

Making Waves

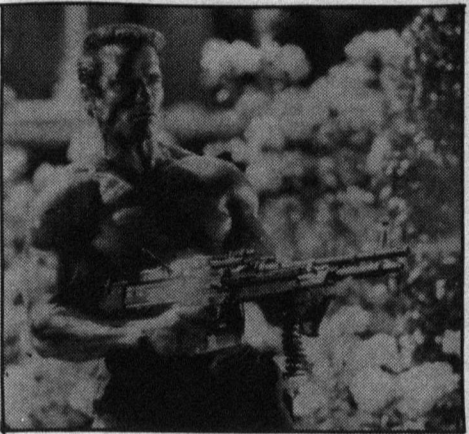
by Dragos Ruiu

I just came back from a really good movie, *Lethal Weapon*, and I have one question that really sticks out in my mind: Why did the girl in the opening scene have to have her shirt undone?

The nudity did not fit in to the movie at all, it was not beneficial to the plot and it wasn't in keeping with the tone of the movie. This single scene was probably the only thing that earned this movie an R rating... hmmm... hey... well, well, well. So that's it!

You see, this movie, while violent, is not violent or gory enough to attract the ire of the censors; and since we all know that no action adventure movie is any good unless it's R... (what a crock!)

It all goes to show you how truly useful the movie ratings decided upon by the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) are. It probably shouldn't come as a surprise to you that the American Library Association ignores them, choosing instead to let anyone of any age check out any material an adult



can. The reason they refuse to recognize the MPAA ratings is because they are "arbitrary" and lack legal status under the First Amendment (Freedom of Speech).

What should surprise you is that the Canadian censor boards almost always use the MPAA ratings. How are these ratings arrived at? Well, the six members of the MPAA just 'decide'. The identities and backgrounds of these six members, who are only responsible to the president of the MPAA, Jack Valenti, are jealously guarded secrets.

Canadian and provincial censor and ratings boards operate in an analogous manner.

Some censor boards are tougher than others, with the Ontario board being renown for its prudishness. A movie that entered Canada in Ontario, for instance, will likely be shorter due to cuts than one originating somewhere else.

They all keep their member lists a secret, and along with their identities, any personal bias they may possess is also shrouded. Yes, under our laws, a few faceless men and women have the power to restrict you from seeing things, or to decide arbitrary cutoff ages for those who are too 'immature' to deal with the subject matter.

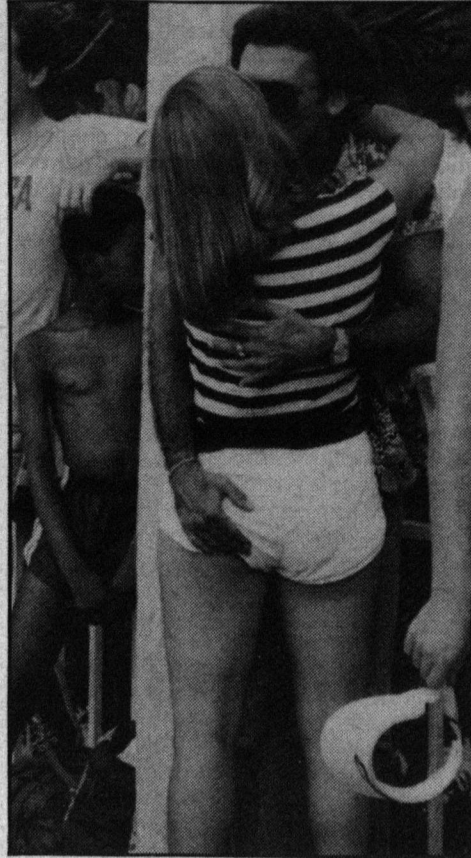
Who are they to decide that one teenager is too 'immature' to see a movie dealing with sex (the ratings are tough on sex, while relatively permissive of violence) while another, a month older, isn't? You can watch the A-Team pour truck loads of slugs out of large-caliber machine guns on TV, but when it comes to a movie that shows naked buttocks, forget it kid.

Besides, we all know that all 'good' teenagers were brought up 'right' and won't even think about sex until they are older or married. Yeah sure, those kids are ignoring sex, and if we make sure they aren't exposed to it, they'll keep ignoring it. Nope, teenage pregnancies are a big myth! Dream on...

The other irritating habit among the censors is the excising of scenes that are particularly realistic or gory. They would have us believe that people who are shot just clasp their wounds and fall over dead — nice, unsullied, blood-less corpses just like on *Miami Vice*.

Well, I hate to break it to you, but dead people are not a pretty sight, and unless they died of a disease or old age, there is a lot of blood and gore. Maybe that's why a lot of people throw up on seeing corpses that died unnatural, violent deaths. The world isn't always a pretty place, and you can't hide it.

Movies and entertainment take us places and let us do things we normally couldn't or wouldn't want to see or do. They are an escape into fantasy, so why do we have to ensure that our imagination stays in a little nice-nice, pretty-pretty world like the one that some people would like to delude us that we are living in. Ignoring the violent and the dark aspects of our world is just as deluded as ignoring youth's awareness of



sex.

The argument against allowing realistic depictions of traumatic deaths or violence is that they 'desensitize' the viewer to it, and in general make him have a lower regard for life. What I would really like to see is some cohesive study of which affects our acceptance of violence more: realistic violence, ugly, messy and full of ramifications, or television's version, immaculate, and complication-free. Common sense would dictate that if you see violence as what it truly is, instead of some stylized fantasy, you would despise it instead of accept it.

