

Movie

Film follows kids to adulthood

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

In 1963 the BBC did a TV special called "7 Up." Fourteen 7-year-olds were interviewed on their hopes, ambitions and ideals. The program was a huge success, and during the next few years it was shown so many times that "Suzi, the rich girl," and "Tony, the cockney boy" almost became household words.

Movie Review

When the "7 Up" kids were 14, and again when they were 21, director Michael Apted (Coal Miner's Daughter, Gorky Park) who was an assistant on the original "7 Up", went back and interviewed them again. In 1984 he made "28 Up" for the BBC. "28 Up" has been released in the United States, and is a fascinating documentary film.

The premise for "7 Up" was the Jesuit aphorism "Give me a child at seven years and I'll show you the man." The most remarkable thing about "28 Up" is how true that saying has proven to be. Apted has incorporated clips from all the three previous specials into "28 Up."

The 14-year-olds seem different from the 7-year-olds, the 21-year-olds seem like other people entirely. But in the 28-year-olds, the 7-year-olds are back.

It's startling how many of the children predicted at seven exactly what they'd be doing 21 years later.

Apted's skillful editing takes his very ordinary subjects and makes us really care about their lives. Several of the stories are uplifting. Like Simon, the only black subject, who has gone from being an illegitimate child living in a children's home to being the head of a large and happy family or the Westland's farm boy who's now a nuclear



Michelle Miklos/Daily Nebraskan

physicist. Or Suzi, the spoiled rich girl who at 21 was a disillusioned, chain-smoking wreck, and who now is an almost improbably contented mother of two.

Other subjects are poignant. The most notable of these is Neil. At seven Neil was by far the brightest, friendliest and most beautiful of the children. Now, as the result of a nervous condition he acquired at 16, Neil is unable to find a job and exists as a tramp, living off the dole and on the road.

The film is beautifully photographed, but the TV-quality sound, combined with the heavy accents of some of the subjects make it occasionally hard to understand.

"28 Up" is showing Thursday through Sunday at the Sheldon Film Theater. Screenings are at 7 and 9:30 p.m., Saturday matinee at 3 p.m., Sunday matinee at 5 p.m. There are no evening screenings on Saturday. Admission is \$3.75.

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