

FILMS IN FOCUS™

P.O. Box 26374
Colorado Springs, CO 80936

Useful movie previews affordable for everyone.

☆☆☆

September 1, 1994

Dear Leaders of America,

COMING SOON TO A THEATER NEAR YOU: more violence, more sex, more profanity, more... Could there be a link between today's movie content and the general moral decline we witness all around us? To say the least, movies do have a certain influence on society.

Whether used intentionally or not, movies have the power to make even the unglamorous seem glamorous. When put up on the magical silver screen, socially damaging behaviors and practices can very often be perceived as "cool" by the undisciplined mind. Children especially sometimes accept what they're shown as being "just part of life" and see no reason why they shouldn't be like, and act like, the characters portrayed.

Strangely, as a nation we seem to be quite tolerant of whatever those in the entertainment media choose to dish out. Perhaps we think it's beyond our control. Perhaps it's "just part of life" and we're supposed to accept the industry's prescribed dosage of graphic violence, gratuitous sex and glorified perverts without question. But hold on. Are things really all that terrible in the good old U.S. of A. that we have to worry about it?

You decide. According to the FBI, which now actually prepares a "Crime Clock" each year, a person is murdered in this country, on average, every 22 minutes. A woman is raped every 5 minutes. And a robbery occurs every 47 seconds. Sexually transmitted disease rates have reached epidemic proportions. Teenage pregnancies are... OK, enough. Yes, it's a national nightmare. And yes, if possible, we should all be doing something.

But what? If we are to preserve our own right to free speech, then we must concede the same right to producers of movies. Just so, it becomes readily apparent that the responsibility rests on our shoulders, not theirs. Everyone agrees that parents, and all responsible adults, need to set examples for children with life styles based on socially redeeming values and morality. But then, as in the case of movie content, we must go a step further and be prepared to provide guidance to the young until they can make healthy decisions on their own.

Unfortunately, such guidance has generally required much time and expense personally previewing many movies in advance. More often we end up taking our chances and rely on ratings. When the industry began to administer its rating program many people were encouraged, it's true. But, because opinions vary, the system has proved wholly inadequate. What may be deemed PG by one person, qualifies for nothing less than R by another, while some R rated films contain no violence, nudity, sex, or profanity at all. Irregardless, it has become almost standard these days to "shock" the audience with unexpected nudity or language.

Knight-Ridder Newspapers recently captured the frustration felt by so many movie-goers. Their story highlights two people, each having gone to a different movie. Each walked out before the movie was over. Wendy Benson found the PG-13 rating and the advertising hype for the film

she chose for her children to be totally misleading. She vowed to never go to a movie again. Bili McDonald was "so hot under the collar" about what he termed "indoctrination" that he wrote a letter to the president of Warner Brothers to complain.

However, to be fair, most of the information we receive about movies before we see them comes from within the industry itself, and is not intended to be a consumer service, but rather to persuade people to buy tickets. So what's the answer? Wendy Benson wishes she'd seen a big billboard that said, "This is a really trashy movie. Don't bring your kids." Don't hold your breath. And boycotting movies altogether won't do either; there will always be films worth seeing. Well, FILMS IN FOCUS™ offers a real solution. And we invite you to be a part of that solution.

Every week our researchers are busy viewing all the latest major motion picture releases nationwide. They have been trained to carefully record only the quantity and degree of violence, nudity, sexuality, and profanity. This information is then assembled and recorded onto audio tape for transmission to the consumer via telephone at the absolute minimum charge possible. Your part? Help us let people know we're here. By working together we can eliminate the need to purchase national media advertising and keep this valuable resource affordable for all income levels.

We are asking leaders all across the country to make copies of the FILMS IN FOCUS™ flyer and share them with as many people as possible. We have enclosed our 8½ x 11 version of the flyer which was produced on a laser printer with high quality paper to serve as a master. (In case you don't have free access to a photocopy machine, we've found the large office supply chains—Office Max, Office Depot, etc.—only charge about 2¢ a copy.) Each person you touch with this bit of good news will surely thank you and your organization later. Networking together in this way is indeed community service at its best.

We hope you will join us in this great effort. We all share a stake in the future of America, not just for ourselves, but for our posterity as well. This FILMS IN FOCUS™ service is certainly not expected to be a national cure-all, but it does, to a large degree, put parents and guardians back in the director's chair, better equipped to do their job effectively. The result can only be positive: more and more children reaching their full potential as responsible, socially conscious, peace loving adults—the next stewards of our nation and planet.

Sincerely yours,
The staff at FILMS IN FOCUS™

P.S. We understand some of you may think of questions we have not answered in the enclosed literature and we welcome your inquiries. Since we are not structured financially to maintain personal telecommunications nationwide, we ask that you utilize the postal service for all correspondence. (Including a self-addressed, stamped envelope whenever possible is always appreciated.)



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- Everyone loves to see a good movie, but... how often have you been disappointed by scenes or language that you found offensive?
- How often have you hoped for a fun night out with friends or family only to have your plans frustrated by inappropriate movie content?
- And, PARENTS, how often do you find yourself feeling anxious and concerned when your children go off to the movies on their own?

Welcome to FILMS IN FOCUS™

- ★ **JUST THE FACTS M'AM** We report only on the quantity and the degree of *VIOLENCE*, *NUDITY*, *SEXUALITY*, and *PROFANITY* in the movies — without ever divulging the plot or spoiling the ending.
- ★ **PEACE OF MIND** Use this service to determine which movies are best suited for different circumstances; for example, a family outing, Mom's birthday, that special date, girls' night out, a little time to yourself, etc.
- ★ **PARENT POWER** Only you know what's best for your children. With FILMS IN FOCUS™ you are equipped to better choose the movies most appropriate for their present ages and levels of maturity.
- ★ **SAVE TIME AND \$\$\$** Armed with the facts, you'll be selecting the movies that are right for you and right for the occasion, thereby eliminating costly mistakes and stretching your entertainment dollars.
- ★ **QUICK AND EASY** Just call FILMS IN FOCUS™ for detailed movie profiles like this: *"(movie name) a comedy-drama, industry rated PG-13. Contains intermittent slapstick and semi-graphic violence in the form of beatings and shootings; occasional partial nudity and one brief scene with full female nudity; frequent sexual jokes involving bestiality, fellatio and transvestites; and frequent vulgarisms and profanities."*

