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Center for Womens Studies & Services



November 12, 1980

Sheriff John Duffy
P.O. Box 2991
San Diego, CA 92112

Dear Sheriff Duffy,

On October 23, 1980, representatives from the Center for Women's Studies and Services viewed Frederick Storaska's film "How To Say No To A Rapist And Survive." This film was part of a presentation by the San Diego Sheriff's Crime Prevention Unit.

We at C.W.S.S. wish to request that this film not be shown or used as an educational tool in the future. We feel that "How To Say No" is not only inaccurate but potentially dangerous to those who might view it.

Specifically, Storaska downgrades the potential of women to successfully defend themselves and, in fact, inserts such self-fulfilling prophecies as "none of you will study martial arts." His humorous approach to the subject not only denies the traumatic nature of rape but also encourages the acceptance of it by reflecting sexist attitudes which are at the root of the problem; i.e., the idea that a woman struggling is sexually enticing, "just try it the next time you and your boyfriend are making love and see how exciting it can be." Storaska doesn't make it clear that rape is in fact a crime of violence and he implies that it is a crime of passion.

Storaska fails to consider that the passive woman is the most likely victim of assault and his reinforcement of the "frail woman" image suggests that the only recourse for a victim is to "go along with the assailant" in order to live through the experience. Storaska mentions two self-defense techniques which are considered acceptable by the Womens Self-

Defense Council, but he does not mention that these methods cannot be realized or learned in one quick seminar. And these methods must be preceded by a state of mind; a woman must feel she is capable of controlling the situation. Reinforcing outdated notions of helplessness does not help, but rather hinders a person from gaining control over their life situations.

By advocating non-resistance, the filmmaker gives advice that will work against the victim if she chooses to prosecute. Thus, Storaskas' suggestions work against the victim in the legal process and may cause more harm in the actual assault situation.

As an organization which operates a Rape Crisis Center and has had extensive dealings with law enforcement officials, hospitals, and the courts, we feel it is our duty to ask you to stop the film from being shown. We appreciate your acknowledgement of the importance of educating the community on the issue of rape and therefore suggest two alternative films: "Nobody's Victim" and "Rape Culture."

Please feel free to contact me at 233-8984 if I can be of assistance in any way. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Marianne Mills

Marianne Mills
Project Coordinator,
C.W.S.S. Rape Crisis Center

MM:mt

cc: Members of the County Board of Supervisors
Peter Albanese
Barbara Fletcher
Tom Whittingham