

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX FILM CORPORATION
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE MARCH 14, 1969

TO: MR. INGO PREMINGER
MR. ROBERT ALTMAN

CC

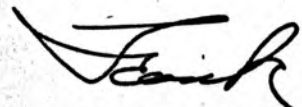
FROM FRANK H. FERGUSON

SUBJECT "MASH"

Attached hereto is a copy of a letter, dated March 12, 1969, from Eugene Dougherty of the Code and Rating Administration, containing his comments regarding the final script, dated February 26, 1969, for the above motion picture.

You will note that on the basis of this script, the picture has been assigned a tentative "X" rating.

If you would like a story conference with representatives of the Administration in order to attempt to modify this script so that it can be approved, please call me or Ellen Jensen in my department so that such a conference can be arranged.



FRANK H. FERGUSON

Att.

cc: Mr. Richard Zanuck
Mr. Stan Hough
Mr. David Brown
Mr. James Fisher

CC

A meeting is absolutely essential - We cannot not take an X on this or any other picture.

(R2)

MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA, INC.

8480 BEVERLY BOULEVARD
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90048
(213) 853-2200



JACK VALENTI
President

EUGENE G. DOUGHERTY
Administrator
Code and Rating Administration

March 12, 1969

Mr. Frank Ferguson
20TH CENTURY-FOX FILM CORP.
10201 West Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, Ca. 90034

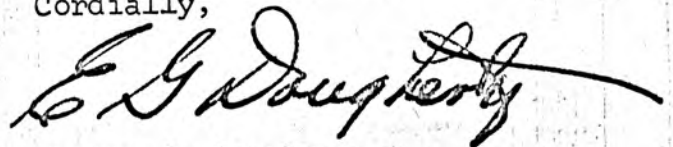
Dear Mr. Ferguson-

We have read the script dated February 26, 1969 and received in this office March 6, 1969 for your proposed production, MASH, and it appears that we have to assign this script a rating of X in its present form.

Basically, this story is M material, but the excessive and cumulative obscenities, the scenes of sexual activity, the suggested nudity, and the gruesomeness explicitly called for in the script make it necessary to rate it X.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing modifications with you at your convenience.

Cordially,



Eugene G. Dougherty

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX FILM CORPORATION
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE March 24, 1969

TO: MR. INGO PREMINGER
MR. ROBERT ALTMAN

FROM ELLEN JENSEN

SUBJECT "MASH"

A script conference with members of the Code and Rating Administration concerning "MASH" took place this morning in Ingo Preminger's office. Present at the meeting were:

Ingo Preminger, producer
Robert Altman, director
Jacqueline Bouhoutsos, Code and Rating Administration
Al Van Schmus, Code and Rating Administration
Ellen Jensen, studio legal department

The following is a summary of the points covered:

In spite of its tentative "X" rating, it was felt that this script could easily be revised into the "R" category and that the story itself is basically "M" material. The discussion was predicated on aiming for an "M" rating. However, it was pointed out that considerable watering down would be necessary to achieve the "M" classification and that the producer and director might decide that the overall project would come off better as an "R". This decision, of course, does not have to be made at this time nor can the Administration be committed to any firm rating except on the basis of the finished picture.

Specific suggestions for deletions and/or modifications follow:

1. Dialogue: The cumulative profanity in the script is a real problem. It was felt that such dialogue should be reserved for situations in which it is the only thing to say. Both producer and director agreed. The dialogue as a whole is rough from the standpoint of taste. Mr. Van Schmus explained that the cumulative effect of this dialogue is what stands between an "R" and an "M" rating, but that as the script now stands, this factor is a primary reason for the tentative "X".
2. The parody of religion very possibly could cause trouble with the National Catholic Office of Motion Pictures, especially the administration of the last rites and the expression "the friggin bible". (This can be removed.)
3. The idea of a whore house supporting a pediatric hospital (Dr. Yamachi's New Era Pediatric Hospital and Whorehouse) could be touchy.