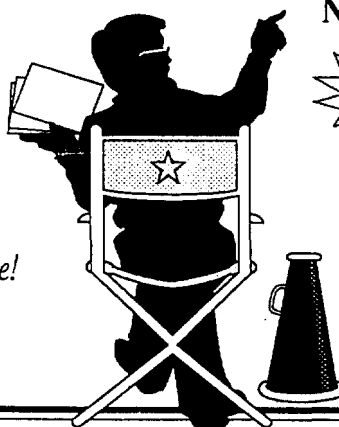
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NEW
FILMS IN FOCUS™ makes the same great preview service available in print for home videos too! Also, every week we give away two free movie tickets, and you could be next! Receive your free sample issue of our monthly Video View™ along with Entry Rules for our weekly Drawings by sending a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

**Films In Focus • Box 26374
Colorado Springs, CO 80936**

* Each profile is approximately 15 seconds. Movies are listed beginning with the most recent releases and ending with the longest running. If you are interested in the very latest movie releases only, your call will be one to two minutes or less. First time callers who want to hear all profiles will require a longer call, perhaps 6 or 7 minutes, making the average cost per call to FILMS IN FOCUS™ about \$2.94. Recorded preview information reports on all major motion pictures during their regular engagements nationwide (excluding discount theaters, G-rated animations, and Sneak Previews). Every week a fully updated program becomes available Saturday morning at 8:00 EST. The fact that FILMS IN FOCUS™ does not purchase national advertising makes the 98¢ per minute charge possible. By making copies of this flyer and sharing them with your friends, you help keep this valuable consumer service affordable for everyone. We'd like to hear from you—your questions, comments and suggestions can help us serve you more effectively. Include a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope and mail your correspondence to Films In Focus, P.O. Box 26374, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80936. We will reply promptly.

Finding a family movie

■ State foundation puts Dove seal on videos it OKs

By Lisa Perlman
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Dick Rolfe sympathizes with the thousands of parents who wander through video stores each weekend searching for a movie without blood-spattering gunfights, four-letter words or sex scenes that will leave them red-faced in front of their wide-eyed 6-year-olds.

"Parents don't want to white-knuckle the video control every time they rent a video and bring it home to watch with the family," Rolfe said.

He thinks he has found the solution.

Nearly three years ago, Rolfe launched the nonprofit Dove Foundation, with the simple idea of publishing a list of videos "appropriate for family viewing."

"Pretty soon, it became a real sought-after list. People began taking the list into their local video stores and then we started getting calls from video store owners asking for the lists, too," Rolfe said.

Today, about 600 video outlets in 35 states and Canada buy blue-and-white Dove stickers and slap them on about 1,000 "family approved" videos on Dove's list. That's nearly four times the 161 stores in the program at the start of 1993. And the Blockbuster chain, with about 3,700 stores, is experimenting with Dove stickers at two franchises.

The Dove Foundation grew from the belief that the major studios aren't filling the demand for family movies and that parents don't really know what to expect when they rent a video rated PG or PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America, Rolfe said.

"Parents are frustrated when they walk into a video store because the MPAA rating system has become so inconsistent — and because 40 percent of videos carry no ratings whatsoever," he said.

"An unrated video can be anything from the director's cut of 'Basic Instinct' to Barney the dinosaur, because neither one went into theatrical release."

But it doesn't take a Sharon Stone sex thriller to become a Dove reject. A single flash of frontal nudity or even just one swear word — including the use of "Jesus Christ" as a profanity — is enough to get a thumbs down from Dove's national network of about 15 volunteer reviewers.

"Sleepless in Seattle" squeaked through, even though there were reservations about Meg Ryan's character having an affair with a boyfriend.

"And yet we approved it because the affair was never glorified or recommended — and in the end she falls in love with the guy she didn't have the affair with," said Rolfe, who has the final say.

All of Dove's reviewers are "responsible parents," and people Rolfe has known for some time. While watching a video, they are asked to note each case of "inappropriate language, inappropriate nudity, unresolved illicit sex, inappropriate graphic violence, unresolved serious disrespect for authority, and other unresolved anti-social behavior."

Some might consider Dove's criteria too prudish. But Rolfe insists that just because Hollywood's standards have become more permissive the same doesn't necessarily hold true for



▲ Dick Rolfe grabs a Dove Foundation-approved movie from a video store rack labeled as being filled with what the group says are films "appropriate for family viewing."

trying to choose a video and this Dove seal makes it a lot easier. "PG-13" doesn't tell you much anymore," said Janet Fisher, a mother of three who was browsing the racks in the video department of a Meijer store in Grand Rapids. With 79 stores in Michigan and Ohio, Meijer Inc. is Dove's biggest chain to sign up so far.

About 18,000 videos have been released since Dove was founded, Rolfe said. The group has approved about 1,000 videos, including some released before it was launched.

Dove is based in Grand Rapids and has offices in Washington, D.C., and Pasadena, Calif.

It charges video stores \$100 annually to join, in return giving them updated video lists, stickers and signs. For \$19 a year, individuals can get lists updated quarterly and a Dove newsletter. Besides those membership fees, the group's funding comes from grants and individual donations.

"In one of our stores, the Dove section was nearly sold out the first weekend we began the program," said Paul Entfield, vice president of development for the

five-store Cost Cutter Food chain in Bellingham, Wash.

"Parents can send their kids in and tell them they can pick anything out of this section without having to worry. That's probably the biggest plus."

Dove has some detractors, some of whom say the organization is nothing but a smoke-screen for pro-censorship religious right groups. Not surprisingly, the most vocal of Dove's critics is the same one Rolfe targets: the Motion Picture Association of America.

"Their goal seems to be to decide what Americans ought to see or not see, and we don't believe there should be any self-appointed or self-anointed group to make such decisions on the part of individuals or families," MPA spokesman Vans Stevenson said.

He points out that stores carrying Dove seals make up less than 1 percent of the approximately 70,000 video outlets nationwide.

