FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 14, 1969

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman and it was announced that opponents to HB 1401 were to be heard. Mr. Chuc Barnes, representing the United Motion Picture Association, representing theatres in Kansas and Missouri, introduced Barbara Scott who is attorney for the Motion Picture Association of America. Miss Scott stated that this association is a trade association composed of distributors of motion pictures in the United States and abroad--that is the major distributors. She stated that the motion picture industry feels that bills such as this are unnecessary; that the industry is now attempting to police itself and is rating the pictures for types of audiences. Also, that they have begun work in this area at the time the scripts are being considered; that they are making suggestions at that time so that only a small change here and there in the script might make the difference between the M movie or the G movie. She discussed various cases, including some Supreme Court holdings, and stated that now Maryland is the only state with a censor board. She pointed out the difficulties of defining obscenity, explaining that in different localities the definition might be different. She urged that legislation of other types would be more proper, mentioning GS 21-1102. She pointed out that SB 9 has a section on obsecnity; that these are penal statutes.

Miss Scott explained that the new code had only been operating for four months and that already strides are being made and that the industry is concerned for the young people of this country and that this is why they have moved to police themselves. She stated that 182 films have been rated since November; that 67 were G, 69 were M, 39 R and 7 were X. She stated that whenever there is a complaint that an exhibitor is letting children into R and X films, that they are working with the exhibitor and attempting to get him to be careful.

Mr. Winters inquired if Miss Scott worked with any other organizations like the President's commission on obscenity. Miss Scott explained that she is a member of this commission; not as a representative of the motion picture industry but as a private individual; that a report will be ready in 1970 and this will probably help in future Supreme Court cases.

Mr. Douglas Lightner, representing the Kansas Motion Picture Exhibitors distributed exhibits (see file) and further discussed the rating system and showed the posters that are being placed in prominent places in front of the theatres, in the box office, etc. which show the rating of the film.

He explained that exhibitors in Kansas are anxious to cooperate, in general, and that if they are not considering the ratings in connection with the audience, that they want to know it and will do something about it.

Mr. Everett inquired if it was the feeling that the public is demanding R and X films and Miss Scott explained that in fact these are not the big revenue films; that such films as Sound of Music, Funny Girl, etc. were in fact the big money makers.

Mr. Arthur Cole stated that he appeared in opposition to the bill, because he had spent 45 years with the censor board in Kansas; that the prerequisite for membership on the board was political affiliation; that in fact morals have not changed but the standard of morals have. He stated that at one point some of the women on the board wanted to censor out women smoking on the screen and just a few years later they were smoking while they reviewed the pictures.

The meeting was adjourned.

MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

What everyone should know about the Motion Picture Code and Ratings...

The motion picture industry announces a voluntary film rating system which will guide the public in their selection of movies. Under this system certain films will be restricted for children. This reflects a special concern for young people, as well as a serious effort to be of direct help to **parents** in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

The Motion Picture Association of America, the National Association of Theatre Owners and the International Film Importers and Distributors of America fully endorse and are cooperating with this plan.

Here are the Rating Symbols...

easily recognized . . . with their meanings:

G — **Suggested for GENERAL audiences.**

M — **Suggested for MATURE audiences (parental discretion advised).**

R — **RESTRICTED — Persons under 16 not admitted, unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian.**

X — **Persons under 16 not admitted. This age restriction may be higher in certain areas. Check theater or advertising.**

And, here are the answers to expected questions, explaining how these symbols serve today's movie-goer in the USA.

These ratings apply to films released **after** Nov. 1, 1968

1. EXACTLY WHAT DO THESE RATINGS MEAN?

All ratings given by the Code and Rating Administration represent the considered opinions of a competent and experienced staff with broad and lengthy backgrounds in film appraisal.

The film rating symbols indicate the following:

G Suggested for **GENERAL** audiences.

These movies are considered to be suitable for patrons of all ages.

M Suggested for **MATURE** audiences (parental discretion advised).

Films rated **M** are considered to be suitable for **adults** and **mature young people.** Each parent should obtain information regarding the content of **M** films, and then guide members of his own family according to each one's maturity, experience, stability and special interests. No one understands each child's capacities and needs better than a parent!

R **RESTRICTED — Persons under 16 not admitted,** unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian.

Again, the parent must decide whether the young members of his family should patronize a film which deals with an adult subject in an adult way. This too requires that he obtain information regarding the content of the film, and then determine whether or not it is one to which he wishes to **take** his child or children. By attending **R** films together, parents and young people can discuss them together.

X **Persons under 16 not admitted.**

A rating of **X** on a film indicates that because of the subject matter or treatment of the subject matter, persons under 16 will not be admitted. This rating will be enforced at the box office of each theatre. (In certain areas this age restriction may be higher.) Film companies that do not choose to voluntarily submit a film for rating by the Code and Rating Administration self-apply an **X** rating to that film.

2. HOW CAN ONE FIND OUT WHAT RATING A FILM HAS BEEN GIVEN?

The quickest and easiest way to locate the rating of a movie is to look in the movie advertisement in your local newspaper. Or, you can obtain this information by phoning the theatre box office. These symbols can also be noted in previews of coming attractions, in the box office window, and on posters in theatre lobbies.

3. IF PARENTS WISH TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CONTENT OF MOVIES SO AS TO MAKE WISE DECISIONS FOR THEIR OWN CHILDREN, WHERE CAN THEY FIND THIS INFORMATION?

Movie advertising is only one of many sources which describe the nature of a movie.

With a little effort, parents can easily locate film commentary in newspapers (reviews by film critics and in movie columns); in certain family magazines which discuss motion pictures (including the "PTA Magazine" and "Parents' Magazine"); in the free monthly film information service provided by the Film Board of National Organizations (FILM REPORTS), made available through movie theatres, public libraries and many daily newspapers; in the ratings of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures posted in all Roman Catholic churches and printed in most Catholic Diocesan newspapers; in the reviews in other religious magazines; and in the information on movies which appears in most popular magazines.

Or . . . phone the theatre and inquire. Theatre personnel can provide the descriptive information contained in FILM REPORTS.

4. WHY WAS 16 CHOSEN AS THE BASIC AGE FOR RATINGS R AND X?

There are a number of reasons why 16 is the best of several alternatives as the age at which ratings apply. Though chronological age is only one of many measures of maturity, the vast majority of educators and parents agree that today's

young people have, by age 16, a... abundance of factual information and an understanding of life previously considered possible only at an older age. Most states require school attendance only up to age **16;** most states grant work permits at age **16.** In most states drivers' licenses are granted at age **16.** One of the oldest film classification systems is British which uses age **16** for similar categories. All of these factors and others were considered carefully in making this decision.

5. WHO WILL ENFORCE THE RATINGS [R] AND [X]?

The ratings are enforced, voluntarily, by the manager in each motion picture theatre.

6. HOW CAN THE PUBLIC BENEFIT MOST FROM THIS SYSTEM OF FILM RATINGS?

Because the **public** is ultimately responsible for the success or failure of this system, here are some tips:

a. **Learn** to identify the rating symbols and what they mean.

b. **Learn** the sources of film content information, and **use** them.

c. **Help** your children to understand what the symbols mean and why they are important. (Parents are ultimately responsible for their own children's movie-going practices.)

d. **Urge** the young members of your family to **respect** the ratings in their movie selections, making it unnecessary for a theatre manager to turn them away at the box office.

e. **Urge** the editors of your local newspapers to publish the symbols and their meanings along with movie advertisements. (The Motion Picture Association of America has provided every daily and weekly newspaper in the country with this information.)

f. **Support** in your theatres the ty... of films you say you want, and you will thereby encourage the production of more of them.

7. DOES THIS NEW VOLUNTARY FILM RATING SYSTEM MEAN THAT T... MOTION PICTURE CODE OF SELF-REGU...ION NO LONGER FUNCTIONS?

Not at all. In fact, most movie-goers see films which carry the Code Seal. The Seal indicates that the film has been submitted voluntarily by the producer or distributor to the Code and Rating Administration, and that it has complied with all requirements set forth in the Code Standards for Production, Advertising and Titles. Pictures rated [G] [M], or [R] may carry the Code Seal, if the producer or distributor so desires. Pictures rated [X] do not receive the Seal.

