

PAT COSTA  
**As I See It**



I tried to keep the explanation brief and simple. But explaining what a homosexual is to a first-grader has pitfalls, even for the parent prepared to discuss the subject.

And I wasn't. But there on our television screen at 8 o'clock on Saturday night Archie Bunker was having a problem, specifically as to how one may identify the species in public places.

Our kids usually watch TV with us on the weekend up until 9 p.m. at least. So when the seven-year-old asked what was going on on the small screen I told her.

While we must rejoice that light is finally being shed upon such social problems as homosexuality via various methods including the television situation comedy, the new open attack on society's ills must necessarily put parents on their toes. If the home was ever sacrosanct (doubtful) against the unpleasantness of reality, we must now adjust to the fact that television not only is capable of bringing almost anything into the living room but that it has lost much of its squeamishness about doing just that.

The parent who attempted to delay his child's learning the facts of life until adolescence (or even later) may always have been a foolish parent. But the folly of his ostrich policy was never more evident than in this day.

For some years now we have been exposed to such extraordinarily tragic sights as war torn men still on the battlefield and big white men bullying small black children. All we had to do is turn on the 6 o'clock news. Sex was still taboo. No more. With the advent of "All in the Family", an imitation of a British production, and "Doctor in the House", an English import, if the walls have not completely tumbled down, they have crumbled enough to provoke some interesting questions from the younger set.

Archie Bunker's "Family" is allegedly the most popular TV show ever with as many as 60 million people watching at one time. What the percentage of

children viewers is I don't know but I'd bet ours is not an unusual household.

In one show we watched the young son-in-law urge his cuddly wife to go to bed with him during the day. In another the plot revolved around a young unwed hippie couple whom Archie forbade to share a sleeping bag under his roof. These are but two of several examples that come instantly to mind. Sometimes they are harder to explain than the fact that the bigot is a bigot. Somewhat similar examples frequently spice up "Doctor in the House".

A few American-produced situation comedies are also breaking away from the traditional mold. "The Dick Van Dyke Show", for example, is obviously attempting to educate us about certain facts of life. In one a priest and a nun leave the church to get married. In another Dick fights the prejudice of a country club which doesn't admit Jews as members. On a more recent show the white son dates two black girls. More power to the writers.

The talk shows present another kind of problem for parents. Producers don't know what is going to be said in advance. Consequently only the most blatant sexual innuendoes are bleeped out.

There are solutions, of course. You can refuse to have a television in the house. Or you can have one and monitor everything your child watches. Or you can limit him to "Misterogers", a stultifying possibility.

A more sensible approach might be to accept the new open policy, get some answers ready if you have children four or older. And make sure they're the right ones.

## At Home With the Movies

**THE IMPOSSIBLE YEARS (1968)**  
Thursday, April 6 (CBS)

David Niven stars in this so-called "comedy" having to do with adolescent sex. Here's how the New York Times reviewer summed it up at the time:

About as smutty and suggestive a comedy as the screen has had in a long time, made genuinely offensive by the picture's radiantly colored and absolutely hypocritical facade as a 'family comedy,' with two 'modern' parents and eventually the entire neighborhood concerned with the question of how, why and to whom lovely 'hep' daughter has lost her virginity.

"The innuendo, delivered by one and all in flip colloquialism and wide-eyed wonderment, is deafening. And the acting, in accord with the text and tone, is just as impossible."

**COLOSSUS (THE FORBIN PROJECT) (1970)**  
Friday, April 7 (NBC)

A science fiction thriller about a top-secret computer that can control the country's military defenses. It teams up with a similar computer in Russia and together they threaten to dominate the world.

It's a film that did not do too well at the box-office, but which nevertheless drew praise as a well-made, literate suspense thriller. Non-names Eric Braeden and Susan Clark star.

The Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

**RAID ON ROMMEL (1971)**  
Saturday, April 8 (NBC)

This is a third-rate war film, starring Richard Burton as a leader of commandos trying to escape Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. There is a lot of carnage and noise in this so-so film that covers ground that's been filmed many times before and much better.

The Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

**MODESTY-BLAISE (1966)**  
Sunday, April 9 (ABC)

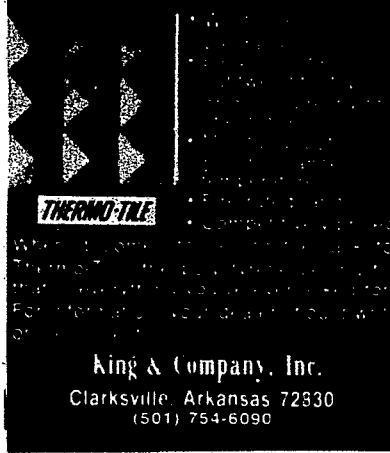
Another in the long line of James Bond spoofs, this one stars Italian actress Monica Vitti as a secret agent in a tale filled with a lot of op art, killings, druggings, chases and bed-hopping.

Dirk Bogarde plays the villain, out to get some gems she has, and Terence Stamp is there to help her. Joseph Losey, a prominent director, did this one, but it's rather mixed-up, to say the least.

It was rated A-3, unobjectionable for adults, by the Catholic film office.

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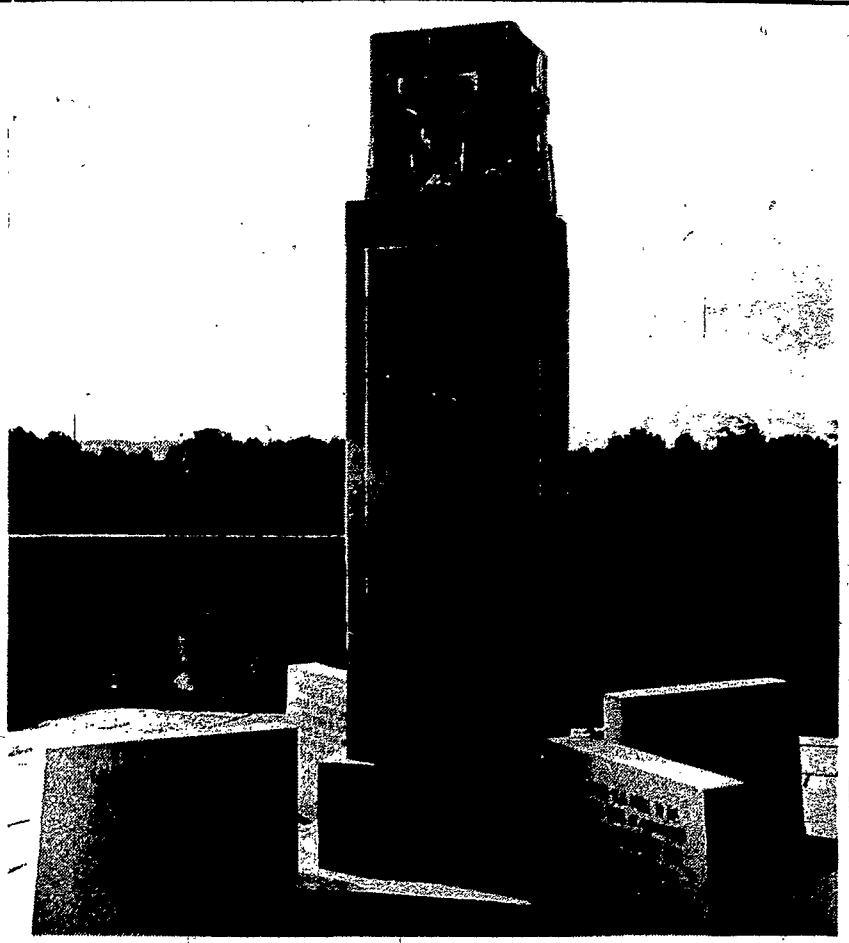
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