Stevenson and others also point to Dove's affiliation with the Michigan Decency Action Council, an anti-pornography group that has sought to bolster

state obscenity laws and encouraged prosecutions of video store owners who sell pornographic videos. Rolfe acknowledges that Dove began as an arm of the Christian organization, but insists that Dove is now independent.

However, the Decency Action Council's president, Dan Vander Ark, serves as Dove's secretary-treasurer. The two organizations remain next-door neighbors — if not philosophically, then physically — in a Grand Rapids office complex.

Dove's co-founder and chairman is Brad Curl, president of the National Christian Association. Rolfe is the group's president and chief executive officer, responsible for day-to-day operations. He previously worked in merchandising and public relations and has three adult children.

Rolfe insists his group is not out to censor, only to give more choices to families.

"When we put a Dove seal on a movie, all we're saying is that this movie is appropriate for family viewing. When we don't, we're not necessarily saying it's a bad movie or an evil movie — just that it's probably not a good movie to share with your 6-year-old."

In fact, Rolfe said, many of the stores that carry Dove seals also rent pornographic videos.

Recently, Rolfe has been trying to persuade the top studios to release edited versions of movies on video — like the versions the studios already edit for airlines to show on flights. He said the Dove-approved edited versions could be placed side-by-side on video store shelves with the originals.

Dove is even working with two television networks interested in using the Dove logo in promoting made-for-TV movies, miniseries and specials, Rolfe said.

The names on Dove's advisory board also have lent the group credibility: entertainer Steve Allen; actor Dean Jones; composer Al Kasha; producer and former Walt Disney Vice President Kenneth Wales; former Dallas Cow-

A short list

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Here are some examples of the approximately 1,000 movies and videos approved by the Dove Foundation:

- Beethoven
- Beethoven's 2nd
- Charlots of Fire (12 years and up)
- Dennis the Menace
- Free Willy
- Groundhog Day (12 years and up)
- Home Alone (12 years and up)
- Honey, I Shrunk the Kids (12 years and up)
- Life with Mikey (12 years and up)
- The Muppet Christmas Carol
- My Girl (12 years and up)

and up)

- Rookie of the Year (12 years and up)
- The Secret Garden (12 years and up)
- Sister Act (12 years and up)

and up)

■ Star Wars

Here are some videos that Dove almost approved and, in parentheses, the reason they were rejected. Dove Foundation President Dick Rolfe says they are good candidates for release in edited form:

- Cool Runnings (uses "Jesus Christ" as a profanity)
- Sister Act II (same as above)
- Manhattan Murder Mystery (same as above)
- Benny and Joon (uses

PARENTAL DISCRETION

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Contact: Ann Roberts
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For Immediate Release

MOVIE REVIEW NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS LAUNCHED

Colleyville, Texas, February 11, 1993 — High Text Corp. announced today the publication of *Parental Discretion*, a monthly newsletter containing reviews of current movie releases. *PD*'s reviews are different from other movie reviews because they are targeted toward parents of children under age 18—parents who want to take a proactive role in their children's exposure to cultural influences. Each review includes a summary of potentially objectionable elements contained in the film, as well as viewing recommendations for different age groups. Suggested discussion topics are also included at the end of every review to encourage parent/child interaction.

These days, movie ratings (G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17) don't tell parents much about a film's content. What qualifies as a PG movie today would have been PG-13 in the not-too-distant past. Many parents would be surprised at the content of some films promoted as "children's movies." On the other hand, occasionally an uplifting or socially positive movie earns an R rating by virtue of a few objectionable words or a brief love scene. *Parental Discretion* describes to parents the contents of movies, with children's viewing in mind, so parents can make informed decisions.



Parental Discretion evolved out of a concern about the increasing prevalence of violence, adult language, and adult situations in films attracting a young audience, and the effect these films might have on kids' views of the world. "We try not to be judgmental," states *Parental Discretion* editor Ann Roberts. "We leave the viewing decisions up to parents, for only they can determine what is best for their children."

High Text Corp. has been providing publishing services for major book publishers since 1986. High Text co-founder and *Parental Discretion* editor Ann Roberts' past experience in publishing includes serving as associate editor of a major trade journal, and editing the in-house newsletter and magazine of an international corporation.

The subscription price for *Parental Discretion* is \$18 per year (12 issues). To subscribe or for more information call (817) 428-2001, fax (817) 428-1186, or write *Parental Discretion*, P.O. Box 758, Colleyville, Texas, 76034.



Phone-in reviews help discerning parents choose movies

He decided all movies are rated PG. That's because given the level of most movies, parents need to dispense some advice. But first, we have to know what we're in for. The movie industry's rating system is close to worthless, geared more toward maximum profits than suitability. The rationale is that the industry that makes movies can make more money if it throws in something rough. That's the business. But there's hope. There's a new newspaper and phone line for parents who want to know what's potentially objectionable in movies rated PG-13, PG and yes — G.

Before you assume that only someone coming from terminal prudishness could get off by a G-rated Disney film, let me tell you. In "The Great Mouse Detective," there is a gratuitous and tacky scene from a silent strip show. And up, a Disney strip joint. I'll bet Uncle Fie is spinning in his angel Mousketeer. In this G-rated movie, the stripper shows her furry little heart out as she sings and grinds: "Drink your beer. Get your baby's here. You won't be misunderstood. Let me be good to you. Hey, hey, I'll take off all my clothes. Hey, hey, there's nothing I won't do just for you. Your baby's gonna come through. Let me



**Gail Stewart
HAND**

be good to you."

What parents think this is a great message for the girls watching? And, what does it say about males, particularly the yo-yos who stuck it in the movie in the first place?

This little episode convinced me that

ratings don't provide parents the information we need.

Joanna Payne reviews movies and gives parents the low-down on how down and dirty the movies are. She counts the number of curses uttered, describes the violence and sexual content. And she notes whether the plot is entertaining and offers what ages she thinks the story would entertain. Best of all, she leaves what children should see up to parents.

She calls her business Family Enrichment Services. Her monthly newsletter costs \$19 a year. That's cheaper than the system my husband and I use of renting videos just for us — or going to shows alone — before we subject our children to them. You can get a sample newsletter for

\$2. Besides tipping you off about movies you may want to skip, she offers story previews so you can help children follow movie plots and she suggests movie classics suitable for families.

