



Richard Pryor is Montgomery Brewster, a baseball player in the minors, who gets a chance to inherit \$300 million if he can spend \$30 million.

the movies  
**Dan Greenberg**

## Spending millions turns out to be tough but it's fun to watch

"Brewster's Millions" is the old story of the rich uncle and the weird will that has been told many times. This time out, the story is re-told in a contemporary framework with a few mild comments on the social scene. The lack of heavy-handed commentary adds to the refreshing and entertaining comedy.

The new "Brewster" has a pleasant, low-key quality. Its good humor moves along at a nice pace that neither bores nor overwhelms. A number of good performances make this a worthwhile trip to the flicks.

Montgomery Brewster (Richard Pryor) is a minor-league pitcher for the Hackensack Bulls — please, no New Jersey jokes. Brewster and his team struggle along, playing on a field where time is called when freight trains pass through the outfield.

**SUDDENLY, ALL** that is changed forever. Brewster's Uncle Rupert (Hume Cronyn) wants to teach his only relative a lesson about hard work and tenacity. When you have \$300 million dollars to give away, people learn fast. Uncle Rupert sure picked a strange way to teach his nephew a lesson.

In 1945, when an earlier film version was made, Brewster only had to spend a million bucks and he had two months to do it. Shows what inflation and the madcap pace of modern life is doing to us. Under the terms of the new Uncle Rupert's will, Brewster must spend \$40 million in 30 days and have no assets to show for it. He's only allowed to give 5 percent to charity and gamble away 5 percent.

Nothing to it, everyone quickly says. "Boy, I'd show him how to do it." Well, if you stop to think about it, it is not that easy. For instance, bankers love to have so much money on deposit and will pay inflated interest rates to hold on to huge sums. Brewster is immediately forced to negotiate lower, regular passbook interest rates to avoid earning more than he spends.

**RELAXED PERFORMANCES** by Richard Pryor and the supporting cast contribute to the pleasure of "Brewster's Millions." In the forefront of things, Pryor maintains wide-eyed, restrained amazement that all this is happening to him.

The basic, ironic facts are (a) poor, struggling ballplayer suddenly has more money than he ever dreamed of; and (b) he's having trouble getting rid of it. When he gambles, he wins. When he invests, he profits.

Throughout all these strange occurrences, Brewster's friends try to help him. How do you help a friend? Conserve his money, help him save and earn. But the friend is a compulsive spender. No one is allowed to know what Brewster is doing in order to inherit \$300 million.

Brewster's closest friend, his catcher Spike Nolan, is a lovable slob, played with great affection by John Candy. You'll be ready to wager that Spike enjoys dripping spaghetti sauce on his shirt. It's a flowered Hawaiian print, and the sauce won't show anyway.

Jerry Orbach turns in a nice performance as Charley Pogler, manager of the Hackensack Bulls. A man content with his lot in life, and he knows it isn't much. Cronyn, on the other hand, as rich Uncle Rupert, knows he has it all, except life, and plays it to the hilt.

**PAT HINGLE** as Edward Roundfield, the attorney charged with insuring Uncle Rupert's will, is carried out scrupulously, provides another anchor of stability in Brewster's madcap world where, literally, no one understands him.

No comedy is complete without love interest, and Lonette McKee turns in a nifty, restrained performance as the compulsive accountant who can't stand to see money squandered. She's caught between that attitude, her gradually developing affection for Brewster and her abhorrence at his behavior. McKee managed all that with a refreshing and ladylike charm.

"Brewster's Millions" benefits from that kind of gracefulness which keeps the comedy and pacing from overwhelming the audience. It's just a nice, old-fashioned entertainment well worth an evening at the movies.



John Candy is Brewster's friend Spike, who enjoys life to the hilt.

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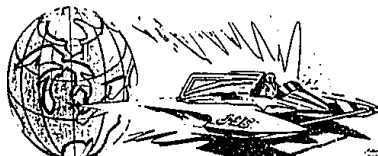
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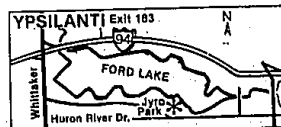
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