8. WHAT ARE THE "STANDARDS FOR PRODUCTION"?

The Standards for Production are a set of principles based on standards common to most communities in the USA. These standards serve as guidelines by which to measure the acceptability of films for American audiences. Although the standards are stated in broad terms, they are applied thoughtfully to each film.

9. DOES A CODE SEAL OR RATING INDICATE THE QUALITY OF A MOVIE?

No. It is not the responsibility of the Code and Rating Administration to judge the artistic, aesthetic, or entertainment quality of a movie. Their responsibilities are limited to judging whether or not films meet the requirements of the Standards for Production, and to applying film ratings.

10. CAN MOVIES BE DISTRIBUTED AND EXHIBITED IN THE USA . . .

. . . **without a Code Seal?** Yes, this is a voluntary system. But, the great majority of movie-goers view films which have been granted a Code Seal.

. . . **without a film rating?** Yes. However, it is estimated that well over 95% of the films exhibited in this country, both domestic and foreign, will now carry a rating, applied either by the Code and Rating Administration, or a self-applied rating of [X].

11. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE FILM INDUSTRY VOLUNTARILY PROVIDE FILM RATINGS FOR MOTION PICTURES, AND ALSO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A PRODUCTION CODE?

It is vital in a democracy that the media regulate themselves and assume responsibility for informing the public. The only alternative would be to abandon this responsibility to government, a practice most thoughtful citizens would oppose. The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States is a guarantee that freedom of speech and artistic expression will be protected.

12. WILL EVERYONE AGREE WITH THE RATINGS GIVEN BY THE CODE AND RATING ADMINISTRATION?

No, of course not. There will be times when some patrons will disagree with these judgments. This is to be expected. In the USA we enjoy a society with many opinions so peoples' responses will vary. Just as there are varying cultural, religious and political views, so will there be diverse personal opinions about movie ratings.

For further information and/or copies of the Code and Rating Program Regulations, write to:

Community Relations Department
MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
522 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10036

THE MOTION PICTURE CODE AND RATING PROGRAM
a system of self-regulation

MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Motion Picture Code and Rating Program

A System of Self-Regulation

MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Code of Self-Regulation of the Motion Picture Association of America shall apply to production, to advertising, and to titles of motion pictures.

The Code shall be administered by the Code and Rating Administration, headed by an Administrator.

There shall also be a Director of the Code for Advertising, and a Director of the Code for Titles.

Non-members are invited to submit pictures to the Code and Rating Administration on the same basis as members of the Association.

Declaration of Principles of the Code of Self-Regulation of the Motion Picture Association.

This Code is designed to keep in close harmony with the mores, culture, the moral sense and change in our society.

The objectives of the Code are:

1 To encourage artistic expression by expanding creative freedom:

and

2 To assure that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the standards of the larger society.

Censorship is an odious enterprise. We oppose censorship and classification by governments because they are alien to the American tradition of freedom.

Much of this nation's strength and purpose is drawn from the premise that the humblest of citizens has the freedom of his own choice. Censorship destroys this freedom of choice.

It is within this framework that the Motion Picture Association continues to recognize its obligations to the society of which it is an integral part.

In our society parents are the arbiters of family conduct. Parents have the primary responsibility to guide their children in the kind of lives they lead, the character they build, the books they read, and the movies and other entertainment to which they are exposed.

The creators of motion pictures undertake a responsibility to make available pertinent information about their pictures which will assist parents to fulfill their responsibilities.

But this alone is not enough. In further recognition of our obligation to the public, and most especially to parents, we have extended the Code operation to include a nationwide voluntary film rating program which has as its prime objective a sensitive concern for children. Motion pictures will be reviewed by a Code and Rating Administration which, when it reviews a motion picture as to its conformity with the standards of the Code, will issue ratings. It is our intent that all motion pictures exhibited in the United States will carry a rating. These ratings are:

G **SUGGESTED FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES**

This category includes motion pictures that in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration would be acceptable for all audiences, without consideration of age.

M **SUGGESTED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES— ADULTS & MATURE YOUNG PEOPLE**

This category includes motion pictures that in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, because of their theme, content and treatment, might require more mature judgment by viewers, and about which parents should exercise their discretion.

R **RESTRICTED — Persons under 16 not admitted, unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian.**

This category includes motion pictures that in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, because of their theme, content or treatment, should not be presented to persons under 16 unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.

X **PERSONS UNDER 16 NOT ADMITTED**

This category includes motion pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration which in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration are rated X because of the treatment of sex, violence, crime or profanity. Pictures rated X do not qualify for a Code Seal. Pictures rated X should not be presented to persons under 16.

The program contemplates that any distributors outside the membership of the Association who choose not to submit their motion pictures to the Code and Rating Administration will self-apply the (X) rating.

The ratings and their meanings will be conveyed by advertising; by displays at the theaters; and in other ways. Thus, audiences, especially parents, will be alerted to the theme, content, and treatment of movies. Therefore, parents can determine whether a particular picture is one which children should see at the discretion of the parent; or only when accompanied by a parent; or should not see.

We believe self-restraint, self-regulation, to be in the American tradition. The results of self-discipline are always imperfect because that is the nature of all things mortal. But this Code, and its administration, will make clear that freedom of expression does not mean toleration of license.

The test of self-restraint — the rule of reason . . . lies in the treatment of a subject for the screen.

All members of the Motion Picture Association, as well as the National Association of Theatre Owners, the International Film Importers and Distributors of America, and other independent producer-distributors are cooperating in this endeavor. Most motion pictures exhibited in the United States will be submitted for Code approval and rating, or for rating only, to the Code and Rating Administration. The presence of the Seal indicates to the public that a picture has received Code approval.

We believe in and pledge our support to these deep and fundamental values in a democratic society:

Freedom of choice . . .

The right of creative man to achieve artistic excellence . . .

The importance of the role of the parent as the guide of the family's conduct . . .

STANDARDS FOR PRODUCTION

In furtherance of the objectives of the Code to accord with the mores, the culture, and the moral sense of our society, the principles stated above and the following standards shall govern the Administrator in his consideration of motion pictures submitted for Code approval:

■ The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.

■ Evil, sin, crime and wrong-doing shall not be justified.

■ Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or anti-social activities in which minors participate or are involved.

■ Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse shall not be presented.

■ Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.

■ Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed.

■ Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sex aberrations.

■ Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.

■ Religion shall not be demeaned.

■ Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups, shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.

■ Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.

STANDARDS FOR ADVERTISING

The principles of the Code cover advertising and publicity as well as production. There are times when their specific application to advertising may be different. A motion picture is viewed as a whole and may be judged that way. It is the nature of advertising, however, that it must select and emphasize only isolated portions and aspects of a film. It thus follows that what may be appropriate in a motion picture may not be equally appropriate in advertising. Furthermore, in application to advertising, the principles and standards of the Code are supplemented by the following standards for advertising:

- Illustrations and text shall not misrepresent the character of a motion picture.

- Illustrations shall not depict any indecent or undue exposure of the human body.

- Advertising demeaning religion, race, or national origin shall not be used.

- Cumulative overemphasis on sex, crime, violence,, and brutality shall not be permitted.

- Salacious postures and embraces shall not be shown.

- Censhorship disputes shall not be exploited or capitalized upon.

STANDARDS FOR TITLES

- A salacious, obscene, or profane title shall not be used on motion pictures.

Regulations Governing the Operation of the Motion Picture Code and Rating Administration

1 The Motion Picture Code and Rating Administration (hereinafter referred to as the Administration) is established to be composed of an Administrator and staff members, one of whom shall be experienced in the exhibition of motion pictures to the public.

2 a. All motion pictures produced or distributed by members of the Association and their subsidiaries will be submitted to the Administration for Code and rating.

b. Non-members of the Association may submit their motion pictures to the Administration for Code approval and rating in the same manner and under the same conditions as members of the Association or may submit their motion pictures to the Administration for rating only.

3 Members and non-members who submit their motion pictures to the Administration for approval and rating should, prior to the commencement of the production of the motion picture, submit a script or other treatment. The Administration will inform the producer in confidence whether a motion picture based upon the submitted script appears to conform to the Standards of the Code and indicate its probable rating. The final judgment of the Administration shall be made only upon reviewing of the completed picture.