She makes note of the role models characters provide, and whether children might be upset by something such as an animal being hurt — which goes unnoticed by most movie critics who gear reviews for adult audiences. While ratings offer little guidance, "in general, a PG means there is no naked sex but some sexual content, some bad language, and there's something that is scary, but less gory" than those with stricter ratings.

Call for preview

Her phone line has information on movies within 48 hours of their national release. That number, (900) 454-1009, only works with touch-tone phones and costs \$1.25 per minute. The average call takes two minutes.

I called Friday, when she offered info on: "Homeward Bound," "Untamed Heart," "Sommersby," "Matinee," "Used People," "Forever Young," "Aladdin," "Groundhog Day," "Cemetery Club" and "Love Field." About half of these were in town.

It takes a little getting used to her recording. Keep pen in hand. She lists movies and you press the number you want to know about. She notes potentially objectionable content and entertainment value. Instead of saying swear words, she spells them rapidfire and gives the number of times used. She notes whether sex scenes are between married people and whether they're nude and actually shown or implied.

I was curious about "Groundhog's Day," rated PG. She gave it a "plus 8" for entertainment and a "minus 1" for content. Her system ranges from minus 10 to plus 10. Here's what I gleaned from her recording: This movie has the word "hell" used twice and the use of "God" as an expletive once. There is some sexual groping of characters who keep their clothes on. There is a comment "we made love like sea otters." There is a punching scene between two men. There is a reference to homosexuality, used as an excuse to get a salesman to leave a character alone.

Overall, she calls it warm, happy, upbeat: "The most entertaining movie I've seen all year." She thinks the story would appeal to people from age 10 to adult. Regardless of whether you agree, at least you have a way to decide whether it's OK for your family.

Other examples from shows in theaters are difficult because some people would be offended by just the description of the contents. That's why the 900-number is just for those 18 and older.

She said in a phone interview from her home in southern California that many parents have just given up on the movies. They are tired of being shocked and embarrassed by what Hollywood does out in the name of the almighty buck. "My job is not just to help parents avoid the movies they don't want their children to see, but also to help them discover really good movies and videos the whole family can enjoy. There are clean, warm, caring and wholesome movies out there."

Ratings alone "show how out of touch the industry is with family values. They are not detailed enough. I got so tired of being misled about movies based on trailers, ads and TV clips," she said.

Her service is helpful. She's motivated not by a desire for censorship but for parents to know what's on the screens. "I want to get families back to the movies again."

□ □ □

To get the newsletter: Family Enrichment Services, 3438-A Foothill Blvd. Suite 216, La Crescenta, Calif., 91214.

Group tracks smut, violence in Hollywood movies

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

A watchdog group in Boca Raton, Fla., that compiles a list of every swear word, nude scene and fight in major Hollywood movies says the Motion Picture Association of America has grown lax in its ratings.

"When you take your child to a PG movie and you hear the F-word, you become a little bit concerned," said Dave Winston, editor of Entertainment Research Reports, a bi-monthly newsletter launched last year that's aimed at parents. "The standards seem to be

lowering themselves."

After a year spent in movie theaters with pad and pencil, recording every curse, punch and bared bosom on film, the group has compiled a veritable statistical abstract of Hollywood raunch:

Did you know, for example, that the average R-rated movie last year included 22 F-words, three fistfights and one scene of female nudity? That four PG-13 films depicted nude sex?

"It's a judgment call," said Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Pic-

ture Association of America and founder of its ratings system. "A lot of people still think cartoons are too violent. We hope our ratings change with the times."

Despite Winston's objections, Valenti has no intention of altering the basic philosophy of his ratings system: What's important is the general tone of the movie, not the number of F-words or the nude-body count, he says.

For more information on the newsletter or the Entertainment Research

After a year spent in theaters, the group has compiled a veritable statistical abstract of raunch.

Group, call 1-800-322-1296, 9-5 weekdays.

DETROIT FREE PRESS
Detroit, Michigan
Thursday, March 26, 1992



Contact: Dave Winston (407) 395-1150

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOVIE NEWSLETTER REPORTS ON CONTENT OF
1992 MOVIES AND ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEES

BOCA RATON, FL--- Recently compiled statistics from the Entertainment Research Report for the year 1992 and comparisons to 1991 highlighted some significant changes including the following: Physical violence increased 163% in PG-13 movies, 101% in PG movies but only 14% in R-rated movies. The objectionable content of PG movies declined overall in 1992 compared to 1991. PG-13 movies contained fewer graphic deaths and bloody incidents but female nudity increased 23% and all but two language categories increased and nudity and sex incidents remained about the same as 1991. Female nudity increased 48% in R-rated movies, graphic deaths up 61% and use of the F-word increased 19% compared to 1991.

In 1992 the average R-rated movie contained 28 F-words, 15 S-words, 12 references to Deity, 1.2 scenes of female nudity, 3.7 graphic deaths and 4.2 incidents of physical battery. PG-13 movies in 1992 averaged 5.1 S-words, 2.5 A-words, 11 references to Deity, 1.2 incidents of implied sex without nudity and 6.3 incidents of physical battery. PG movies during 1992 averaged 1.8 S-words, 2 Damns, 2.4 Hells and 5.8 references to Deity. PG movies also averaged 9.5 incidents involving physical battery.

Of the Academy Award nominees for 1992 *The Crying Game* contains 74 F-words followed by *Scent of a Woman* with 25. *Unforgiven* contains 8 graphic deaths and *The Crying Game* 7. Neither *Howard's End* nor *A Few Good Men* contain any graphic sex or nudity but the latter does contain two incidents of death, neither of which are graphically explicit.

The Entertainment Research Report focuses on potentially objectionable content in today's movies and videos to provide information to parents, teens and other concerned movie goers that is generally not available in local movie critic reviews. It is published 24 times per year @ \$29.95 in Boca Raton, FL 1-800-322-1296.

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Complete statistics are available upon request.

