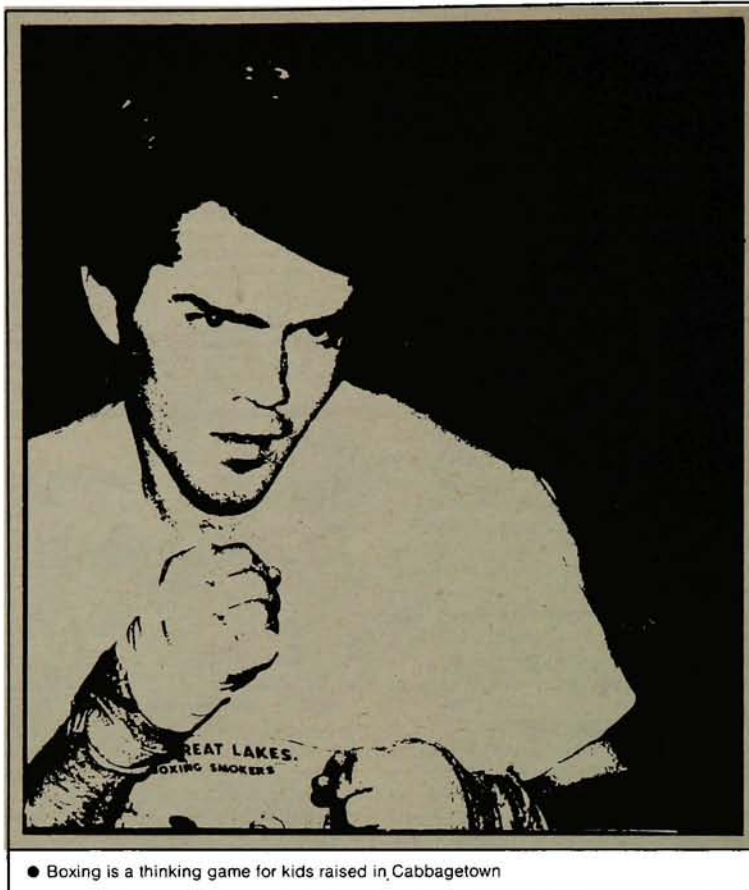


## Burl Glenroy's The Cabbagetown Kid

This well-made documentary opens on a vulnerable moment: a good-looking young man is talking about the bones in his nose - what's been broken, what hasn't. He is Shawn O'Sullivan, light middle-weight champion of the World Amateur Boxing Association, a teenager from the Cabbagetown area of Toronto. *The Cabbagetown Kid* is about his training and his devotion to his sport, culminating in his three-round bout with Cuban boxer Armanda Martinez for the World Cup in late 1981.

For viewers like me, who have a basic revulsion to boxing, this film is an explanation of the sport's character-building aspects. We learn that, for many teenage boys, boxing is a way to stay out of trouble and learn to feel good about themselves. Says O'Sullivan, indicating the warehouse surroundings in which he works out, young boxers "leave here happy and tired." We learn that boxing "is an art," "a thinking game." "Stamina, strength, agility and speed - boxing has them all," is what we're told. According to Michael O'Sullivan, Shawn's father, "A boxer has confidence; he's not a bully." Obviously, the filmmakers are aware that many people do not understand this sport. They stress its discipline and hard training.

The centerpiece for the film is the grueling World Cup Final match between O'Sullivan and Martinez fought in Montreal on November 18, 1981. The fight



● Boxing is a thinking game for kids raised in Cabbagetown

was filmed in a two-camera setup (covering shots and medium-shots) and is included in its entirety in *The Cabbagetown Kid*. Consisting of three 3-minute rounds, the fight is nicely placed in the structure of the film. It comes after we

have grown to like Shawn O'Sullivan and admire his intense workouts with coach Ken Hamilton and trainer Peter Wylie. Also, we have gradually been prepared for the match through sparring sequences that lead up to it. This seems

an important point because the Martinez-O'Sullivan fight for the 1981 World Cup is an extremely vicious match, in the sense that both fighters hold nothing back and give their all to win. During the breaks between rounds, we are with O'Sullivan in his corner, hearing the advice from his coach and seeing the toll this incredible bout is taking on the young fighter. The filmmakers have captured all the intensity of the fight and wisely show it in its entirety, thereby honoring the nuances of the sport, the prowess of both fighters, and underscoring the hard-won victory of O'Sullivan.

Ironically, this fight section contains the only moment of physical tenderness that we see in the film. Having just "beaten the crap" out of one another (to put it bluntly), Martinez and O'Sullivan embrace with what is clearly sincere affection. It is a stunning moment in the film, one that suggests they have endured something together which has taken them beyond competition. As a non-verbal moment, it says more about boxing than all the preceding rhetoric combined.

*The Cabbagetown Kid*, though only 36 minutes long, has depth and subtlety, quietly including minor themes of working-class pride, communal solidarity, a father-son relationship, growing up Irish, even growing up male. It is a well-crafted production.