4 a. When a completed motion picture is submitted to the Administration and is approved as conforming to the Standards of the Code, it will be rated by the Administration either as [G] (suggested for general audiences), [M] (suggested for mature audiences — adults and mature young people), or [R] (restricted), according to the categories described in the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

b. Completed motion pictures submitted by non-members for rating only will be rated according to the categories described in the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES as [G], [M], [R] or (X).

5 Motion pictures of member companies or their subsidiaries which are approved under the Code and rated [G], [M], or [R] shall upon public release bear upon an introductory frame of every print distributed in the United States the official seal of the Association with the word "Approved" and the words "Certificate Number," followed by the number of the Certificate of Approval and the symbol of the rating assigned to it by the Administration. So far as possible the Seal of the Association and the rating shall be displayed in uniform type, size and prominence. All prints of an approved motion picture bearing the Code Seal shall be identical.

6 Motion pictures of non-member companies submitted for Code approval and rating or for rating only which receive a [G], [M] or [R] rating shall bear such ratings upon an introductory frame of every print distributed in the United States, in uniform shape, type, size and prominence. Prints of such pictures may also display the official Seal of the Association if application is made to the Association for the issuance of a Code Certificate number.

7 If the Administration determines that a motion picture submitted for approval and rating or rating only should be rated (X) in accordance with the description of that category in the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, the symbol (X) must appear on all prints of the motion picture distributed in the United States in uniform type, size and prominence and in all advertising for the picture.

8 The Administration in issuing a Certificate of Approval and Rating or a Rating Certificate shall condition such issuance upon the agreement by the producer or distributor that all advertising and publicity to be used for the picture shall be submitted to and approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising.

9 The producer or distributor upon applying for a Certificate of Approval for a picture or a Rating Certificate for those pictures receiving a rating only shall advance to the Administration at the time of application a fee in accordance with the uniform schedule of fees approved by the Board of Directors of the Association.

10 The Standards for titles for motion pictures shall be applied by the Administration in consultation with the Director of the Code for Titles to all motion pictures submitted for approval and rating only and no motion picture for which a Certificate of Approval or Rating Certificate has been issued shall change its title without the prior approval of the Administration.

Advertising Code Regulations

1 These regulations are applicable to all members of the Motion Picture Association of America, to all producers and distributors of motion pictures with respect to each picture for which the Association has granted its Certificate of Approval or Rating Certificate; and to all other producers and distributors who apply the Ⓧ rating to their motion pictures and voluntarily submit their advertising.

2 The term "advertising" as used herein shall be deemed to mean all forms of motion picture advertising and exploitation and ideas therefor, including the following: pressbooks; still photographs; newspaper, magazine and trade paper advertising; publicity copy and art intended for use in pressbooks or otherwise intended for general distribution in printed form or for theater use; trailers; posters, lobby displays and other outdoor displays; advertising accessories, including heralds and throwaways; novelties; copy for exploitation tieups; and all radio and television copy and spots.

3 All advertising for motion pictures which have been submitted to the Code and Rating Administration for approval and rating, or for rating only, shall be submitted to the Director of the Code for Advertising for approval before use, and shall not be used in any way until so submitted and approved. All advertising shall be submitted in duplicate with the exception of pressbooks, which shall be submitted in triplicate.

4 The Director of the Code for Advertising shall proceed as promptly as feasible to approve or disapprove the advertising submitted.

The Director of the Code for Advertising shall stamp "Approved" on one copy of all advertising approved by him and return the stamped copy to the Company which submitted it. If the Director of the Code for Advertising disapproves of any advertising, the Director shall stamp the word "Disapproved" on one copy and return it to the Company which submitted it, together with the reasons for such disapproval; or, if the Director so desires, he may return the copy with suggestions for such changes or corrections as will cause it to be approved.

5 The Director of the Code for Advertising shall require all approved advertising for pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration by members of the Motion Picture Association of America and their subsidiaries to carry the official Code seal and a designation of the rating assigned to the picture by the Code and Rating Administration. Uniform standards as to type, size and prominence of the display of the seal and rating will be set forth by the Advertising Code Administrator.

6 Approved advertising for pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration by companies other than members of the Motion Picture Association of America, and their subsidi-

aries, for Code approval and rating, or for rating only, may bear the official seal at the distributor's option, but all such advertising shall bear the assigned rating.

7 Approved advertising for pictures rated Ⓧ by the Code and Rating Administration shall bear the Ⓧ rating but may not bear the official seal.

8 All pressbooks approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising shall bear in a prominent place the official seal of the Motion Picture Association of America and a designation of the rating assigned to the picture by the Code and Rating Administration. The word "Approved" shall be printed under the seal. Pressbooks shall also carry the following notice:

> All advertising in this pressbook, as well as all other advertising and publicity materials referred to herein, has been approved under the Standards for Advertising of the Code of Self-Regulation of the Motion Picture Association of America. All inquiries on this procedure may be addressed to:
>
> **Director of Code for Advertising**
> **Motion Picture Association of America**
> **522 Fifth Avenue**
> **New York, New York 10036**

9 Appeals. Any Company whose advertising has been disapproved may appeal from the decision of the Director of the Code for Advertising, as follows:

> It shall serve notice of such appeal on the Director of the Code for Advertising and on the President of the Association. The President, or in his absence a Vice President designated by him, shall thereupon promptly and within a week hold a hearing to pass upon the appeal. Oral and written evidence may be introduced by the Company and by the Director of the Code for Advertising, or their representatives. The appeal shall be decided as expeditiously as possible and the decision shall be final.

On appeals by companies, other than members of the Motion Picture Association of America and their subsidiaries, the President shall, if requested, decide the appeal in consultation with a representative of Int'l. Film Importers and Distributors of America, as designated by its Governing Board.

10 Any company which has been granted a Certificate of Approval and which uses advertising without securing the prior approval of the Director of the Code for Advertising or if such advertising does not include the assigned rating may be brought up on charges before the Board of Directors by the President of the Association. Within a reasonable time, the Board may hold a hearing, at which time the company and the Director of the Code for Advertising or their representatives, may present oral or written statements. The Board, by a majority vote of those present, shall decide the matter as expeditiously as possible.

If the Board of Directors finds that the company has used advertising for a Code approved and rated picture without securing approval of the Director of the Code for Advertising, or without including the assigned rating, the Board may direct the Code and Rating Administration to void and revoke the Certificate of Approval granted for the picture and require the removal of the Association's seal from all prints of the picture.

11 Each company shall be responsible for compliance by its employees and agents with these regulations.

CODE AND RATING APPEALS BOARD

1. A Code and Rating Appeals Board is established, to be composed as follows:

(a) The President of the Motion Picture Association of America and 12 members designated by the President from the Board of Directors of the Association and executive officers of its member companies;

(b) Eight exhibitors designated by the National Association of Theatre Owners from its Board of Directors;

(c) Two producers designated by the Producers Guild of America; and

(d) Two distributors designated by the International Film Importers and Distributors of America.

2. A pro tempore member for any particular hearing to act as a substitute for a member unable to attend may be designated in the same manner as the absent member.

3. The President of the Motion Picture Association shall be Chairman of the Appeals Board, and the Association shall provide its secretariat.

4. The presence of 13 members is necessary to constitute a quorum of the Appeals Board for a hearing of any appeal.

5. The Board will hear and determine appeals from:

(a) A decision of the Code and Rating Administration withholding Code approval from a picture submitted for approval and rating and which consequently received an Ⓧ rating.

(b) A decision by the Code and Rating Administration applying an Ⓧ rating to a picture submitted for rating only.

On such appeals a vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be required to sustain the decision of the Administration. If the decision of the Administration is not sustained, the Board shall proceed to rate the picture appropriately by majority vote.

6. The Board will also hear and determine appeals from the decision of the Code and Rating Administration applying any rating other than Ⓧ to a motion picture.

Such appeals shall be decided by majority vote. If the decision of the Administration is not sustained the Board shall proceed to rate the picture appropriately.

7. (a) An appeal from a decision of the Administration shall be instituted by the filing of a notice of appeal addressed to the Chairman of the Appeals Board by the party which submitted the picture to the Administration.