ENTERTAINMENT RESEARCH REPORT

NUMBER OF MOVIES RELEASED IN 1992 IN WHICH IDENTIFIED POTENTIALLY OBJECTIONABLE ITEM OR CONDUCT APPEARED

(as a percentage of total movies in rating category)

M.P.A.A. RATING	R		PG-13		PG		NOT RATED	
MOVIES REPORTED IN 1992	128 MOVIES		62 MOVIES		35 MOVIES		39 MOVIES	
F-WORD	117	(91%)	21	(34%)	---	(0)	12	(31%)
A-WORD	113	(88%)	41	(66%)	17	(49%)	13	(33%)
S-WORD	122	(95%)	47	(76%)	16	(46%)	21	(54%)
S O B	74	(58%)	25	(40%)	6	(17%)	4	(10%)
D-MN	100	(78%)	44	(71%)	21	(60%)	22	(56%)
B-STARD	66	(51%)	33	(53%)	6	(17%)	12	(31%)
B-TCH	69	(54%)	23	(37%)	4	(11%)	9	(23%)
H-LL	115	(90%)	51	(82%)	20	(57%)	19	(49%)
NAMES OF DEITY AS PROFANITY	119	(93%)	55	(89%)	26	(74%)	26	(66%)
SLANG FOR URINATION	45	(35%)	23	(37%)	9	(26%)	5	(13%)
RACIAL OR ETHNIC SLURS	22	(17%)	6	(10%)	1	(3%)	6	(15%)
REFERENCE TO MALE GENITALS	71	(55%)	24	(39%)	9	(26%)	7	(18%)
REFERENCE TO FEMALE BREASTS	27	(21%)	4	(6%)	5	(14%)	5	(13%)
REFERENCE TO FEMALE GENITALS	23	(18%)	3	(5%)	---	(0)	1	(2%)
SLANG FOR SEXUAL RELATIONS	40	(31%)	17	(27%)	5	(14%)	6	(15%)
OBSCENE GESTURE	21	(16%)	8	(13%)	---	(0)	1	(2%)
FEMALE NUDITY	63	(49%)	19	(31%)	1	(3%)	13	(33%)
MALE NUDITY	25	(19%)	7	(11%)	3	(9%)	10	(26%)
GRAPHIC SEX WITH NUDITY	34	(26%)	---	(0)	---	(0)	4	(10%)
GRAPHIC SEX WITHOUT NUDITY	25	(19%)	7	(11%)	---	(0)	7	(18%)
IMPLIED SEX WITH NUDITY	19	(15%)	3	(5%)	1	(3%)	3	(8%)
IMPLIED SEX WITHOUT NUDITY	66	(51%)	38	(61%)	10	(28%)	16	(41%)
GRAPHIC DEATHS	81	(63%)	18	(29%)	2	(6%)	14	(36%)
INCIDENTS WITH GRAPHIC BLOOD	60	(47%)	17	(29%)	3	(8%)	9	(23%)
DEATHS	48	(37%)	24	(39%)	7	(20%)	15	(38%)
BATTERY	114	(89%)	56	(90%)	30	(86%)	24	(61%)
ADULTERY	25	(19%)	10	(16%)	7	(20%)	8	(20%)
SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE	61	(48%)	24	(39%)	8	(23%)	11	(28%)
INCIDENTS OF HOMOSEXUALITY	21	(16%)	6	(10%)	1	(3%)	3	(8%)
USE OF ALCOHOL	54	(42%)	26	(42%)	14	(40%)	10	(26%)
USE OF DRUGS	39	(30%)	5	(8%)	---	(0)	1	(2%)
INCIDENTS OF CHILD OR SPOUSE ABUSE	22	(18%)	10	(16%)	4	(11%)	6	(15%)

ENTERTAINMENT RESEARCH REPORT

TOTAL AND AVERAGE OCCURENCE OF POTENTIALLY OBJECTIONABLE ITEM OR CONDUCT IN MOVIES REPORTED IN 1992

(as an average for total movies in rating category)

M.P.A.A. RATING	R		PG-13		PG		NOT RATED	
MOVIES REPORTED IN 1992	128 MOVIES		62 MOVIES		35 MOVIES		39 MOVIES	
F-WORD	3643	(28.5)	42	(.7)	---	(0)	64	(1.4)
A-WORD	741	(6)	158	(2.5)	47	(1.3)	40	(1)
S-WORD	1911	(14.9)	316	(5.1)	63	(1.8)	96	(2.5)
S O B	219	(1.7)	62	(1)	22	(.6)	6	(.1)
D-MN	505	(3.9)	203	(3.3)	74	(2.1)	57	(1.5)
B-STARD	150	(1.2)	67	(1.1)	11	(.3)	26	(.6)
B-TCH	176	(1.4)	46	(.7)	7	(.2)	15	(.4)
H-LL	663	(5.2)	334	(5.4)	83	(2.4)	43	(1.1)
NAMES OF DEITY AS PROFANITY	1510	(11.8)	687	(11.1)	202	(5.8)	79	(2)
SLANG FOR URINATION	97	(.8)	52	(.8)	11	(.3)	14	(.3)
RACIAL OR ETHNIC SLURS	80	(.6)	40	(.6)	2	(<.1)	6	(.1)
REFERENCE TO MALE GENITALS	265	(2.1)	61	(1)	15	(.4)	26	(.6)
REFERENCE TO FEMALE BREASTS	51	(.4)	4	(<.1)	9	(.3)	11	(.3)
REFERENCE TO FEMALE GENITALS	81	(.6)	4	(<.1)	---	(0)	3	(<.1)
SLANG FOR SEXUAL RELATIONS	91	(.7)	47	(.7)	5	(.1)	10	(.3)
OBSCENE GESTURE	27	(.2)	11	(.2)	---	(0)	1	(<.1)
FEMALE NUDITY	157	(1.2)	32	(.5)	2	(<.1)	24	(.6)
MALE NUDITY	35	(.3)	9	(.1)	3	(<.1)	13	(.3)
GRAPHIC SEX WITH NUDITY	60	(.5)	---	(0)	----	(0)	6	(.1)
GRAPHIC SEX WITHOUT NUDITY	36	(.3)	7	(.1)	---	(0)	7	(.2)
IMPLIED SEX WITH NUDITY	23	(.2)	3	(<.1)	1	(<.1)	5	(.1)
IMPLIED SEX WITHOUT NUDITY	117	(.9)	72	(1.2)	15	(.4)	30	(.8)
GRAPHIC DEATHS	476	(3.7)	74	(1.2)	4	(.1)	38	(1)
INCIDENTS WITH GRAPHIC BLOOD	176	(1.4)	30	(.5)	4	(.1)	15	(.4)
DEATHS	91	(.7)	42	(.7)	11	(.3)	25	(.6)
BATTERY	539	(4.2)	390	(6.3)	332	(9.5)	132	(3.4)
INCIDENTS OF CHILD OR SPOUSE ABUSE	26	(.2)	16	(.2)	6	(.2)	8	(.2)

