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Sandy
Ratcliff

A teen struggles for sanity

FAMILY LIFE — a Cinema 5 release, produced by Tony Garnett, directed by Ken Loach, screenplay by David Mercer. At the Studio-4 and Studio-New Center.

THE CAST

Janice	Sandy Ratcliff
Mr. Baildon	Bill Dean
Mrs. Baildon	Grace Cave
Tim	Malcolm Tierney
Barbara	Hilary Martyn
Dr. Donaldson	Michael Riddall
Mrs. Carswell	Alan MacNaughton
Man in the garden	Johnny Gee

By A.L. McClain

News Entertainment Writer

Janice is an emotionally disturbed teen-ager who always does a comical little shuffle at the front door before entering.

The girl with the pretty but pouting-sad face is out of touch with reality. "Family Life," formerly titled "Wednesday's Child," is a film that probes Judith's life to discover how she lost her grip on sanity.

It's an often depressing film that seems more like a television documentary than a full-length feature. Much of the dialog is spontaneous and the hospital scenes were done with actual patients.

SANDY RATCLIFF, WHO PLAYS Janice, had no previous acting experience, and Grace Cave, seen as her mother, is a housewife from Walthamstow, England.

Often the film becomes too clinical, but it never loses its

fascination for the viewer looking for psychological answers.

Before going very far into his story, writer David Mercer settles on the villains for Judith's illness. Not surprisingly, they are her parents.

The mother's preoccupation with tidiness is responsible for the girl's shuffle, designed to clean the dirt from her shoes.

Her father, played by Bill Dean, is pictured as a man whose ties with his daughter were severed by the mother long ago. He wonders, helplessly, why his daughter can't be normal so that he can get a good night's sleep.

WHEN THE PSYCHIATRIST asks the father about his sex life, he fumbles and admission that it isn't all that bell-ringing while wondering what that has to do with his disturbed daughter.

In questioning Judith, the doctor learns that she is willing to discuss her father, but has built a mental block about what her mother is like.

"Family Life" is often too simplistic in its analysis of the girl. It is taking the easy way out to blame the parents entirely for shoving her over the brink.

"Family Life" is a fascinating study of one girl's breakdown that doesn't supply many answers, but is honest in its efforts.

Sandy Ratcliff plays Judith with every disturbed mannerism in place, but, best of all, she makes the viewer want to reach out and help this wild child.

Parents of teen-agers who see the film will feel compelled to re-evaluate their relationships with their children.

This is the real power of "Family Life."

Sensitivity rating: Some profanity.