



"I'm not very good at what I'm successful at," says William Hurt as Tom Grunick

## Broadcasting new messages

**Broadcast News**  
**Twentieth Century Fox**  
 Whitefield Crossing, Westmont 4,  
 West Mall 6

review by David Smith

*Broadcast News* succeeds in saying a great many things about that part of life which develops between 'your first big career move' and 'your arrival at the top.' And pleasantly enough, it is all delivered sincerely, not with the sugary sweetness that audiences have come to expect from Hollywood in the last few decades.

The Rock Hudson/Doris Day pictures set an unpleasant standard back in the fifties: man meets woman, man chases woman, woman flies actively for ninety 'fun-filled' minutes, woman allows herself to be caught in the last twenty minutes of the film for a

happy ending. This formula for comedy/romance/drama was so redundantly employed by film makers in the seventies, and even the early eighties that audiences have come to expect it (possibly even want it). James L. Brooks has created a movie that refuses to fit that mold to the very end, and in doing so, he has presented audiences with a brilliant alternative to 'and they lived happily ever after.'

William Hurt portrays anchorman Tom Grunick, who appears as a trustworthy and honest anchorman, presenting the news with as much conscience and concern as Cronkite could ever muster. Yet underneath his grave expressions of emotion and patented good looks is a man who really does not know what he's doing. Were it not for his producer, played by Holly Hunter, Grunick would be as two-dimensional and flat as his

image on the small screen. The real talent to presenting informative news lies in the give-and-take relationship that exists between producer Jane and the station's number one reporter, played by Albert Brooks. In one scene, Brooks is watching the broadcast, and feeding information to his producer, who in turn is feeding information to the anchorman, who is informing the nation about a recent fast-breaking story. It's a vicious cycle, with Brooks' character Aaron on the losing end.

Tragically, Aaron never makes the move from backroom genius to up-front player: the one time he tries, he is publicly humiliated. But in his failure to beat the odds lies the real-life heart-smashing truth that Hollywood strives to miss, and that James L. Brooks designed this film around: life isn't fair. Director Brooks does not spare the audience a second from the unpleasant fact that in any sphere—public or personal, business or pleasure, there will always be someone who can screw you; whether he be fate or your best friend is almost irrelevant.

And there is a lot of back-stabbing to be found in this fast-paced world of television journalism. The theme of the film, which is hidden well below its surface, never boils up long enough to allow the audience to fixate on one aspect of the movie, and thus serves to thrust you from one crisis to another.

The performances are honest and true to life. Holly Hunter does wonders with the character of Jane: an emotionally charged and confused woman. In private, she is the state-of-the-art professional on the job. Her portrayal is so complete that you find yourself cringing at the intensity of the frustration that Hurt's Grunick draws out of her.

Most people may not like the way the film ends. In a way, it actually doesn't end; a resolution is never met. But then again, isn't that just what the movie is about. If no one gets the girl, it's because she wasn't meant to be got—that's life. So by no means could one rank this film with other escapist features, which is what James L. Brooks intended. Sure enough, it's a film with enough real humour to stand together with other comedy drama, and it is more than entertaining enough to sustain the viewer for the full 2½ hours, but it isn't only a film. This is not really art. It's more like... therapy.

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 Deadline for  
 all entries:  
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## FEBRUARY

12

Submit entries with

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All entries must be

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