Besides being deluding and candy-coating reality, the ratings/censor boards are also intruding on the artistic rights of the filmmakers. The film directors probably wished to portray something important with scenes that have drawn fire from censors, like the disgusting brutal world of drug-dealers in the dismemberment scene of *Scarface*, (a

scene which never made it past any censors, by the way) or heterosexual anal sex in *Last Tango in Paris* (for which the director was finally acquitted of obscenity charges in Italy just last month).

Canada's censorship laws are considered strict by many standards, and they empower the government to restrict a lot of media. (Like pictures of women wearing ropes in *Penthouse* or whatever it is trendy to consider socially harmful these days.) This whole business particularly distasteful in a country that likes to call itself free. Just goes to show you freedom is just if you are calling the shots or the other guy is. Sieg Heil, comrade...

News:

The Darth Vader of the music industry, the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) hath decreed that 45 singles are a dying animal. They will be replaced by cassette singles...

This will be the year of the Vietnam movie. Hot on the heels of *Platoon* (a movie Oliver Stone tried to get made for ten years) comes Stanley Kubrick's movie on the same subject. This movie was also a long time in the making. Keep your eyes open, it's gonna be good.

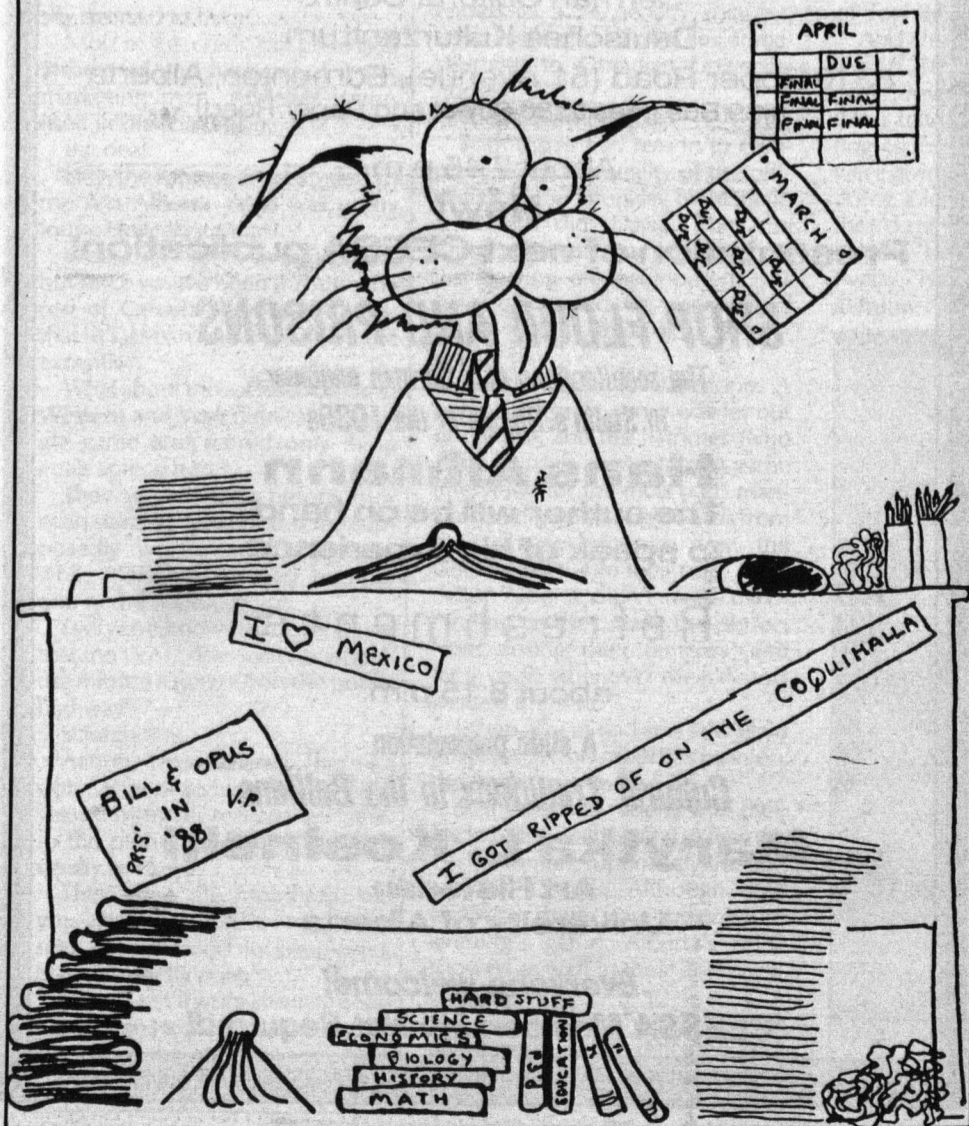
Canadian Duran Duran listeners CAN purchase the single "Skin Trade" with the original cover showing naked buttocks while U.S. buyers will only get a blank cherry red one. John Taylor says, "Now I'm 100 percent certain that what we're talking about in the song is true."

Hi-Tech CD manufacturing recently got a boost from the stone age. Apparently one of the biggest bottle-necks in production was the making of the metal masters from which the duplicates on plastic are made. The masters had to be made by laser in clean-rooms to exacting standards. A new, cheap and fast, mechanical process enables the use of ordinary rooms because it simply "mushes" extraneous particles into the metal surface. The process? A piezo-electric crystal and needle on an arm, just like a phonograph. A blast from the past...

Fluff:

Quote: "I live to put people in jail." From the Chairman of the Meese Commission on Pornography, Henry Hudson in the *Washington Post*.

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