(b) Provision shall be made for the screening by the members of the Appeals Board at the hearing or prior thereto of a print of the motion picture identical to the one reviewed and passed upon by the administration.

(c) The party taking the appeal and the Administration may present oral or written statements to the Board at the hearing.

(d) No member of the Appeals Board shall participate on an appeal involving a picture in which the member or any company with which he is associated has a financial interest.

(e) The appeal shall be heard and decided as expeditiously as possible and the decision shall be final.

8. The Board will also act as an advisory body on Code matters and, upon the call of the Chairman, will discuss the progress of the operation of the Code and rating program and review the manner of adherence to the Advertising Code.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

With the adoption of the voluntary film rating system described in this booklet the creators, distributors and exhibitors of motion pictures fulfill an important responsibility to the **parents** of this country. Through this system guidance is now provided as to the suitability of certain films for young audiences.

The ratings are applied by the experienced staff of the Code and Rating Administration. Those few film companies that do not choose to submit a film for rating will self-apply the strictest rating to that film, an X. The symbols which indicate audience suitability can be found easily . . . in movie advertising, in theater boxoffice windows, in lobby displays, and in numerous newspapers and magazines.

This new system goes into effect on November 1, 1968, but there will be a period of from 3 to 6 months during which time movies in release prior to that date will continue to be shown without ratings. Their number will diminish rapidly, however, after the new system begins to operate.

The film industry is doing all in its power to make these ratings easily accessible, but we must rely on the **public to become familiar with** the symbols and their meanings, and to **respect and follow the guidance** offered. **Parents** especially must teach their own children to understand and observe the symbols. Theater managers will enforce all those which restrict children's admission.

For further information or for additional copies of this booklet, write to:

Motion Picture Association of America
522 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036

WATCH FOR THIS BOX IN YOUR NEWSPAPERS

MOVIE AUDIENCE
*********GUIDE*********
A SERVICE OF FILM-MAKERS AND THEATERS.

These ratings apply to films released after Nov. 1, 1968

THIS SEAL
in ads indicates the film was submitted and approved under the Motion Picture Code of Self-Regulation.

G Suggested for GENERAL audiences.

M Suggested for MATURE audiences (parental discretion advised).

R RESTRICTED — Persons under 16 not admitted, unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian.

X Persons under 16 not admitted. This age restriction may be higher in certain areas. Check theater or advertising.

Printed as a public service by this newspaper.

Motion Picture Association of America
Jack Valenti, President
522 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10036

1600 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

8480 Beverly Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif. 90048

CATHOLIC FILM NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXXIII, No. 29 October 31, 1968

Published by the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures with the assistance of its educational affiliate, the National Center for Film Study (a division of the Catholic Adult Education Center, Chicago).

CLASS A, SECTION I
(Morally Unobjectionable for General Patronage)

PAPER LION—United Artists

AN ANGEL IN MY POCKET—Universal

THE HORSE IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT—Buena Vista

ICE STATION ZEBRA—MGM

YELLOW SUBMARINE—United Artists

CLASS A, SECTION II
(Morally Unobjectionable for Adults and Adolescents)

THE DIALOGUE OF THE CARMELITES (French)—Freena Films Limited

HELLFIGHTERS—Universal

CLASS A, SECTION III
(Morally Unobjectionable for Adults)

GREAT CATHERINE—Warner Bros.-Seven Arts

THE FIXER—MGM

ONLY WHEN I LARF—Paramount

CLASS A, SECTION IV
(Morally Unobjectionable for Adults, with Reservations)

SECRET CEREMONY—Universal

Observation: Among other things, this film is about the interdependence of people as portrayed in the relationship of a middle-aged prostitute and a retarded girl, each of whom needs, but is unable to help, the other. Although certain aspects of plot are unsavory (madness, incest, suicide) and some of the dialogue vulgar and sexually explicit, the film's treatment of these elements is restrained and in keeping with plot and characterization. More disturbing to some viewers will be the disquieting atmosphere of corrupted innocence which permeates the film but which expresses the mystery of evil implicit in the story's meaning.

CLASS B
(Morally Objectionable in Part for All)

THE BOSTON STRANGLER—FOX

Objection: There is no reason why the film medium, when restricted to mature audiences, cannot treat with insight and artistic restraint the subject of a sex murderer who terrorizes a city. This insight and restraint are not always manifest in The Boston Strangler.

Contrary to its concluding statement (flashed on the screen as a printed epilogue), this film tells us nothing about how society is to begin to deal with "the violent among us." Moreover, at a time when the casual connection between screen and real violence is being re-examined, one can wonder what effect the physical and psychological brutality depicted in the film may have upon those who are in some way emotionally disturbed.

A major motion picture, treating material as important to the well-being of society as this, should be beyond any suspicion as to its intentions and their achievement. Unfortunately, The Boston Strangler, in choosing to present the graphic details of just how such crimes are committed, becomes not only patently gross but also possibly dangerous to society.

CLASS C
(Condemned)

THE MAGUS—FOX

Objection: In th[illegible]m about a [illegible]owth to self-knowledge the explicit [illegible]tment of [illegible]exual sequences is morally offens[illegible]e and witho[illegible] justification.

STAR! Before *Sound of Music* was released to become a movie legend in its own time, director Robert Wise, producer Saul Chaplin, and superstar Julie Andrews had already decided to collaborate once again, this time in making a musical about stage star Gertrude Lawrence. The result is now on hand for Miss Andrews' many fans and all others who like music with their entertainment.

It is an ambitious film which is not content simply to showcase the talents of one of the few widely accepted movie stars of our time. It labors mightily to recreate with authenticity the life and career of a well-remembered and outstanding stage personality of the first half of our century. But more important, it endeavors to set this career into the context of the changing times from just before World War I through the middle forties.

The frame into which all this is put is that of a documentary film being prepared on Miss Lawrence's life. This brings an impression of reality to an unreal world. This "documentary" material (specially made for the film) is shown in normal 35mm ratio in black and white. The events are then seen in wide screen and color with Miss Andrews' commenting from time to time about their implications. The effect is a sort of one-dimensional *Citizen Kane* done in song and dance.

The screen Gertrude Lawrence is presented as a hard-working, long-suffering trooper both on and off stage. How closely the film followed her autobiography is not really important—*Star!* succeeds in giving the feeling that this must be the way a person gets to the top and stays there. What comes across most forcefully is the driving ambition that has to motivate a person in show business and the pride and confidence in oneself such a career demands, not to mention a certain toughness of spirit and ruthlessness towards other individuals.

Miss Andrews succeeds in communicating all these facets of the film version's Gertrude Lawrence with subtlety and conviction. The endless rigors of stardom and the damage to one's personal life come through with a clarity that is indeed enhanced by the sympathetic understanding Miss Andrews' performance generates in the viewer. In skirting the sentimentality latent in this material she is admirably assisted by the witty and astringent interpretation Daniel Massey gives to the role of Noël Coward.

Those who enjoy the musical theatre will be able to gorge their nostalgia inordinately. *Star!* has a score of eighteen musical numbers that begins (after an overture performance by an orchestra in front of the stage's curtain) with a turn-of-the-century music hall routine and builds toward the flamboyant "Jenny" number from *Light Up the Sky*. This is essentially photographed theatre: crack cameraman Ernest Lazzlo shot these musical spectacles from a ticket-buying spectator's point of view. Women will undoubtedly be fascinated by the stupendous fashion show that the film puts on display. In other words, *Star!* will please a far larger number of people than those who are already Miss Andrews' devoted followers. (A-II)

ROMEO AND JULIET. In the last twenty-five years there have been three major film productions of Shakespeare's classic love story (not counting the Ricardo Freda version to be released later this fall). MGM did an adaptation with Norman Shearer and Leslie Howard in 1936 and Rank followed in 1954 with an Italian version by Castellani featuring Laurence Harvey. The former was 'traditional' Shakespeare, well acted and staged, though Norma Shearer was 37 at the time and obviously too old for the part. The Castellani production, pictorially a knockout, stubbed its toe in the performance category. Now there is the Paramount release directed by Franco Zeffirelli.