Joyce Nelson ●

**THE CABBAGETOWN KID** d. Burl Glenroy p. Wendy Loten, Alan Gibb, Bruce Annis cam. Burl Glenroy, Leo Zourdoumis, Pierre Paledeau ed. Bruce Annis, Alan Gibb asst. ed. Olivia Rehmer ed. Michel Charron, Michel Gabereau narr. Henry Ramer re-rec. Marvin Bernstein graphics Jeanne Gray 16mm, colour, 36 mins., 1982 p.c. Film Images, 2 College Street, Suite 304, Toronto, Ont. (416) 928-9687.

## MINI REVIEWS

*Short films covered in the mini-review*  
*Short films covered in the mini-reviews*  
for this issue are not from a distribution year students in the Film Department, York University, Toronto.

The annual offering from the York students is always a mixed bag. But this year was a distinct disappointment - an aura of safeness and respectability pervading. The ideas and issues were there, but how ordinarily presented! Where's the crass dash and flair, the wildness and wackiness of student work? Everything so predictable, so derivative, so... nothing. Oh, *Daria Stermac*, where are you?!

### BREAK AND ENTER

A slight comedy/drama about a cat burglar and his accomplice, during which an interminable and tortuous set of events lurch forward. Something about the fellow's wife expecting a "kitten burglar", and his attempt to reform by attending a training session for vacuum-cleaner salesmen and yes, there's a chase sequence too.

A poor script and uninspired acting, coupled with feeble attempts at fast-moving, slapstick comedy, all contribute to a depressing experience.

d./sc. Michael Blouin cam. Manse James ed. Richard Taylor l.p.: Kim Dunn (Allen Dillon), Jane Schoettle (Julie Dillon), Howard Rock (Mrs. Needles), Trixie (Libby Lenny), Mr. & Mrs. McMillan (Julie's parents), Anne Skeats (Mrs. Fefner) 18 mins. 16mm.

### RUNAWAY

A gritty, black & white documentary about young runaways on the Yonge Street "Strip" in Toronto.

Members of the Juvenile Task Force of Metro Toronto Police stroll the sidewalks in street clothes. The roving camera records encounters with kids, mostly using their own words. "The streets are rough", and survival is a constant nightmare - "I lived in a car for six months".

Influenced by TV, and with a derivative style, but nevertheless quite promising.

d. Marshal Golden cam. Ian Scott ed. John DeCorso mus. Richard Underhill. 16 mins. B&W. 16mm.

### A CHOICE OF HOME

A sentimental, muddled tale of a grandmother living in her little rural house in Quebec. After a fall in the kitchen, her single-parent daughter brings her to the city apartment to convalesce. The grandmother is alone a lot and feels useless. The teenage granddaughter "explains" to her mother that "Mémère" would be happier with familiar surroundings and people she knows, and gives information about agencies who will counsel them.

Filled with every conceivable cliché, saddled with simplistic French and English dialogue which is an insult to both cultures, and ending with all three trimming the Christmas tree... enough!

d./sc. Ruth Taylor cam. Robert Pearson ed. Kelly King mus. John Heberman l.p. Elizabeth Chester (Mémère), Katya Ladan (Louise), Adrienne Duncan (Diane), Nathan Kieot (Robert), Kenneth Taylor (The Doctor) 20 mins. 16mm.

### ONE TO ONE

A documentary about participation apartments in Toronto, where housing and special care is provided for physically handicapped adults.

Several tenants speak to the joy of finally being almost self-sufficient. A girl says, surprisingly, that there's not much interaction or socializing with other tenants. The staff aides talk of support services and the blurring of lines as they go about their work in people's homes.

An example of people-content triumphing over a prosaic approach to filmmaking.

d. Douglas McCullough cam. Arthur Reinstein ed. Donna Powell 16 mins. 16mm.

### UNION MADE

A docu-drama focussing on sexual harassment in the workplace - in this case, a strip joint, where the new uniform for waitresses is a skimpy red bathing suit.

What could have been a sharp, up-to-the-minute, little vignette, is bogged down by a confused script without a clear thought-line. And the acting by a

number of professionals is truly awful, but since there's no directorial credit, perhaps they can't be castigated.

sc. Andrea Youngman & Robert Levine cam. Joel Guthro ed. Mary Canty. 15 mins. 16mm. l.p.: Robin Leslie Mann (Susan), Matsu Anderson (Laurie), Paul Klugman (Hewitt), John Cavall (Potter), and others.

### PATERNITY BLUES

A little bit of fiction featuring a horrendous young nagging girl driving into the country with her man. She goes on and on about having a baby, while the lusty lad indulges in fantasies of nubile hitchhikers holding up cards imprinted with one word, "Sex."

Escaping another baby barrage the next morning, the young man walks off alone. He encounters a little old man reclining on a lounge chair, who gives him advice. Then there's some contemplation of murder, and a dream trial in heaven.

The film hangs together quite a bit in its storyline, and attempts some effects in a small way. However, the plot and dialogue need a lot of polishing. Rumour has it that CBC-TV picked *Paternity Blues* up.

d./sc. John Podolak cam. Bill Bannerman ed. Michelle Gnutzman mus. Mark Promane & Anthony Vanderburgh. 17 mins. 16mm. l.p.: Scott Dickson (Mike), Audrey Adams (Katie), Guy Sanvido (Old Man), Debbie Hancock (Woman), and others.

Pat Thompson ●