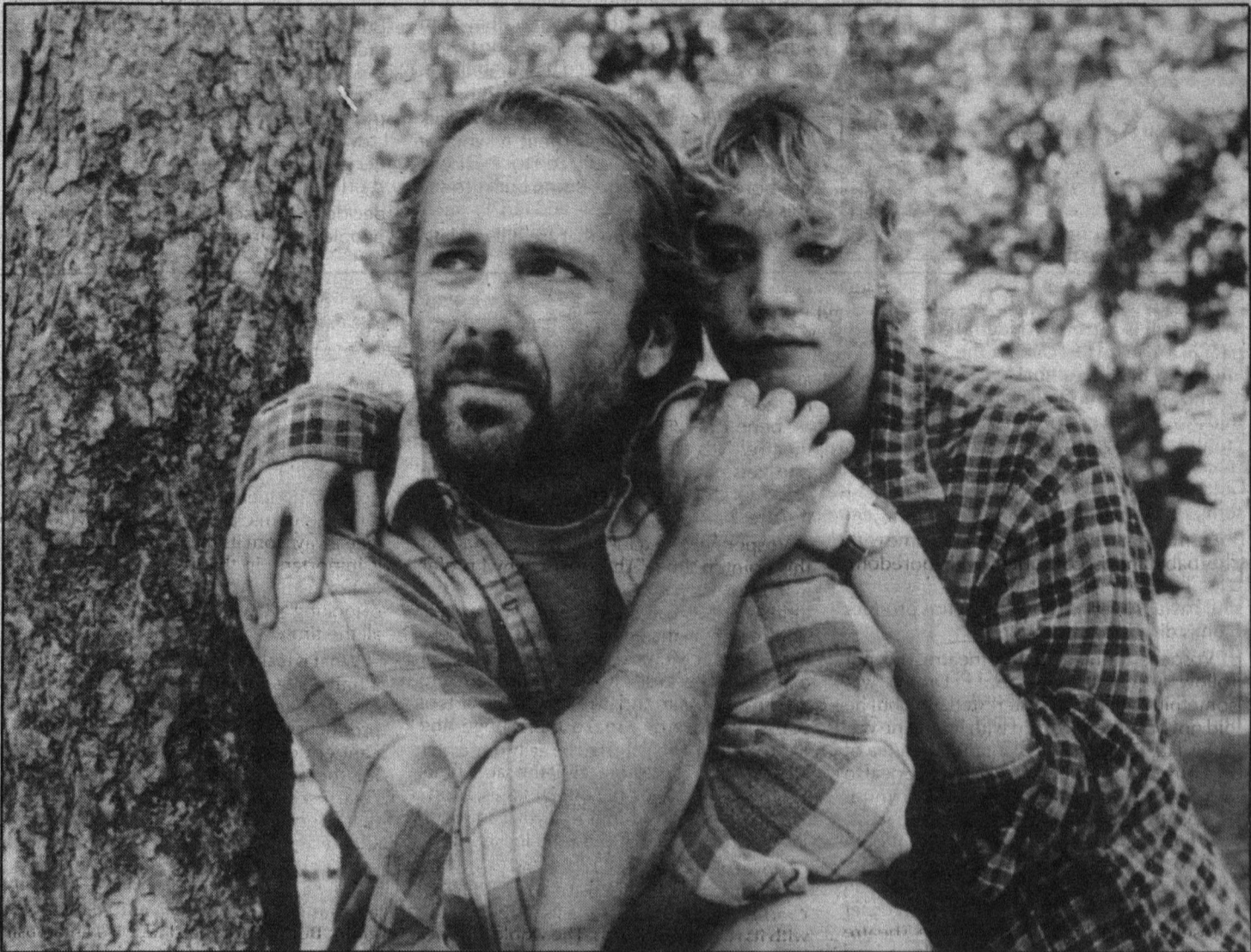
Unfortunately, there are a few detractors to

the film. Emily Lloyd shows her inexperience in the film, grossly overacting her part as a naive girl, bringing new meaning to the term "dumb blonde." There are a few subplots which could have been edited from the

screenplay without having a detrimental effect on the movie. One example is Samantha's teenage girlfriend's unwanted pregnancy. There is a large degree of repetition, almost to the point of overkill, which slows the movie down considerably.

On the whole, the movie is enjoyable to watch, and worthwhile seeing. Bruce Willis'

acting is excellent. He is one hundred per cent believable as a cynical veteran with a sharp wit. The humour in the film is spontaneous and delivered point-blank, not being flippant or unnecessary. The movie is heartwarming and touching, with an emotional impact that doesn't leave you feeling spent, just pleasantly satisfied.



Emmet (Bruce Willis) is consoled by his niece Sam (Emily Lloyd) in the Warner Bros. production of *In Country*.

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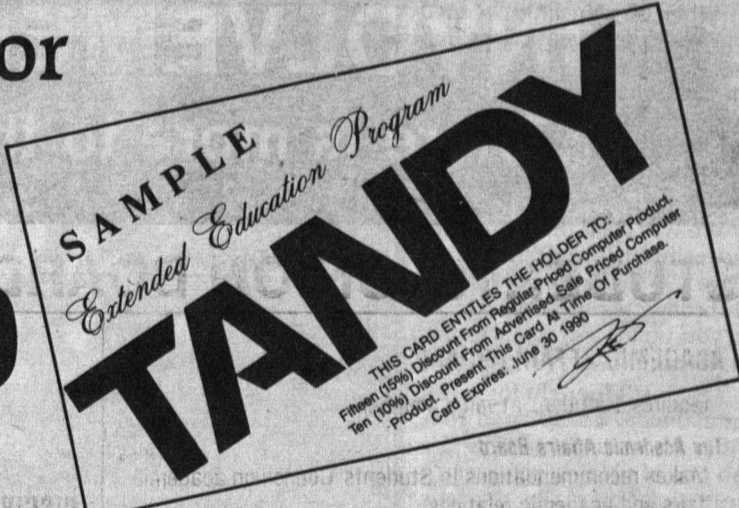
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