For the purist, Mr. Zeffirelli's liberties will represent a form of cinematic sacrilege, but for the less sanctimonious groundlings among us this *Romeo and Juliet* may well prove a new and enduring shrine to the Bard, for its somewhat free interpretation brings a vitality and credibility, an appreciation for the present-day mind and *mores* of our society that simply explodes a 350-year old heirloom into the contemporary imagination.

In this unique rendition, a 16-year-old, Olivia Hussey, was selected for the role of Juliet, and a 17-year-old, Leonard Whiting plays Romeo. Shakespeare's text, while hardly dismissed, is occasionally cut (Romeo's killing of Paris at the tomb is simply deleted for dramatic economy), scenes are reshuffled, and some scene-setting lines are excised in the interest of the graphic visuals which perform the same function with greater effect. In contrast to past efforts the keynote of this production is action; the duels, the masque, the street-fights, the balcony scene itself are realistic, not staged gestures or rigid symbols as they had of necessity to be within the limited props and staging the Globe of Shakespeare's day provided.

This recreation of a tragedy of "star-crossed-lovers" in the Italy of the High Renaissance is more faithful, one suspects, to the playwright's own vision than even he could have imagined possible. Shot in Gubbio, a town still a part of its past, and the surrounding Umbrian and Tuscan countryside, the film breathes an Italian sensuousness, and the joy and exuberance of impetuous young love that Shakespeare's text conjures up in words. The fast pace makes the plot all the more believable: the terrible battle between the Capulets and Montagues at the beginning convinces us of the justice of the Prince's edict; the duel begun in fun, then by accident turned into deadly combat, adds strength to the play's theme of fateful retribution wreaked upon the heads of innocent youth.

There is a richness of color (the gold-red hues of the ball, the light and shadow of the balcony scene, the harsh brightness of the courtyard encounters), of costuming and orchestration (the extraordinarily sensitive musical score of Nino Rota) that dispose the viewer to accept the plausibility of this lightning-quick love and its doomed outcome. And the youthful leads (not untrained, Miss Hussey studied four years at the Italia Conti Drama School in London and for two years acted in the British production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie"; Mr. Whiting played the Artful Dodger in the London version of "Oliver!") bring a freshness and innocence to their roles that is quite unique in the history of the play's production. The rest of the cast, principally Michael York as Tybalt, John McEnery as M[illegible] Pat Heywo[illegible] as the scene-stealing, bawdy n[illegible]d Milo[illegible] as Friar Lawrence (as [illegible]nb[illegible]d potic[illegible] as he was meant to be) flesh out the surround[illegible] with more than competence. Despite the brief nude scene on the morning after the wedding night, which, though not prurient, is as silly as it is self-consciously acted by the two principal youngsters, mature teenagers will find the film a most engaging introduction to Shakespeare.

Were Will to see this one he might turn over in his grave, but one can't help feeling that it would be with a sigh of relief. Three cheers for Franco Zeffirelli! (A-IV)

THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES is a film that succeeds beyond what a knowledge of its plot and characterizations would suggest. Essentially a going-no-place story of a family of three, this play-into-film concerns itself with an exploration of the psychology and interrelationships of a husband (Jack Albertson) who is a self-made man, hypocritically religious, self-pitying, philandering, close-fisted; a wife (Patricia Neal) who is possessive, herself mother-centered, sinned against and bitter; and a 21-year-old war-vet son (Martin Sheen) who has just returned to the family's middle-class Bronx apartment from World War II to be unwilling referee, examiner, victim, prize, and doctor of his parents' domestic struggles. The people are ordinary enough, the action unspectacular, and the outcome, for all intents and purposes, indecisive. For all that, the average viewer will find it difficult to recall a recent American film as honest, humanly sensitive, and compassionate as this first film-effort of Ulu Grosbard.

At home Timmy discovers all the old wounds in his parents' marriage still open. He finds himself once again the center of a jealous struggle, the prize each parent seeks to win and use against the other. Nettie, his mother, attempts to test her son's affection by searching his memories of favorite breakfasts and by forcing him to visit her mother and retarded cousin; John Cleary, his father, encourages Timmy in shared drinking bouts and a trip to the family's summer cottage.

As the action unfolds it is evident that the boy, like so many other young men who are more [illegible] to life than to contemporary theatre, has grow[illegible] through his army experiences, to an acceptance of his parents' frustrations and shortcomings that is not only the beginning of wisdom but a test of love.

The intimate touches of family life are masterful and utterly revealing, like Timmy's gift of roses to Nettie which he convinces his father to present to her in his own name, because he realizes the pleasure such an unexpected gift from John will bring her. It is John's later denial of the gift in an argument with Nettie that pinpoints his own insensitivity and leads to one of the the high moments in the film. Timmy's reflection that for all the family's animosities no one is really guilty underscores a mutual tenderness that is effectively a part of each member's reaction toward the other; a tenderness not negated by Timmy's need for independence at the end of the film.

Roses will no doubt be criticized for its banalities and repetitions. Four years ago when Frank Gilroy wrote it and Ulu Grosbard brought it to the Broadway stage, the play won the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Dram[illegible]tics' Awar[illegible]5). But in the interim a number [illegible] and fil[illegible]e [illegible]e along covering similar [illegible] though, [illegible] admitted, with

considerably less skill and perception. Nevertheless, it is a somewhat flawed effort. The expanded location shots (the trip to the lake house, the nightclub sequence, Nettie's twelve-hour escape on a bus trip to a New Jersey shore community) cannot dispel the impression that this is a one-set play. In addition, the choice of color over a black and white production is distinctly out of keeping with the tone and texture of the subject matter. The acting, however, is universally competent; Jack Albertson and Martin Sheen recreate their stage roles, and Patricia Neal, in her welcome return to film after her serious illness, shows a broad understanding of the mother's part.

This MGM release, produced by Edgar Lansburry, may not come up roses for the super-sophisticated, but under its thorns there's a warmth, honesty and an appreciation of life's complexities that distill a very pleasant fragrance in contemporary cinema. (A-III)

THE LION IN WINTER. Eleanor of Aquitane was one of the most famous women in all history, renowned throughout medieval Christendom for her beauty, intelligence, wit, and sensitivity. Towards the end of her life, she engaged in a running duel with her husband, Henry II of England (who was involved in Thomas á Becket's martyrdom), for control of the throne by trying to estrange her children from their father.

The selection of the actors for the two central roles in this film was clearly important for its success. Eleanor could be played by only one actress, Katharine Hepburn (who thirty years before had embodied Mary, Queen of Scots, the only other historical figure whose life equaled the romantic drama of Eleanor's). It was not difficult to cast Henry II who, at least in the public's mind, was already Peter O'Toole.

The film gives them every opportunity to have at each other in a monumental verbal battle. They are royal equals playing a game with a kingdom at stake and yet still deeply in love with each other. In turn they banter pleasantly, scheme wickedly, quarrel violently, rant outrageously, and finally, in despair, torment each other without mercy. On paper the script may be balanced between the two, but Miss Hepburn, stealing scene after scene by some little bit of business, is clearly the dominant figure.

Adapted by James Goldman from his own stage play, the film emphasizes the personal struggle of two worthy adversaries. The relationship between the sons and parents is broadly portrayed and, since they are but pawns, does not have the interest of the main conflict. The details of this complicated historical period are of little importance since Goldman has simply used the past in order to present the love-hate relationship of the royal couple in contemporary terms. Nonetheless those who are so inclined will find that the historical background has been handled with careful attention to the setting and mood. John Barry's music is particularly good in this respect.

Anthony Harvey, who is beginning a career as a director after a brilliant one as an editor (e.g., *Dr. Strangelove),* used his resources appropriately in terms of the subject rather than trying to call attention to his cinematic cleverness. Too many historical films

have been merely crowded pageants. *The Lion in Winter,* like *Becket,* is one of those films in which history is not allowed to get in the way of the characters. (A-III)

FILM EDUCATION COMMENTS

On November 1st, the motion picture industry will introduce its new system of rating films according to age suitability. The four categories to be used are: G (for general audience patronage), M (suggested for mature viewers but without excluding anyone from attendance), R (those under 16 not admitted unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian), and X (no admission at all for those under 16).

