



## AS I SEE IT Pat Costa

I do not know if all men are turned off by female comedians but every time the likes of a Carol Burnett, Lucille Ball or Totie Fields, to name just three, appear on our television screen, the head of our house cringes quite visibly.

There appears, however, to be at least one exception to the rule. Let Ernestine the telephone operator, Mrs. Earbore, the tasteful lady or five-year-old Edith Ann (all figments of comedienne Lily Tomlin's imagination) show up and he laughs along with the rest of us.

I asked him once why the others turned him off but I can't remember what he said exactly. The gist was, I think, that they were debasing their own essence — their womanliness. (I always think this is something different than femininity, the first being inherent, the latter something females acquire according to the proximity and kind of men in their lives.)

Lily Tomlin is a womanly woman. And she never loses the quality no matter what character she is projecting. An hourlong special on CBS recently gave her the opportunity to add some new womanly women to her repertoire.

The cocktail lounge organist named Bobbie Jeannine was one and the most skillfully drawn.

The overlong sketch in which the character was presented hampered the pungency. Two supporting actors also lessened the effect.

But the picture Miss Tomlin outline was sharp and true.

That same evening, Mario Thomas, of "That Girl" fame came to the television screen in what I think was her first special. Written by the husband and wife team Renee Taylor and Joseph Bologna (remember him in the adaptation of "Honor Thy Father" as Bill Bonanno?) the sketches dealt mainly with the various relationships between men and women. And most of them reminded us that Miss Thomas is a very active member of women's lib.

Only one of the skits was very successful, that in which she and Bologna enacted a fighting husband and wife. Highly reminiscent of a scene between a battling Harry Guardino and Anne Meara in "Lovers and Other Strangers" which Bologna and Taylor also wrote, the sketch centered around that fine line which separates the love and hate husband and wife often harbor at the same time for each other.

Also fairly effective was Martlo's finale in which she plays a new mother telling her infant daughter how liberated she is but later succumbing to the baby's charms and deciding she won't go back to work for awhile longer.

In case you haven't noticed the reruns are with us. "Bridget Loves Bernie," "Mary Tyler Moore" and "Bob Newhart" all sprung them a week or so ago: suppose we should be thankful. Who knows when some enterprising producer will decide to rerun football games.

# Are Film Ratings Worthless?

By JOHN E. FITZGERALD

Now, with four years just finished, in case you've wondered, it looks as though the still-evolving controversial code and classification system for films is alive and well and will be living in Hollywood for some time to come.

It also seems that exhibitors not only tolerate ratings but even want them; that producers and distributors are seeking G and PG ratings; that more movies are being made and submitted for ratings lately; that a growing number of independently-made films have been submitted for consideration; and that the public is getting used to and not protesting the ratings system, which was established four years ago this month.

The conclusions mentioned can be found in the latest Variety. They were reached by A.D. Murphy writing from Hollywood after analyzing a mosaic of figures by categories and companies compiled by the famous show biz weekly over the past four years on the 1,908 features submitted for ratings by the MPAA.

Murphy points out that the code and rating system has been attacked from without and within

the industry after having been adopted as a stopgap against governmental censorship. There have been a few changes in nomenclature and disputes over individual rating decisions, but the writer concludes "The running dispute on the code will never end, probably, but at the very least there is some indirect value to a system constantly under a fish eye. It is, after all, better to be hated than ignored."

But sometimes I wonder whether the code, the industry's roadmap to morals and mores, isn't too often both hated and ignored.

Things seem to be settling down a bit since classification allows freedom to the artist and gives information to the audience without stopping either from the making or attending of films not suited to the immature. Yet we must never kid ourselves that there is not a goodly degree of farce and hypocrisy about our communication industry's codes.

The movie industry's code was born in a climate of audience disgust; it was raised in a climate of artistic dissatisfaction while serious artists and quick-buck opportunists found themselves bedfellows; both the top and bottom of the creative barrel

# At Home With the Movies

PUEBLO

Thursday, March 29 [ABC]

Made-for-television drama that promises to be an absorbing dramatic examination of the story surrounding the North Korean seizure of the U.S. Naval destroyer Pueblo a few years ago. Hal Holbrook plays the episode's central figure, Commander Lloyd M. Bucher. Andrew Duggan, Gary Merrill co-star.

GRAND SLAM [1968]  
Sunday, April 1 [ABC]

Another Topkapi-like robbery, but done so well it's as good as new. Edward C. Robinson, retired teacher, plans the complex robbery of a Brazilian diamond firm he has studied for 30 years. Then a powerful middle-man and four international thieving specialists take on the job, and suspenseful it is when put into detailed operation during Carnival time in Rio.

