

Thoroughbreds Don't Cry

US : 1937 : dir. Alfred E Green : M-G-M : 80 min
 prod: Harry Rapf : scr: Lawrence Hazard, J Walter Ruben & Eleanor Griffin : dir.ph.:
[Mickey Rooney](#); [Judy Garland](#); [Ronald Sinclair \(Ra Hould\)](#)
 Sophie Tucker; C Aubrey Smith; Frankie Darro; Henry Kolker; Helen Troy; Elisha Cook Jr;
 Forrester Harvey; Charles D Brown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω □ ∅ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5265	2½	6	2		3 - 3 - -	No	unseen



Mickey Rooney "as lovable as a bullet", but Ronald Sinclair seems to like him

Source: Moving Picture Boy

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
 2001 review:

"Fairly good racetrack story with jockey Rooney involved in crooked deals, young Garland adding some songs. Mickey and Judy's first film together. **1½ "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review

"Jockeys fight for the chance to ride a valuable English horse. Ho-hum racetrack yarn significant as the first teaming of two young stars."

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Nothing is certain in this world. This concoction was dreamed up to co-star MGM's two boy stars, energetic American Mickey

Rooney and prissy English child Freddie Bartholomew – but the latter's role is played by a look-alike, Robert Sinclair *[sic]*. He's grandson to C Aubrey Smith and they are in the US to race a horse; Rooney, as lovable as a bullet, is a swelled-head jockey. They lodge with Sophie Tucker, whose granddaughter is Judy Garland, caught at the worst moment of adolescence but relaxed about it. Indeed, she's already the Garland of legend. * ”

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

“Fairly good racetrack drama thanks to Rooney's expert playing of a jockey. **½ ”

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“In this first teaming of Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, he is a discredited jockey (sound familiar?), and they help a young English boy win a big race with his horse, the Pookah. Garland does get to sing, but Sophie Tucker, as her aunt, is wasted in a non-singing role. *** ”

The M.G.M Story listing:

“ **"THOROUGHBREDS DON'T CRY"** was the first picture to give Judy Garland top billing and the beginning of the Rooney-Garland team... Miss [Sophie] Tucker's slam-bang stage personality seemed to lose some of its gusto on the screen, and in this movie it was pretty well swamped by the three talented juveniles. The Harry Rapf production, ably directed by Alfred E Green, was a racetrack story by J Walter Ruben and Eleanor Griffin, scripted by Lawrence Hazard.”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Sinclair:

“The aristocratic Sinclair had a New Zealand father and a British mother; his real name was Richard Arthur Hould. Having made a modest

four-year old stage debut as an elf, he found himself in 1933 acting with Sybil Thorndike at a Dunedin theatre.

Billed as "Ra Hould", he had the main child part in **"DOWN ON THE FARM"**, New Zealand's first talkie. Then, on Miss Thorndike's advice, his parents took him not to England (their original idea) to further his movie ambitions, but to Hollywood. It worked, and he got a part in **"BELOVED ENEMY"**.

At the end of 1937, for **"THOROUGHBREDS DON'T CRY"** (a film with Rooney and Judy Garland) he changed his performing name from Ra Hould to Ronald Sinclair. It did no harm. Nor did playing young Scrooge in **"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"**. The out-rageously handsome youth continued to thrive.

Three more **"Little Peppers"** films absorbed Sinclair's energies in 1940; he was also in **"THAT HAMILTON WOMAN"** (41) and **"DESPERATE JOURNEY"** (42)...

After World War Two Ronald Sinclair abandoned acting and learnt the craft of film editor, which he practised for the next 25 years. Films he worked on included - for Roger Corman - **"THE PREMATURE BURIAL"**, **"THE RAVEN"** and, oddly enough, another **"TOWER OF LONDON"**.



Rooney is initiated into the jockey fraternity with a traditional mass spanking – or is he?

Source: indeterminate

Judy Garland was 15, Mickey Rooney 17 and Ronald Sinclair (someone at the studio doubtless thought his real name “too unamerican”) 13. Rooney, seasoned trouper that he was, had not done with boy roles yet by a long chalk – 1937 saw him in **“LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY”**, **“CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS”** and **“THE DEVIL IS A SISSY”**, exchanging a Freddie Bartholomew lookalike for the real thing in all of them. Three years later he was playing **“YOUNG TOM EDISON”**. And he was still exuding horsey wisdoms 42 years later, in **“THE BLACK STALLION”**.

Judy Garland, although she was on stage at the age of five, only made her screen debut at 14 in the short film **“EVERY SUNDAY”**, followed by **“PIGSKIN PARADE”** and **“BROADWAY MELODY OF 1938”**. It scarcely seemed to matter how inauspicious the films they cast her in – she still garnered a special Oscar in 1939 for her “outstanding performance as a screen juvenile” (she made **“WIZARD OF OZ”** that year, but it’s an open secret she wasn’t the studio’s lead of preference). Fame for her would be a poisoned chalice, and the punishing work schedule that would shatter her personal life was already well in train.

Ronald Sinclair’s American films as Ra Hould were **“BELOVED ENEMY”** (36), **“BOOTS AND SADDLES”** (37), **“DANGEROUS HOLIDAY”** (37) and **“A DOCTOR’S DIARY”**. **“FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS AND HOW THEY GREW”** came in 39, but I can only locate two, not three, sequels the following year (the third film was released under two titles).

See subject index under **GRANDPARENTS** and **HORSES & PONIES**.