*some categories in this table are summaries of more detailed categories in the Entertainment Research Report

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RATINGS

Quality: ☆☆☆☆ to ☆

(This refers to the quality of the production):

☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT
☆☆☆ GOOD
☆☆ FAIR
☆ POOR

Acceptability: +4 to -4

(This refers to the moral quality):

+4 Exemplary: No questionable elements whatsoever
+3 Moral: Some minor questionable elements
+2 Good: Moderately questionable elements
+1 Wholesome: Recommended but discernment required for young children
-1 Caution: Discussion advised for older children
-2 Extreme Caution: Discretion advised for adults
-3 Bad: Excessive sex, violence &/or immorality
-4 Evil: Intentional blasphemy, evil &/or gross immorality

Abbreviations:

AB - anti-biblical, anti-Christian, or anti-Jewish worldview or elements
Ac - anti-Communist element worldview
A - alcohol use or abuse
D - substance abuse
B - biblical or moral worldview, principles, perspective, or character
C - Christian worldview or elements, Gospel witness, or positive reference to Jesus Christ
E - Environmentalism or environmentalist worldview
FR - non-Christian worldview or false religions
H - humanist worldview or humanism (incl., Marxism, Communism, socialism, etc.)
Ho - Homosexual worldview or homosexuality, (inc. sodomy and lesbianism)
L - few obscenities and profanities (1 to 9)
LL - several obscenities and profanities (10-25)
LLL - numerous obscenities and profanities (25+)
M - miscellaneous (gambling, revenge, theft, blackmail, etc.)
N - naturalistic nudity (not in a sexual context)
NN - partial or brief nudity
NNN - extensive nudity
NA - New Age or pagan worldview or elements
O - occult worldview, occult elements or satanism
PC - politically correct worldview or elements
R - romantic or idealistic worldview or elements
RH - revisionist history
S - implied adultery, promiscuity or sexual immorality
SS - depicted adultery, promiscuity or sexual immorality
SSS - graphic adultery, promiscuity or sexual immorality
V - brief or action violence
VV - Moderate violence
VVV - extreme or graphic violence

MOVIEguide®

A Family Guide to Movies and Entertainment

Volume X

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HOW TO PICK A VIDEO

THAT WON'T SEND YOU
BACK TO THE STORE
SCREAMING



by Ted Baehr with Bruce Grimes

Several years ago, I walked into my local video store on Friday night. My mission: find something suitable for family viewing.

I strode past several aisles to the children's section. My eyes caught the video jacket for "The Golden Seal." It looked innocent enough: a fair-haired young boy hugging a cute little seal. *Here's a good family film*, I thought. I glanced at the credits, recognized a few of the names, and checked it out.

I'm a Christian movie critic by profession, so to double-check, I looked up "The Golden Seal" in a comprehensive video catalog. Released in 1983, the movie had no rating. However, the synopsis sounded okay:

"Delightful nature tale about the plight of a golden seal and how it affects the humans around it. Beautiful photography in a fable the entire family will enjoy."

Our family enjoyed the movie—for about five minutes. Shortly after the opening credits, obscenities and vulgarities filled our living room. Off went the video. I apologized to my children—and vowed never to get burned again.

When I returned the video, I asked to see the store owner. I chastised him for not placing a warning sticker on the jacket. A few weeks later, I noticed a little message on the box: "Contains bad language: probably a PG-13 rating."

Developing Discernment

Perhaps you have a similar horror story to tell. How can parents rent the right videos in the flurry of today's many offerings?

The first thing you should do is check the rating. "The Golden Seal" didn't have one. That was a red flag I ignored.

Unrated means unknown. You have no idea what you are getting. Obviously, the title didn't reveal much. On the other hand, if you rent "Stripped to Kill II," you can be pretty sure what you're getting.

In most states, videos do not have to display the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating. Although the MPAA system leaves much to be desired, it's better than nothing. The MPAA's G, PG, PG-13, and R ratings are mainly window dressing; they're Hollywood's way of making parents believe impressionable youth are being protected. Many people are not aware that these ratings are given by the movie industry itself, not by an independent body.

If the video is rated, you'll find it on the back side of the jacket box. "G" means the movie is suitable for all audiences. "PG" means parental guidance is suggested, but as I'll explain later, you'll want to avoid a lot of PG movies. The same goes for "PG-13," which often contain significant doses of sex and violence. "R" means

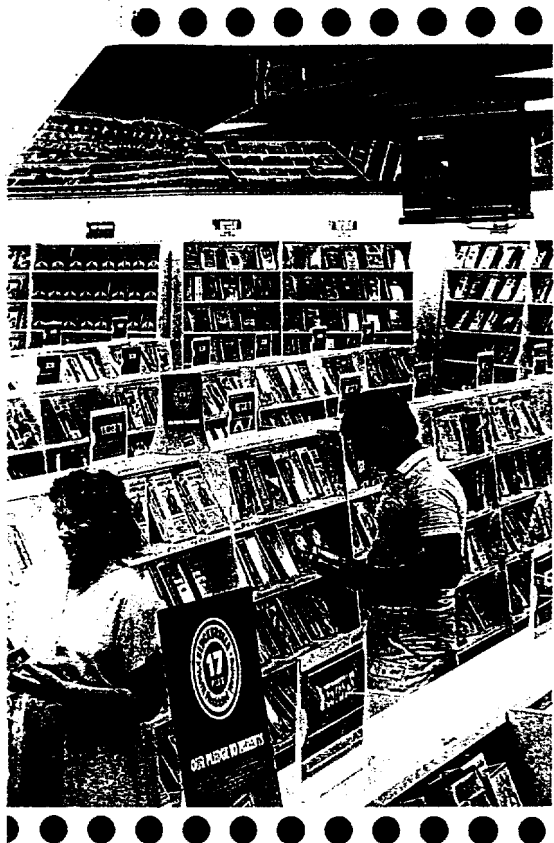
restricted, with no one under 17 allowed into the theater without a parent or adult guardian. But the R rating is a joke: it's rarely enforced, especially by video store operators.

