

FCC Acts On Petition

(Cont. from p. 1)

organizations of and for the elderly;
organizations of and for women;
organizations of and for youth--
including children--and students;
professions; public safety; health
and welfare; recreation; and religion.

Broadcasters were required to ascertain representatives of the 19 elements. An optional category was provided for surveying other elements not on the checklist. However, there was no requirement to go beyond the stated 19 elements.

The 1977 petition submitted by NGTF had requested that the list of 19 groups be expanded to include "organizations of and for the gay community." When handicapped groups petitioned as well, the Commission staff recommended modification of the optional "other" category to ensure that all significant elements and institutions in a community be given an opportunity to participate in the ascertainment process.

The rule approved by the FCC, therefore, places an obligation on

broadcasters to go beyond the 19 elements when an unlisted element significant to the community contacts the broadcaster.

After the Commission vote, FCC chairperson Charles D. Ferris said in a written statement, "Our action today does acknowledge that groups constituting significant elements of the community--handicapped, gays, new immigrant arrivals such as the Vietnamese in some areas--are part of our diverse American people. Whether wealthy or impoverished, politically powerful or weak, they deserve to be heard."

"Lesbian and gay groups across the country have been given an important tool to use in the effort to improve broadcast coverage of our concerns," said NGTF Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska.

The NGTF pamphlet, "Media Guide to Gay Issues," can be obtained by sending 10¢ to:

National Gay Task Force
80 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Cruising

(Letter cont. from p. 6)

Cruising illustrates all these points. It underscores them through Pacino in the lead role: discovering--and liking, relishing--the gay subculture, finding a gay friend, discovering homosexuality in himself, losing his orientation, and finally, acting out from self-hatred and self-rejection to murder the man to whom he finds himself attracted. Pacino's motivation is the same as that of the psycho-killer: to destroy the evidence of homosexuality.

Cruising is not a particularly pleasant film. There are moments of hideous brutality. These are not points against the movie: the realities of repression and self-hatred are unpleasant, brutal and hideous. To depict them any other way is dishonest.

Perhaps this perspective separates Cruising from the general realm of gay experience; after all, very few of us become so unhinged by repression and self-hatred as to commit murder. (Suicide is a more common pattern.) But repression and self-hatred remain very important problems for many gays. Since homophobia is so prevalent, most of us have to work through these problems.

Gayness is very positive when one has evolved to the point of

dealing with the repression and oppression involved; of course, there is a need for films about triumph and liberation and positivism. Still there are certain social (and hence psychological) realities; to ignore them because they are unpleasant is dishonest and dangerous.

A gay movement which insists that all artistic treatments of homosexuality be, essentially, propaganda pieces about happiness and fulfillment and coming out, while ignoring social realities, is suffering from serious problems of self-confidence.

Perhaps these problems of self-confidence and image arise from the kinds of repression and self-hatred analyzed in Cruising. If so, the source of the gay paranoid over-reaction to the film is that; rather than being dishonest, it was honest enough to explore a sensitive area that most of us would like to forget.

As long as the manifestations of self-hatred exist--queer bashing, sado-masochism, suicide, murder, etc.--it behooves us to remember and understand them, not to censor them and pretend that they don't exist.

-Nelson Lancaster