

APPENDIX 1

The Motion Picture Production Code (as Published 31 March, 1930)

A CODE TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY VALUES IN THE PRODUCTION OF SILENT, SYNCHRONIZED AND TALKING MOTION PICTURES

Adopted by Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc., at Hollywood, Calif., and ratified by the Board of Directors of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., March 31, 1930.

Reasons for the New Code

The advent of sound on the motion picture screen brought new problems of self-discipline and regulation to the motion picture industry. Sound unlocked a vast amount of dramatic material which for the first time could be effectively presented on the screen. It brought the dramatist to Hollywood, to supplement the work of the scenario writer. It brought stars from the legitimate stage and the variety stage to the talking motion picture screen. It brought spoken dialogue, which had to be adapted to the requirements of film presentation. It brought new "extras," many of whom were given spoken lines.

To meet this new situation it became necessary to reaffirm the standards under which silent films had been produced since 1922, and to revise, amplify and add to those principles in the light of responsible opinion, so that all engaged in the making of sound pictures might have a commonly understandable and commonly acceptable guide in the maintenance of social and community values in pictures.

The task undertaken by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, cooperating with educators, dramatists, church authorities and leaders in the field of child

education and social welfare work, has now resulted in the adoption of a new Code by the Association of Motion Picture Producers.

The new Code has been accepted and subscribed to individually by such prominent producers in the motion picture industry as: Art Cinema Corporation (United Artists); Christie Film Company, Inc.; Columbia Pictures Corporation; Cecil B. de Mille Productions, Inc.; Educational Studios, Inc.; First National Pictures, Inc.; Fox Film Corporation; Gloria Productions, Inc.; Samuel Goldwyn, Inc.; Inspiration Pictures, Inc.; Harold Lloyd Corporation; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Inc.; Paramount Famous Lasky Corporation; Pathé Studios, Inc.; RKO Productions, Inc.; Hal Roach Studios, Inc.; Mack Sennett Studio; Tiffany Productions, Inc.; Universal Pictures Corporation; and Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.

Principles Underlying the Code

- 1 Motion picture producers recognize the high trust and confidence which have been placed in them by the people of the world, and they recognize their responsibility to the public because of this trust.
- 2 Theatrical motion pictures . . . are primarily to be regarded as entertainment. Mankind has always regarded the importance of entertainment and its value in rebuilding the bodies and souls of human beings.
- 3 It is recognized that there is entertainment which tends to improve the race (or at least to re-create and rebuild human beings exhausted with the realities of life), and entertainment which tends to harm human beings, or to lower their standards of life and living.
- 4 Motion pictures are an important form of art expression. Art enters intimately into the lives of human beings. The art of motion pictures has the same object as the other arts – the presentation of human thought, emotion, and experience, in terms of an appeal to the soul through the senses.
- 5 In consequence of the foregoing facts the following general principles are adopted:
 - No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
 - Correct standards of life shall be presented on the screen, subject only to necessary dramatic contrasts.
 - Law, natural or human, should not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

Particular Applications

Crimes against the law

These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

- 1 *Murder*
 - a The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.

- b Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
- c Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.
- 2 *Methods of crime* should not be explicitly presented.
 - a Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.
 - b Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.
 - c The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.
 - d Methods of smuggling should not be presented.
- 3 *Illegal drug traffic* must never be presented.
- 4 *The use of liquor* in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

Sex

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

- 1 *Adultery*, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.
- 2 *Scenes of passion* should not be introduced when not essential to the plot. In general, excessive passion should so be treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element.
- 3 *Seduction or rape*
 - a They should never be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.
 - b They are never the proper subject for comedy.
- 4 *Sex perversion* or any inference to it is forbidden.
- 5 *White-slavery* shall not be treated.
- 6 *Miscegenation* is forbidden.
- 7 *Sex hygiene* and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.
- 8 Scenes of *actual child birth*, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.
- 9 *Children's sex organs* are never to be exposed.

Vulgarity

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil subjects, should be subject always to the dictates of good taste and a regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

Obscenity

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion, is forbidden.

Dances

Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

Profanity

Pointed profanity or vulgar expressions, however used, are forbidden.

Costume

- 1 *Complete nudity* is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any lecherous or licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.
- 2 *Dancing costumes* intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

Religion

- 1 No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.
- 2 Ministers of religion in their character as such, should not be used as comic characters or as villains.
- 3 Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.

National feelings

- 1 The use of the Flag shall be consistently respectful.
- 2 The history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.

Titles

Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

Repellent subjects

The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste:

- 1 Actual hangings, or electrocutions as legal punishments for crime.
- 2 Third Degree methods.
- 3 Brutality and possible gruesomeness.
- 4 Branding of people or animals.
- 5 Apparent cruelty to children or animals.
- 6 Surgical operations.