

# 'There will be blood' gets rave review

*The first 14 minutes of silence doesn't take away from the movie's brilliance*

By **Adam Morrison**

The UPEI Cadre

For the first 14 minutes, there is no dialog. It shows Paul Thomas Anderson's confidence in his directing skills, being able to keep our attention through his use of sound

Will Ferrell and crew bring back a piece of basketball history in 'Semi-Pro'

*The ABA made serious contributions to basketball as we know it today including the three-point rule and slam-dunk competition*

In 'Semi-Pro', Will Ferrell plays Jackie Moon, a one-hit wonder singer who uses his profits to buy himself a basketball team, the Flint Tropics, in the American Basketball Association (ABA).

Soon after, the ABA Commissioner announces plans to merge the ABA with the NBA. But only the top four teams will be absorbed into the league.

In reality, the ABA, founded in 1967, was a competing league with the NBA, distinguishing itself with a more open-style play, and different rules such as a 30-second shotclock, instead of the NBA's 24-second type of play, and the ABA was one of the pioneer professional league's to test the three-point line.

It also pioneered the crowd-pleasing slam-dunk competition in 1976.

The ABA proved to be quite the

and cinematography. Spanning 1898 to 1927, it's a fascinating character study and an exercise in brilliant craftsmanship. Much has been made of Daniel Day Lewis's performance as Daniel Plainview, a self described oil man. He completely loses himself in the role, becoming a hateful and success driven shell of a man,

competition for the NBA, catching on appeal with fans, but with no television contract and financial losses, the independent league seemed certain for failure.

Upon the merger of the leagues, the NBA did, in fact, only absorb four of the ABA's teams. But the move depended more on business relations, and nothing to do with the placement of the teams. The teams absorbed were the Denver Nuggets, Indiana Pacers, New York Nets and the San Antonio Spurs.

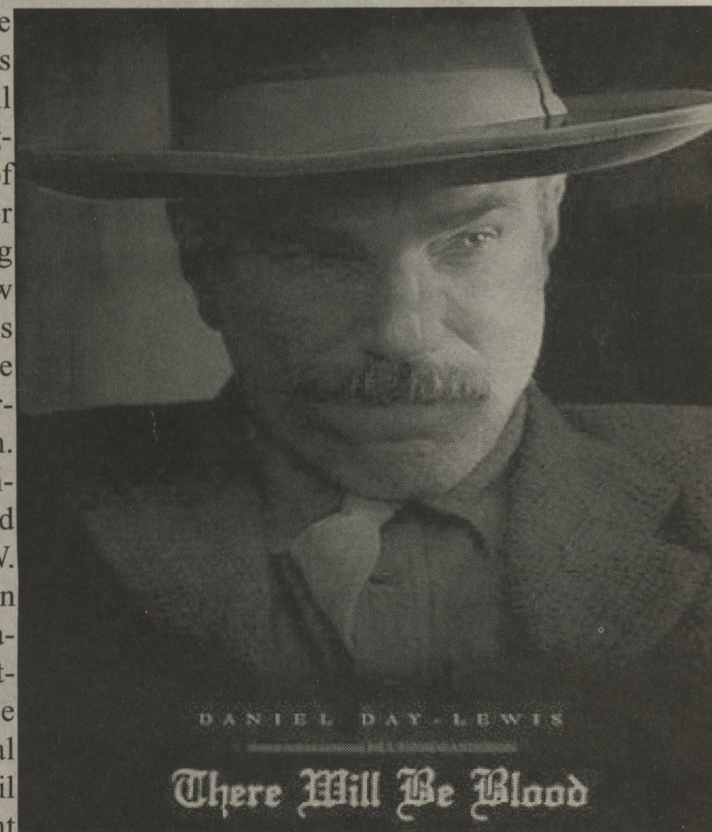
Jackie Moon's Flint Tropics are a fictionalized team and Jackie Moon is simply just a character. But despite it's fictionalization of the league, 'Semi-Pro' may have rejuvenated a forgotten league which changed the face of one of the world's most popular games.

saying "I've got a competition in me. I don't want anyone else to succeed. I look at these people, and I see nothing worth liking." His hatred for the common man is Eli Sunday (Paul Dano), a preacher of the Church of the Third Revelation. The land upon which the church is built has an ocean of oil beneath it. This triggers a relationship of pure contempt for each other starting when Plainview doesn't let Eli bless the new well for the church and surrounding town. Plainview's accomplice is his son and partner, H.W. Plainview (Dillon Freasier). Their relationship is fascinating and gives the film an emotional weight. When an oil derrick accident

leaves H.W. disabled, it seems Plainview genuinely cares for someone than besides himself. But Plainview's decision regarding how to treat H.W.'s condition makes us realize it'll affect his business, and is thus heartbreaking. Family also arrives in the form of Henry (Kevin J. O'Conner), who claims to be Daniel's brother. This gives Daniel someone to confide in, but we remain skeptical as to whether or not he is his actual brother.

In terms of direction, this is a milestone. Working again with Robert Elswit, Anderson shoots the sun-baked landscapes with a type of widescreen photography similar to epics of decades ago. When the oil derrick burns at night, we see only Daniel's face illuminated by the

flames. Long takes are an art unto themselves (Scorsese is a master at this), and Anderson employs several dazzling shots. Also extraordinary is the score by Jonny Greenwood, of Radiohead. It's a gorgeous soundtrack, making excessive use of the



violin. When the film begins, it hits you like a brick in the face.

But this would be nothing without its lead performer. His intensity is similar to what De Niro brought to films like Raging Bull. To create such a grandiose character, it's alarming when seeing Day Lewis in interviews, as he's a soft-spoken Englishman. It's a testament to his abilities as an actor.

Like No Country for Old Men, there's been some debate regarding the ending. Like No Country, there is no clear resolution. It simply ends with Plainview saying "I'm finished", then fading to black. It's an appropriate closing line for one of the better films of 2007.

**Rating:**

\*\*\*1/2 out of four