Keep in mind, too, that most video stores don't rent the video with the original box. Instead, they insert the videocassette in a clear plastic box. This presents a problem, especially if your children rent a movie and you want to know more about it before popping it in the VCR.

Like books, you really can't tell a video by its cover—or the brief synopsis written on the jacket. One must read between the lines to decide where the movie stands with respect to Christian values.

For instance, 99 percent of R movies are unacceptable to Christian audiences. But a few, like "The Killing Fields," are worthwhile movies. "Killing Fields" portrays the horror of communism taking over a country and systematically murdering men, women and children. The movie was given an R, even though there is practically no sex or obscene language in it.

Robert Redford sought an R rating for his movie "The Milagro Beanfield War" because he thought that it needed an R to attract an adult audience. Yet "Milagro" contains no sex, violence or excessive language. To show you how meaningless the MPAA rating system can be, the Billy Graham Association's



ment is crucial in choosing a video-cassette. Movies are loaded with messages. Asking the right questions will help you look beneath the surface:

What is the premise of the movie? What message does the film communicate? You can often find the premise on the jacket of the videotape. Remember—you have to read between the lines.

Does the premise agree—or conflict—with biblical concepts? For example, "The Accidental Tourist" was a cute movie. Starring William Hurt, it was nominated for several Academy Awards. The premise of this popular film, however, was that adultery leads to happiness. This premise is abhorrent to God and aggravates the tremendous marital problems confronting us today.

A recent film, "Driving Miss Daisy," is a heartwarming story with a powerful premise: Dedication to Christian virtues can bring love and reconciliation into an alienated life.

Who is the hero? What kind of role model is he or she? "Henry V" tells the story of a young Christian monarch who gives God all the credit for victory, but in "Lethal Weapon II," the hero is a totally despicable policeman who encourages his partner to take drug money. Later, he congratulates his partner when his daughter stars in a commercial for condoms.

Who is the villain? All too often, the villain is a minister or person of faith, as was the case in "Poltergeist II" and "Fletch Lives." Hollywood delights in portraying moral people as nerds, prudes, kooks and psychopaths. "Criminal Law" depicts pro-lifers as cold-blooded killers. In "Shirley Valentine," the working husband is the

How is religion portrayed? If you're looking for it, you'll notice how often believers are portrayed as evil, weak, insincere, obsequious, rotten and foolish. "Born on the Fourth of July" portrays Christians and patriots as warmongers and fools. "Blaze" indicates that Christians are adulterers and strippers. In "Ministry and Vengeance," the minister is a vengeful killer. (What else? That's the title of the movie.)

How is the world portrayed? Hollywood often distorts the way to look at the world. Many movies portray the world as full of wealth, sex and drugs. "Blaze" shows us a world where corrupt whoremongers are the good guys. In "Family Business," stealing is a legitimate profession. Sex and drugs are rewards for living the good life in Eddie Murphy's "Harlem Nights."

A good movie, "Prancer" shows a world with real problems. But the reality of God is central to the solution of the film.

How is love portrayed? Love is at the heart of the gospel. Who can forget the godly mother in "Eleni" standing in front of a firing squad to save her children? "Driving Miss Daisy" shows that human friendship does not have to be coupled with the obligatory sexual relationship.

Yet most movies reduce love to one-night stands, tedious ordeals or homosexual liaisons. In "Skin Deep," John Ritter sleeps with one woman after another. In "Ruthless People," we're supposed to chuckle as the husband tries to murder his wife. "Desert Hearts" has a woman who is getting a divorce discover that lesbian love is better than heterosexual love. "The Kiss of the Spider Woman," a critic's

World Wide Pictures asked for a PG rating for "The Prodigal" so it wouldn't be seen as a goody-two-shoes "religious" movie.

Trying to pick a decent PG or PG-13 is also a difficult assignment. Driving past a theater marquee last summer, I noticed two PG-rated films: "Ghostbusters II" and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids." With the PG imprimatur, parents would think both movies were acceptable for kids.

"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" was good entertainment for the entire family. You didn't find any sex, violence, nudity, profanity or any other objectionable material. (One character did utter a mild expletive.) Although the film begins with family division, it ends with reconciliation. For the discerning viewer, the film is filled with principles from the Word of God. Most of all, it conveys a vital message: the importance of bringing families back together!

On the other hand, "Ghostbusters II" was a cesspool of child sacrifice, idolatry, profanity, obscenity, blasphemy, occultism and demonic activity. The film was evil. It presented the triumph of man through the use of occultic powers: the essence of the New Age movement and satanism.

But both of these movies were rated PG!

Ask the Right Questions
Even with an MPAA rating, discern-

*Movies are loaded with messages.
Asking the right questions will help
you look beneath the surface.*

villain, while his wife (the heroine) runs off with her feminist friend to have a series of adulterous affairs in Greece.

We know who the bad guys are in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" when Indy delivers the immortal line, "Nazis, I hate those guys." As a matter of fact, the villain in this allegory is a bad guy—a greedy National Socialist who will stop at nothing to gain eternal life.

favorite, lifts up homosexuality. Two recent movies, "The War of the Roses" and "She-Devil," suggest that marriage is war.

How is the family portrayed? Unfortunately, the family is under attack—and has been for some time. You would think that "Parenthood" and "Uncle Buck" would be good family movies. They weren't. The children steal, swear and indulge in pro-

miscuous sex. The parents lose all control. While played for laughs, the films lack any sense of moral perspective.

In three movies, "Distant Voice, Still Lives," "Shirley Valentine" and "Valentino Returns," the father is the root of the problem. "Down and Out in Beverly Hills" promotes free love. Steven Spielberg's "The Color Purple" attacks the basic building block of our society: the family.

sible for "Chariots of Fire," "The Mission," "Cry in the Dark," and the magnificent "Driving Miss Daisy."

