

TREATMENT

OLD MOTHER WITCH

The film begins on a beautiful autumn day. Walking down the sidewalk, carrying the Halloween pumpkins that they have just purchased at the local pumpkin patch, are the members of the neighborhood "wild bunch." Their unofficial leader is David Martinez, a bright dark-haired boy of 10. He is accompanied by his friends Scottie, a pudgy kid who is always eating something; Mary Ellen, a black girl with long legs who is very athletic; and Eric, the "brain" of the group. It is Halloween day and they are in high spirits as they plan the evening's trick or treating and refine some new one-liners about Scottie's eating habits and Eric's intelligence. Their kibitzing is abruptly ended by the arrival of the long-time neighborhood bullies, Eddie Malone and Don MacDonald. The two groups exchange putdowns on the sidewalk. Eddie and Don are out of their league in a game of words, so they turn to their specialty--threatening to get even with the "wild bunch" in the dark streets on Halloween night. Laughing, they speed away on their skateboards. This sidewalk confrontation has caught the attention of Mrs. Oliver, David's 70-year-old neighbor. Leaning over her garden fence, Mrs. Oliver delivers an all too familiar lecture about making noise and causing a disturbance in her quiet neighborhood.

David's father is washing the family car in the driveway as David and his friends arrive at David's house. After their confrontations with Don and Eddie and Mrs. Oliver, the "wild bunch" is not feeling so wild. Mrs. Oliver, they decide, is simply a "nag." Mary Ellen suggests they forget their troubles with a game of touch football.

The football field is the front yard of David's house. Two trees and some sweatshirts mark the boundaries. Sides are chosen. Mary Ellen and David are on one team, and Scottie and Eric are on the other. These teams are not fairly matched. Mary Ellen is by far the best quarterback, and David is the best receiver. It is going to be a mercifully quick slaughter. Mary Ellen and David decide to strike quickly with a "bomb." David heads for the end zone as Mary Ellen throws a beautiful spiral toward him. Unfortunately the ball sails far over David's head, over the fence beyond the end zone and into Mrs. Oliver's yard. It hits her house with a loud thud, nearly breaking a window. Everyone freezes. Suddenly Mrs. Oliver storms out the door and down the steps. She picks up the football and angrily castigates the children for nearly breaking her window and for making such an infernal racket. To teach them a lesson, she tells them she is going to keep their football for a while. After she goes back in the house, the former football players agree that she is indeed an "old witch." Mary Ellen suggests that she might have