4. The by-play with the traveling prostitutes and the curbside service must be very carefully handled. Mr. Altman explained how he planned to film these scenes, making it clear that there would be nothing beyond the externals (i.e., girls, trucks, lines). It was pointed out that under no circumstances should the actual sex act be shown.
5. Care must be taken in the Burns-Hot Lips sequence, especially at the end of the scene. Mr. Altman explained that this sequence, and the entire picture, would be filmed as a romp, a three-ring circus, and that he did not plan to "dwell" on any one thing for very long. In connection with the sex scenes in the picture, Mr. Van Schmus and Dr. Bouhoutsos agreed that as long as a scene was done in good taste, the sex act not specifically shown, and the cumulative effect not unfavorable, an "M" rating could still be obtained for the picture (dependent, of course, upon the finished film).
6. Care must be taken with any actual nudity in the picture, especially if an "M" rating is desired. There cannot be complete breast exposure (as could possibly occur in the scene featuring the frame-up of Colonel Merrill with Michiko in Japan) in an "M" picture. In the Korean Army induction scenes genitalia cannot be shown and caution must be exercised even in rear shots. Mr. Altman felt there would be little, if any, actual nudity in this scene, but that whatever nudity there was would be implied.
7. In the Lt. Dish-Painless scenes, her reaction should be attributable to his total nudity under the sheet, not to his oversize penis. However, the shower peephole scenes and the accompanying comments earlier in the script may make the latter scene unacceptable. Mr. Van Schmus agreed that if the character Painless is approached as the marvelous lover who has had a bad experience rather than featuring his physical attributes, the rest of the material would be all right. Mr. Altman advised that he planned to shoot the shower scene, but it can be cut if it proves objectionable.
8. Short arms inspection. The whole ship sequence at the end has been deleted.
9. No frontal nudity in Hot Lips' shower scene.

Attached is a list of specifics left by Dr. Bouhoutsos in connection with this script. This list is intended to point up the cumulative effect of the profanity and obscenities in the script and can be used as a guide toward modifying the script in order to obtain either an "R" or "M" rating on the finished picture.

Ellen Jensen

MASH

- Page 4: damn
- 5: whore house
sex activity in truck "only partially concealed by blanket"
- 6: Jesus
- 12: Jesus Christ
What the hell's going on
- 14: undue goriness
- 15: limb separated and handed to corpsman
- 19: the frigging bible
- 20: goddam door
Christ almighty
- 21: Parody on Lord's prayer
- 25: damnit
- 26: Hawkeye's hands on Lt. Dish's fatigue pants
Haul ass
- 30: Jesus to Jesus and 8 hands around
- 31: who ever found fulfillment in the ladies can...
- 36: native broad
- 37: lot of crap
- 41: scene in Dago Red
sure as hell
- 43: what the hell's that?
hell of a lot more
- 48: play on Lt. Dish's seeing Panless nude
My God, Hawkeye
- 52: what the hell
- 53: son-of-a-bitch
- 54: Christ
- 56: sure as hell
- 60: homosexual biplay
"queen"

- Page 61: Frank's hand under Hot Lips' shirt
- 63: sex intercourse in Hot Lips' tent
Don't stop now
Can't - couldn't
- 64: Hawkeye: is that stuff you're tapping any good?
- 65: I only wanted to know what she's like in the sack.
Do those boobs hold up or are they kind of droopy?
- 67: If I get into Hot Lips...
naked Korean boys
- 73: betcher ever-lovin' A
Goddam army - 3 times
So let's haul ass
- 77: find the gas-passer
without her tits getting in my way
- 78: Save that crap
- 79: discussing scoring in high school
Dr. Yamachi's New Era Pediatric Hospital and Whorehouse
- 80: pimp
bastard
- 89: Mitchiko's nudity in bed of Colonel
what the ehll's going on?
- 91: goddam message center
- 92: damn
- 96: blood - avoid goriness
- 97: hell
get his ass in here
blood spurting
- 98: godamn blood
gas-passer
son-of-a-bitch
- 100: Christ's sake
- 102: Christ
- 103: damn
- 104: Jesus
the mother must have gone in
goddam

Page 107: Trapper, Hawkeye, Duke nude?
I'll be damned
ass

109: Hot Lips nude

110: Leslie in bed with Henry
goddamnit Hot Lips
goddam commission

112: betcher ass

119: screw her

124: son-of-a-bitch

126: hell - 2 times
bastard
damn

128: hell

130: hell
God's sake

135: bastards
Christ's sake
Goddamn

136: ~~short arm~~ short arm inspection

137: screw it

139: hell
" opium concession

140: goddam

Don't mess it so close to my cigar, soldier "