

Sarah Child



All in the Family

### Walking Fast But Guilt Still Catches Up

A shopping mall can be a dangerous place. Short of placing a clothespin on your nose there is little you can do to protect yourself from temptation.

I have, on past excursions, flown past the chocolate chip cookie booth, scurried around the ice cream stands, literally galloped past the purveyors of chocolate and other candies.

But a fast food connoisseur can only take so much without giving in. And so the other day when my husband, the eighth grader and I went to finish some shopping, we succumbed to the lure of the open food.

Aware of a recent study at Cornell which discovered that you actually lose more by eating and exercising at the same time (well, that's what the story said), we ate our through Marketplace Mall.

"You're sure you don't want to go in and sit down and have a salad?" my husband asked.

"Pizza," I said.

"Eggrolls," said the youngest.

We had both. The Eggroll Express was closest and venturing in we ordered two to go. Deciding to eat outside in the mall we found sweet and sour sauce and napkins in the bag.

Frankly, it was not the best way to divide and eat eggrolls. What the napkins couldn't get off our fingers, we licked off and then scrutinized each other's shirt fronts for spots.

On our way to the pizza place, our daughter spotted the pretzel vendor who just happened to be giving away free miniature samples.

Did we want to try them? Of course. We chewed away happily, having decided earlier we weren't going to worry about the image we were presenting. We needn't have worried. Every second person was chewing, chomping or licking some delicacy.

Our appetites already shaved by the eggrolls and pretzels we looked at the large slices of pizza displayed in the case and decided to order just one piece for the three of us. "Too airy but good" was our critical evaluation.

Now for dessert. Nearby was Brad's Cookie Nook which had been written about in the morning paper. The chocolate crinkle cookie had been extolled but I knew from past experience that the chocolate walnut beat it to smithereens.

Fudgy and loaded with nuts, first cousin to the brownie, the chocolate walnut was mindboggling.

We walked and ate, devouring the crumbs then walked and walked and walked some more, the gunk starting to catch up with us.

"Now that's what I call a lunch," somebody said.

"Not over yet," said my spouse whose weakness is ice cream. We headed for Huggins's but never quite made it.

We're saving it for the next time we dare and brave the mall — in about six months.

## MOVIES

# 'Daniel' a Sorry Look at Past

By Henry Herz  
New York (NC) — "Daniel" (Paramount) is a film about a brother and sister who share the pain of growing up in a foster home after their parents are executed for treason. It is also about the virtues and failings of American democracy over the last half century. Unfortunately, its ambitions are not fully realized on either score.

Daniel Isaacson (Timothy Hutton) and his younger sister, Susan (Amanda Plummer), are now young adults, each bearing the burden of their past differently. Susan, a campus radical, is totally dedicated to the cause of ending the war in Vietnam, while introverted Daniel pays attention to nothing but his graduate studies.

When Susan is committed to a mental hospital after a nervous breakdown, Daniel feels partly responsible and follows her wish that he investigate their parent's trial and determine their guilt or innocence. His memories as a child and the recollections of those involved with the case furnish the major portion of the film. After wading through much contradictory evidence and conjecture, the question of legal justice remains unresolved, but in the process Daniel is able to accept his heritage and find some measure of peace in his own identity.

The problem is that Doctorow's fictional Isaacson family is much less interesting than the historical context which engendered

### Art Group

Area artist Paxton Maffett will give an oil painting demonstration at the next meeting of the Chili Art Group, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 7, at the Chili Community Center, 4400 Buffalo Road in North Chili. The public is invited and memberships will be welcome.

them. Worse, the script's ponderous jumbling of past and present continually undercuts the dramatic potential of its subject.

The film presents Daniel's parents as idealistic members of the Communist Party who become the victims both of the party and of the country's anti-Red fears. Their fault lies in being true believers of Stalinist dogma, for which they are willing to sacrifice their lives. It is certainly not their politics that Daniel finally comes to accept as his legacy but rather his parents' dedication to the cause of social justice and their example in struggling against racism, economic exploitation of workers and civil rights abuses.

Opening with newsreel footage of anti-Vietnam demonstrations and concluding with shots of last summer's spectacular anti-war rally in New York City, the film suggests the continuity of peace and justice issues that have troubled the nation's conscience over the past 50 years. By lumping them all together, without distinguishing the various political factions or delving into ideological differences and motivations, the film is at best simplistic, if not politically naive and prone to overromanticizing "the way we were."

Even if one accepts the limitations of re-creating such a crowded span of history, the film's essential failing is the frozen character of Daniel. This central role is primarily a passive one — that of asking others questions — but in Hutton's wooden performance, the only thing that changes are his clothes, until just before the end when he cries at his sister's funeral. The rest of the cast, incidentally, are quite good even if most of the roles are slogans rather than

flesh-and-blood characters.

Periodically during the film, the audience is prepared for the Isaacsons' execution because Daniel reads passages describing the various barbaric ways in which the state has put people to death over the centuries. It is a mistaken device because it makes the electrocution scene — grisly enough in itself — anti-climatic and unnecessary. It is symptomatic of what's wrong with the film: what isn't underdeveloped is overdone.

The Motion Picture Association of America has

given Daniel a rating of R, restricted. The U.S. Catholic Conference rating is A-III, adults.



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