This plan is intended primarily to protect the young from material with which they may not yet be prepared to cope. In the case of the M and R ratings, the responsibility for allowing children to see these films is placed where it belongs, with the parent; he is the one best qualified to determine suitability of screen fare for his family. The age level of 16 is not mandatory but is left to the discretion of the distributors in each state. Taking their cue from existing state legislation concerning minors and/or from local community expectations, some theatre owners may set 17 or 18 as the appropriate age. In no case however, will the age restriction be lower than 16.

This rating system is the industry's response to a growing concern on the part of the public about the increasingly explicit treatment of adult themes in a mass entertainment medium which traditionally has been open to every age level. Many responsible groups have repeatedly pointed out that the United States is the only country in the civilized world not to have some form of film classification by age. Now that it has come, it can solve the single most important problem that has frustrated and confused the public.

It is no secret that the film industry is finally undertaking this new rating system because it is particularly aware of the various forms of film legislation that have already been proposed on local, state, and federal levels of government. But it is not only the industry's interests that are at stake—it is also the public's and those of the future of the film art. The success of this plan will have a direct bearing upon the quality of our culture and the well-being of our society. This is the reason the churches are concerned and why their film departments have issued the following statement:

JOINT STATEMENT BY NATIONAL CHURCH FILM OFFICES REGARDING VOLUNTARY RATING SYSTEM OF THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

On October 7, 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America announced the details of a new and expanded plan of self-regulation, the success of which depends upon the voluntary cooperation of all segments of the industry. In essence, this plan is based upon the principles of the already existing Production code, supplemented by a system of rating films according to their age suitability.

Sharing the concern not only of the public but also of the industry, the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures and the National Council of Churches' Broadcasting and Film Commission endorse in principle

this MPAA rating system as being consistent with the rights and obligations of free speech and artistic expression, as well as with the duty of parents and society to safeguard the young in their growth to responsible adulthood. NCOMP and BFC of the NCC have repeatedly affirmed the position that these ends can best be served through a voluntary classification of film by the industry rather than by government regulation.

Recognizing that this may be the last opportunity for the industry to discharge its public responsibilities, and fully aware that its failure to do so will result in compulsory legislation, NCOMP and BFC, after thoughtful consideration and relying on the good faith of the industry, give genuine and full support to this plan and urge its conscientious implementation on every level of production, distribution, and exhibition.

Conscientious implementation of this new rating plan, which is so essential for generating public confidence, will be measured by the industry's performance in the following crucial areas:

1. The Code and Rating Administration's first responsibility is faithfully to apply to each film submitted to it the Standards of Production required for obtaining the Production Code Seal. Its second and new responsibility is to assign the appropriate rating after judicious and prudent deliberation, aided by whatever professional consultation and research may be necessary.
2. For their part, exhibitors must firmly uphold and enforce at the box office the age restrictions which are applied to certain films.
3. Advertising, in whatever medium it is presented, must clearly indicate the rating which applies to the film in question.

The success of the new MPAA plan obviously also depends upon public understanding and support. With this in mind, NCOMP and BFC commend to community, church, parent, and civic organizations active involvement in the application of the rating system at their local theatres. In addition, they are also urged to encourage the editors of local newspapers to publish daily the definitions of the ratings in their entertainment section as a public service.

The public by right will be the final arbiter of the new rating plan. Because time will be required for the plan's introduction and implementation, the public is counselled to avoid making premature judgments on its effectiveness. In advising the public's support and forbearance, NCOMP and BFC appreciate their responsibility to make objective evaluations of the entire industry's performance and to report periodically these findings to the public.

The Catholic Film Newsletter alternates with a Guide to Current Films and the Classification List at bi-weekly intervals for a total of twenty-six issues per year. The service also includes an Annual containing studies, articles and reviews. Subscription rates for this service are $5.00 (first class mail) or $6.50 (air mail). Bulk and school subscription rates also available. All inquiries regarding subscriptions should be addressed to the Subscription Manager, National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 453 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022; phone 758-3990 (area code 212).
Questions and comments relating to the material found in the Newsletter and requests for permission to reproduce should be sent to the Director at the above address.

Cover photograph of a scene from "STAR!" (courtesy of 20th Century-Fox)

CATHOLIC FILM NEWSLETTER

The film industry's new classification system helps parents answer the question . . .

Which Films Are OK for Our Children?

By JAMES M. WALL
Editor, CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE

IF YOU'VE grown jaded over "for adults only" approach to film advertising, you probably hadn't realized that some of the more recent ads really mean it.

The motion-picture industry has introduced a new four-category classification system, designed to aid parents in determining which films are appropriate for young children. In addition, theater owners have pledged not to admit youngsters to films judged suitable only for adult audiences.

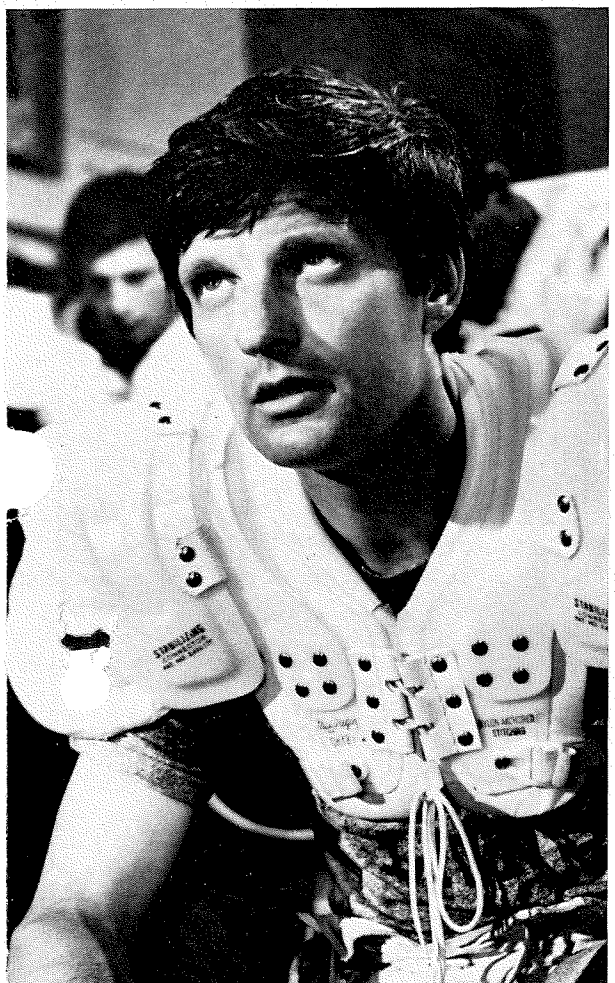
With this new self-imposed system, American film companies and theater owners are trying to convert "for adults only" into a statement of product suitability. This conversion of an old advertising lure is underway within an American society comprised of grandparents who see one film a year; college students who know Andy Warhol better than Hemingway; younger teen-agers who laugh at *Laugh-In* jokes once confined to burlesque; and police chiefs who consider themselves authorities on motion-picture art.

When movies were simple, families went together to the local theater, often without knowing what was playing. The kids would either have a good time or be bored. Only rarely was there a chance they would be shocked or disturbed for nearly all movies were family fare. But that was before television captured the family trade. It was also before adult themes were introduced into this country through the "foreign film" market.

Today's films are increasingly aimed at specialized audiences and deal frankly with themes long the province of other art forms, but only recently broached in motion pictures. Films are a part of the changing scene, and Hollywood officials have decided to police their own house before local ordinances do it for them.

The new film-rating system went into effect November 1, 1968. All films released for distribution since then have been labeled as falling into one of the four categories:

G—for general audiences
M—for mature audiences



G—General
Alan Alda is in the title role of Paper Lion, *a film based on George Plimpton's book, which was rated suitable for any audience after language spoken in the heat of battle was subdued.*

M—Mature
In-between films like The Charge of the Light Brigade, *starring David Hemmings (right) fall into a "mature" category, leaving up to parents the decision on children's viewing.*

R—restricted to those over 16, unless accompanied by parent or guardian.

X—restricted to those over 16 with no exceptions.

These ratings must be included in all advertising copy and also must be prominently displayed at the ticket window.