Janet Leigh does some very good acting as a prim employe of the diamond company, and all thieves, new to American audiences, are fine. Italian-Spanish-German co-production tautly directed by Giuliano Montaldo. [A-III]

A LOVELY WAY TO DIE [1969]  
Monday, April 2 [ABC]

Kirk Douglas, Sylvia Koscina, Eli Wallach star in a lowgrade, feverish thriller about an ex-cop hired as a bodyguard for a New York socialite accused of murdering her husband. Contains some suggestive situations and crude violence. [B]

THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES [1968]  
Monday, April 2 [NBC]

This fine film about a Bronx Irish family's domestic crisis succeeds far beyond the going-no-place limitations of its basically one-set story. Starring

blending their voices, crying out for the Code's abolition or revision. And, although revised, it disintegrated in a climate of industry disregard; the rubbery relativity of its standards is still such that the renovated code staff, like honest policemen, can enforce the law only as rigidly as the administration which employs them permits.

Indeed, the cynicism within the industry long considered the Code's purpose as purely medicinal: as a placebo, to convince the public that the industry was adequately and responsibly regulating itself; as an aspirin, to ward off the sniffles of further governmental regulation; and as a tranquilizer, to calm those church and civic groups concerned not with a film's artistic essence so much as its potential effect.

But even further, we've come to see the inherent weakness of industrial codes in general. By their nature such codes are after-the-fact documents. Somehow all such codes seem to share the same limitations and characteristics. Inevitably they're replete with opportunities for appeal while being scarce in facilities for enforcement.

Like roadmaps they can only point the direction; they can't govern the speed. Though garbed in splendid legal terminology, they're primarily public relations devices, contrived and calculated to still and forestall outcry from the community conscience. Being self-administered, like old girdles, they sag with time's passing, becoming increasingly looser in their restrictive power.

Unneeded by the responsible and unheeded by the irresponsible in any field, such codes are ultimately worthless. And will remain so as long as integrity remains a personal rather than a corporate matter.

Patricia Neal and Jack Albertson as the parents, and Martin Sheen as their serviceman son, the film anatomizes the love and hate that alternately bind the three together and tear them apart.

Adapted from Frank Gilroy's Broadway drama, the film contains intimate touches of family life, its joys and frustrations, and is masterful in its revelation of human nature, jealously and love. [A-III]

LORD LOVE A DUCK [1966]  
Tuesday, April 3 [NBC]

Sophomoric comedy about high school kids of the Dobie Gillis ilk, with Roddy McDowall and Tuesday Weld starring, and Ruth Gordon and Lola Albright supplying daffy and sensuous support, respectively. Under the guise of its black-ish comedy, this film tries to offer a biting commentary on the meaningless lives of a certain of contemporary society. This in itself isn't so bad, but a plot complication involving hypnosis in order to regulate students' love lives only confuses things. [A-IV]

FAMILY FLIGHT  
Tuesday, April 3 [ABC]

Troubled parents Rod Taylor and Dina Merrill convince estranged son Kristoffer Tabori to come on a flying vacation with them to Mexico. Tabori has second thoughts when he

discovers that Janet Margolin, an ex-girlfriend and sister of a buddy, whose death Tabori blames himself for, is the fourth member of the group. When the plane crashes in the Mexican desert the four must pull together for their survival. Made-for-confusion.

A WAR OF CHILDREN  
Tuesday, April 3 [CBS]

Excellent television movie, set in contemporary Belfast, Northern Ireland. Focus of the drama by James Costigan is on a 10-year-old boy undergoing a change of heart in the terrible conflict that, for all practical purposes, is eight or nine centuries old.

The film, because of its themes about the war and the quality of its achievement, is of above-average interest.

## CDA Plans Workshop

A weekend workshop for the state chairmen of the New York State Court, Catholic Daughters of America will be held on March 31-April 1 at The Sheraton Motor Inn, Electronics Parkway, Syracuse.

The workshop will open with a luncheon at 12-3 P.M. on the 31st followed by a meeting and opening Mass celebrated by the Father L. John Hedges, state court chaplain.

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## Once Over Briefly

<p>ACROSS 110th STREET — <b>Condemned</b> — Indeed, as even the buildings are.</p> <p>AVANTII! — <b>Objectionable</b> — Angels have 47 chromosomes.</p> <p>CHILD'S PLAY — <b>Adults</b> — Horrible horror.</p> <p>DELIVERANCE — <b>Adults, with reservations</b> — Not your ordinary camping trip.</p> <p>THE EMIGRANTS — <b>Adults and adolescents</b> — Epic masterpiece on the American experience.</p> <p>THE GETAWAY — <b>Adults, with reservations</b> — Mucho macho.</p> <p>THE HIT MAN — <b>Condemned</b> — Non-entertainment for blacks.</p>	<p>INNOCENT BYSTANDERS — <b>Objectionable</b> — An incoherent, sloppily made spy movie.</p> <p>JEREMIAH JOHNSON — <b>Adults and adolescents</b> — Robert Redford as legendary mountain man.</p> <p>LADY SINGS THE BLUES — <b>Adults, with reservations</b> — The story of Billie Holiday, with everything from Amos 'n' Andy to Superfly.</p> <p>MAN OF LA MANCHA — <b>Adults</b> — The impossible nightmare.</p> <p>THE RULING CLASS — <b>Adults, with reservations</b> — Pokes a sharp, funny finger at British aristocracy.</p>
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