Would you be embarrassed to sit through the movie with your parents, your children or Jesus? When we are alone, we often deceive ourselves regarding the true nature of a movie; however, if we imagine that our parents, our children, or the Lord are with us (which He is), then the

foreign films have had the most penetrating biblical messages. Not only are such films as "Babette's Feast," "Repentance" and "Manon of the Spring" entertaining, but they have the most to say to Christians.

A Closing Thought

Remember, the motion picture medium is not bad per se. Movies are tools for communication. Like any tool, they can be used for good or for evil. A hammer can be used to build a church or to crack a skull. Movies can uplift ("Trip to Bountiful") or degrade ("Emerald Forest" and "Cocoon").

Films are often viewed with suspicion by the church. It's true that too many movies are filled with nudity, profanity and immorality. They deserve our condemnation since we are called "to flee immorality" (1 Cor. 6:18). On the other hand, Christians should support entertaining, uplifting movies (such as "The Hiding Place"), if only for the reason that our support will cause producers, who are primarily interested in making money, to make more wholesome movies.

Trying to ignore movies has proven to be counterproductive. Rather than bury our heads in the sand, Christians should be careful about which movies we support at the box office and in the video store. If Christians redirect their entertainment dollars away from immoral entertainment and toward moral movies, Hollywood will take notice. And we'll have more to pick from the next time we go into a video store. □



If Christians redirect their entertainment dollars toward moral movies, Hollywood will take notice.

When a couple are shown in bed, four out of five times they aren't married. Little wonder: 87 percent of the media elite feel adultery is okay. Films are a rationalization for their own conduct and an attempt to drag the rest of us down to their level of immorality.

We need more movies like "Dad," a deeply reflective film about three generations of fathers who are reconciled by learning to forgive one another.

Who's behind the camera? Pay attention to the names on the credits. For example, George Lucas ("Star Wars") has a mission to proclaim an occult Force. Oliver Stone, who directed "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July," hates America and loves communism. "I think America has to bleed," Stone said recently. "I think corpses have to pile up. I think American boys have to die again. Let the mothers weep and mourn."

Director Costa-Gravas is an avowed communist who designs his movies to attack what he abhors, such as Christianity ("Betrayed") and anti-communism ("Music Box").

You can be pretty sure that you won't agree with the premise of films starring the liberal Hollywood Establishment, such as Jane Fonda, Martin Sheen, Glenn Close, William Hurt, Holly Hunter and Tom Cruise.

On the flip side, Charlton Heston's clear stand for traditional values is reflected in the roles he plays. Heston recently starred in a remake of "Treasure Island," an excellent film released on cable TV. It should be in video stores soon. Barry Reardon, president of Warner Brothers Distribution, is a committed Christian who tries every year to release a few strong Christian films. Barry has been respon-

sible for "Chariots of Fire," "The Mission," "Cry in the Dark," and the magnificent "Driving Miss Daisy."

Heading for the Video Store

Here are some more tips for renting a good video:

- Listen to word of mouth. What are your Christian friends saying? Perhaps your Bible study group could discuss suitable films and come up with a list.
- Consult resources that review movies from a Christian perspective. I'm the founder of *MovieGuide: A Biblical Guide to Movies and Entertainment*, a biweekly newsletter that reviews Hollywood's latest releases. I've also co-authored, with Bruce Grimes, two volumes of *The Christian Family Guide to Movies and Videos* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt). Each volume reviews hundreds of movies and provides helpful information on how to develop biblical discernment.

John Evans, a good friend of mine, has written *Recommended Movies on Video*, which contains brief reviews of more than 650 recommended videos. John also publishes *Preview Movie Morality Guide* twice a month.

• Know what you want to rent before you walk into the video store. If you are browsing, head for the "classics" or "musicals" sections. Movies made before 1963 stand a better chance of being good.

• Rent videos at a Christian bookstore. Although few Christian bookstores do rent videos, you're sure to find something good at those that do.

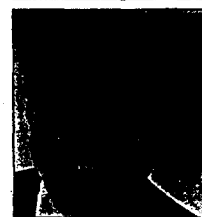
• Stay away from horror movies as well as teen "sexploitation" films.

• Don't be afraid to rent foreign films, even ones with subtitles. Lately, many

Resources for Your Home

• *MovieGuide: A Biblical Guide to Movies and Entertainment* is published biweekly. The suggested donation is \$30 for 26 issues. Write: *MovieGuide*, P.O. Box 9952, Atlanta, GA 30319, or call (404) 262-7260. *MovieGuide* also has a hotline number which contains reviews of the latest movies (900) 346-3463. Each call costs 65 cents.

• *Preview Movie Morality Guide* reviews the latest G, PG, and PG-13 movies. Published by Movie Morality Ministries, the suggested donation is \$25 per year. Their address: *Preview Movie Morality Guide*, 1309 Seminole Drive, Richardson, TX 75080. Phone (214) 231-9910.



Ted Baehr, who was assisted in this story by Bruce Grimes, also reviews movies for "Family News in Focus," heard on 800 stations daily. He and his family live in Atlanta, Ga.

Film Advisory Board updates ratings plan

Hollywood The Film Advisory Board has updated its motion picture ratings system, which attempts to provide an alternative to the Motion Picture Assn. of America system by providing more detailed info.

FAB is replacing its "MM" (very mature) and "MMM" (extremely mature) ratings with "VM" and "EM" designations, and otherwise continues to classify films in these categories: "C" for children, "F" for family and "M" for mature.

Redesigned ratings labels to be carried on vid packaging also will explain the ratings in more detail, with the phrases "language,"

"violence," "nudity," "sex," "explicit sex," "extreme nudity," "extreme violence," "extreme language" and "substance abuse."

IVPA to use ratings

After about 1½ years administering the system with the Independent Video Programmers Assn., FAB will again operate the ratings system alone.

IVPA companies are expected to continue to use the FAB ratings, and the decision to discontinue the joint effort was amicably reached, according to Elayne Blythe, FAB prez. About 60 titles were rated by the IVPA/FAB team in the 21 months of that teamup.

VARIETY Oct. 4-10, 1989