The new system is entirely voluntary, but it has more specific restrictions than any self-imposed system the industry has ever put upon itself. For the first time in its history, film officials are saying to parents:

"You cannot bring your child to see this film" (when it has an *X* rating). Or it is saying, "Your child cannot see this film unless you bring him yourself" (when it has an *R* rating).

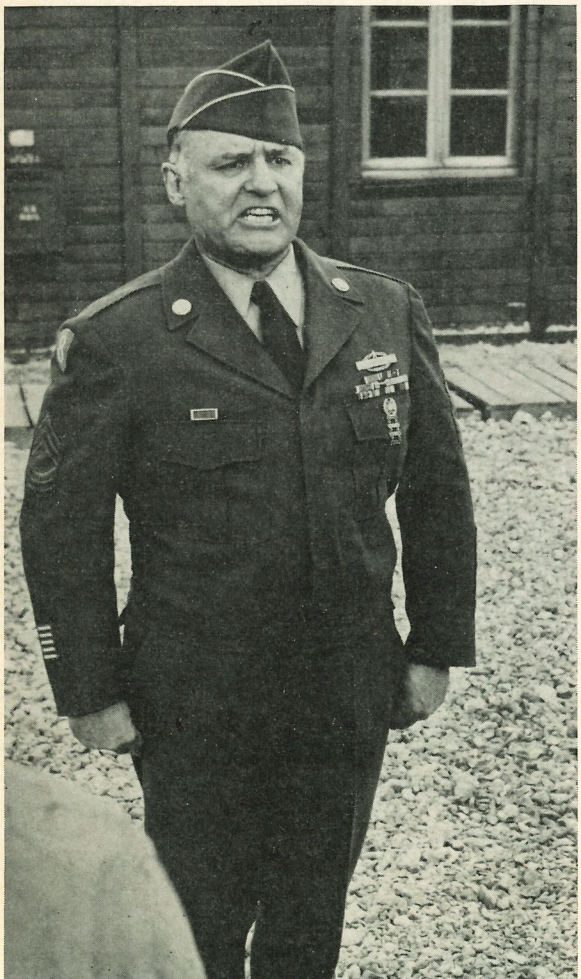
Accepting such restrictions was not easy for creative film makers, or for businessmen who sell and show films. But they have consented because a recent Supreme Court decision (ruling on a Dallas, Texas, classification case) made it clear that local governments can restrict films for minors. Rather than leave the imposition of restrictions to local whim, the industry moved to rate its own films.

The new program was quickly endorsed by Roman Catholic and Protestant film officials as "consistent with the rights and obligations of free speech and artistic expression, as well as with the duty of parents and society to safeguard the young."

In a joint statement, Father Patrick Sullivan, head of the Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, and the Rev. William Fore, director of the National Council of Churches Broadcasting and Film Commission, commended the industry for setting up its guidance program, and called upon all exhibitors to strictly enforce the classifications.

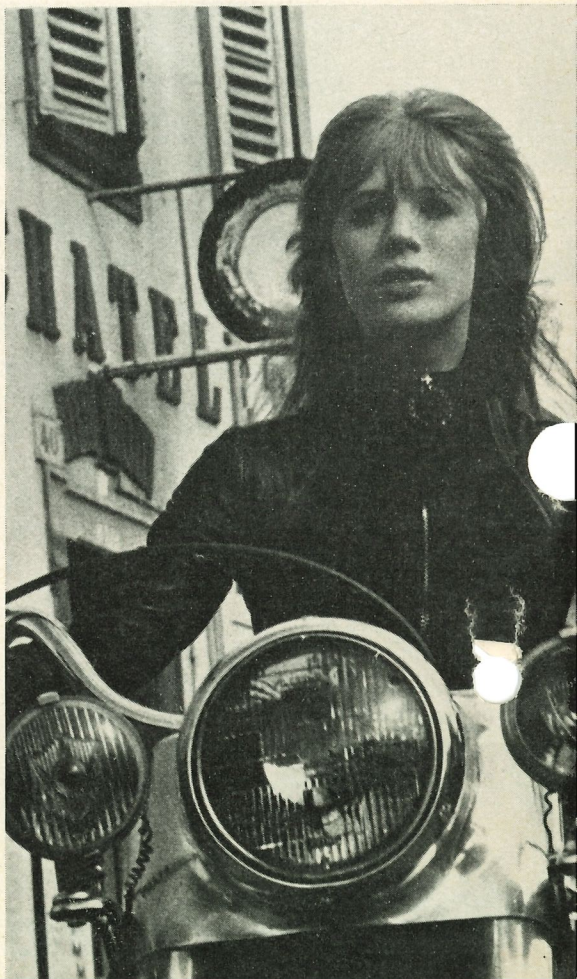
The church leaders were cautious in their endorsement, accepting classification as a better alternative than censorship, but promising to make periodic reports to the church public regarding the effectiveness of the new system.

Films will be classified by the



R—Restricted
Children under 16 must be accompanied by parents if they want to see such adult films as The Sergeant, *with Rod Steiger (left), a serious study of an army man's attraction to a younger soldier.*

X—No One Under 16
Children under 16 will not be permitted inside the theater to see films rated in this category. The Girl on a Motorcycle *was the first film given this designation. It is English-made.*



Code and Rating Administration of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), which until January of this year was headed by veteran film buff Geoffrey Shurlock. The code office was established in 1930 under Will Hays during a dark period in filmdom's history when irresponsible film makers threatened to bring down the wrath of the nation on the fledgling industry.

Shurlock is quick to point out that the new ratings will not indicate quality or artistic value.

"They are concerned with content suitability," he told me in his Hollywood office. "A general (*G*) picture may or may not be one your particular child will enjoy, but if we give a film a *G*, you know that, in our opinion, there is nothing in the film which would be inappropriate for your child."

Among the first films to receive *G* ratings, for example, were three major musicals, *Oliver, Star!* and *Funny Girl.* None is "child's fare," but all are considered suitable for children.

Shurlock's office must engage in delicate discussions with film companies before the ratings are released. If a company objects to a rating, it may ask what change it can make in the film in order to shift it into a different classification. His staff of four men and a woman psychologist works with film makers from the first submission of a script to the final viewing of the finished print. If a company cannot work out its differences with the code office, a larger Appeals Board, composed of film executives, must arbitrate.

Although Shurlock himself prefers not to discuss details of how specific ratings are determined, it is known in the trade that at least one *G* film, *Paper Lion,* almost got an *M* rating because of some inadvertent bits of profanity on the sound track. The film's producers decided the language was not that important and toned down the soundtrack. As released, the film, a fun picture about football, is *G*, and you hear little profanity.

Films with the *M*—mature—rating may be seen by children unaccompanied by their parents. But the code office advises parents to consider that such pictures contain material that might be inappropriate for some children. *The Charge of the Light Brigade* was one of the first films to receive an *M*, largely because of the barracks language and the adult nature of its love story.

Each family will differ, of course, but the ratings might be used in this manner:

Say a family has four children: Susi, 5; Richard, 9; Robert, 12; and David, 14. The parents could assume that a *G* picture would be suitable for all the children, though Susi would probably enjoy *Mary Poppins* more than *Star!* Parents may decide that *M* films are probably too mature for 9-year-old Richard, but that, in some cases, they would permit Robert (12) and David (14) to see the *M* film after getting information on the picture.

FILMS classified *R*—restricted—are off limits to all children under 16 (or 18 if local theater managers prefer to raise the age limits) unless accompanied by a parent. Our hypothetical parent with four children may want his 14-year-old David to see a particular *R* film so they can discuss it together. David may see the film, but only if the parent takes him into the theater.

The Sergeant, a post World War II Army film, starring Rod Steiger, has been classified *R*, probably because it deals with a homosexual attraction felt by a tough sergeant for a young private in his company. This classification does not mean *The Sergeant* is a "dirty" or "bad" film, but that, in the opinion of the rating office, it is designed for a mature audience.

The fourth classification is *X*, excluding all under 16 without exception. Many in the industry were initially resistant to including this category because it is, in effect, telling a parent what he can do regarding his children. Under the system, even if you want your child to see an *X* film and go to the theater with him, he will not be admitted. But the *X* was included and takes in all those films which are deliberately exploitative, particularly of sex, as well as the serious art films which include controversial material for legitimate artistic reasons but still are too explicit for children.

The first film to receive an *X* was *The Girl on a Motorcycle,* made in England, and obviously designed for a particular kind of adult audience, which goes to movies in search of detailed sexual activities and portrayals of violence.

An *X* film will not be given the MPAA's Seal of Approval, which means that, in the industry's opinion, the *X* film has failed to live up to certain commonly accepted community standards. The major companies which comprise MPAA —Avco-Embassy, Allied Artists, Columbia, Paramount, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Warner Bros.-Seven Arts, United Artists, Universal, 20th Century-Fox—have agreed not to release any films without a Seal of Approval. If any film gets an *X*, it will be released through a subsidiary, such as Warner Bros.-Seven Arts' Claridge Pictures, which is handling the distribution of *The Girl on a Motorcycle.* This sharply reduces the film's distribution potential, since many theaters probably will not show *X* films.

All films released by MPAA will be rated, and it is expected that films distributed by independent companies, as well as those brought in from non-American sources, will be voluntarily submitted for classification by MPAA.

Classification rode into the American scene on the backs of two kinds of films, the artistic and the exploitative. *Blow-Up,* directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, is an example of a film of serious intent with scenes unthinkable in a major U.S. film prior to World War II. But *Blow-Up* was generally acclaimed by film critics as an exceptionally fine work of art.

Exploitation films, on the other hand, have graduated from the days when they were shown only in major cities in grimy little theaters. The "nudie," or dirty, film is still made to play these houses, but technically well-made exploitation films like *Therese and Isabelle* or *I, a Woman* are playing in suburban and small-town as well as major urban theaters. These films have

no real artistic merit, but pretend a certain artistry with formula slickness.

The new rating system probably will meet objections on two sides. Many parents may still feel local censorship is the better solution. Others may resent not being able to take an under-16 child to see what they feel is a cinematic work of art. But between these two extremes, and against the background of cultural change, film classification appears to be the best immediate solution to protecting children from exploitation without hampering the work of serious film artists.

Of course, the word "protect" is vague. Practically no current research evidence supports the contention of some that particular films have direct bearing upon a child's behavior.

A Film and Social Behavior Consultation, sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Christian Social Concerns a few years ago, concluded that while film has enormous influence on cultural patterns, it is almost impossible to pinpoint any one film or scene as the cause of either social or personal attitude or behavior changes.

But despite the lack of concrete evidence tying film-viewing to specific attitudes or actions, the film industry is aware of increased public uneasiness over depiction of sex and violence in films. The classification system is an attempt to satisfy this uneasiness and provide a sensible parental guide. The system's effectiveness hinges largely on how well local theater managers display and enforce the ratings, and how seriously they are treated by the public.

No legal requirement forces a manager to display the rating, and only his conscience requires him to keep youngsters out of *R* and *X* films. Theater managers are like ministers; some will follow the national program while others will not. For those who do not, however, there is at least one source of industry pressure—the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), which is headed this year by Julian Rifkin, a Boston, Mass., theater-chain executive.

Mr. Rifkin worked closely with MPAA President Jack Valenti in developing the rating program, and while he is quick to admit that not every theater chain is enthusiastic about the classification system, he feels that it is workable and adequate.

NATO was not involved in a previous MPAA attempt to classify certain films under the heading "Suggested for Mature Audiences." As a result, the SMA label was almost meaningless since theater owners did not enforce it. Now, with the threat of local censorship facing theaters, Mr. Rifkin feels most NATO members welcome the stronger and more specific classifications.

NATO is conducting an intensive educational program with its members, and looks to local civic and church leaders for help in encouraging theater managers in each community to take part in the program.

CHURCH influence with parents also will be an important factor. Industry leaders already have expressed concern that many parents will resent classification. Mr. Rifkin cites the hypothetical case of a man who sends his 14-year-old son to the movies on a Sunday afternoon so that father can take his customary nap.

"When this father is awakened by his son's news that the theater manager won't let him into a picture classified *R* unless his father comes with him, that parent might decide that classification is interfering with his right to sleep," he points out—a reminder to churchmen that not all parents really care which films their children see.

In contrast to this laxity in child-rearing, there are parents who feel the best way to protect children from "undesirable" films is for such films not to be made at all. The problem this poses, of course, is the impossibility of reaching total agreement on what is undesirable.

Censorship of films is an external restriction imposed by officials unrelated to the film industry. The advantage of the industry classification program is that it is administered by the film makers themselves, a valid compromise with an artistic product that is commercially sold on the mass market.

Local censorship decisions can be shortsighted and uninformed. There was, for example, the recent case of a Chicago lawyer serving as counsel for that city's appeal board, which passes on a film's suitability for children. After looking at *La Guerre Est Finie,* Alain Resnais' much-acclaimed film concerning the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, the lawyer said, "If I was a patron of the movie theater and paid to see it, I would have walked out. It was boring."

Admitting that he couldn't remember the director's name, the lawyer still sought to have sections of the film cut before it could be shown to a general audience. "There was one part of a love scene that could be eliminated," he said. "We thought it could be deleted without affecting the theme and value of the picture." (The film was later passed for general-audience viewing.)

The lawyer is entitled to his opinion, but a free society can hardly permit a man without any awareness of *La Guerre Est Finie*'s artistic significance to make a judgment as to how much of it could be shown.

In order for a free society to maintain freedom from external restraints, it must pay the price of products peddled by the irresponsible members of the film industry. Films with artistic pretense like *Therese and Isabelle,* or just plain "dirty" films, will continue to be made by marginal—or, occasionally, even major—companies. But the new classification system now labels these films for what they are: peep shows for adults.

Meanwhile, the more serious film artists will be able to explore important themes through the cinematic art form without feeling they must tone down their treatment because children might see the film.

In a democracy, no protective system is perfect. The present classification system, however, is a good try at protecting both freedom of expression and the right of children to develop without undue exploitation. □

The Wichita Beacon

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Marcellus M. Murdock, Chairman of the Board and President
Britt Brown, Vice President and Secretary
John P. Colburn, Editor and Publisher

Dangerous Precedent?

The faculty of Yale College has voted to strip the Reserve Officers Training Corps of its academic standing and to relegate it to the status of an extracurricular activity.

The faculty — virtually autonomous in curricular matters — also voted to take away the title of "professor" from military officers who run the program.

In itself, the move would be of little importance, because Yale has only an Army and Navy unit and both have less than 100 members. And faculties have always looked down their noses at the military "professors" and have resented their academic rank.

But the Yale decision could have far-reaching effects at other colleges and universities.

There is a growing disaffection with the military programs which train college students to be officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force.

And because of Yale's prestige, there is fear that the downgrading there will encourage similar action elsewhere. Some military people feel that if there is no credit for military courses, pressures on an undergraduate's time might discourage him from joining any program that moved him no closer toward his degree.

Undoubtedly these fears are well founded. Yale's Army unit was formed in 1916, and the Navy group 10 years later. Both were among the first in the country.

Other colleges, less than enchanted with ROTC anyway, may decide that if Yale considers the program no more important than this, they may as well follow suit.

This could result in serious chipping away at a program that provides a major portion of America's military officers.

And if the draft is eliminated, as President Nixon hopes it will be after the Vietnam War, a dangerous shortage of trained personnel could eventually occur.

Futile Attempt

A bill by two Shawnee County representatives aimed at curtailing the spread of obscene material is just as silly as similar attempts on the federal level.

It's an experiment in futility.

Undoubtedly their hearts are in the right place, but it simply won't work. In the first place, it is nearly impossible to define pornography. What is a "shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion" to one person may be art to the next.

And worse, any law which limits what another person can read, view or listen to is censorship and a limitation of freedom.

Kansas is well rid of the movie review board which was struck down by a court decision a few years ago. Why ruin that progress with a step backward?

Anyway, there are ample laws on the books now to take care of real obscenity, and the action against those accused of violation of the laws is in the courts where it belongs.

The best way to stamp out pornography is not to buy any of it. If it isn't profitable it will disappear.

John Chamberlain Says

The American Left Is Way Out in Left Field

The Left is clearly wondering where to turn.

It sent some ten thousand young demonstrators to Washington for the Nixon

to be the man for the raucous Left. He likes the institution of the U. S. Senate, which means that he likes the citadel of