

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES
FOR MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION TREATMENT OF
HOMOSEXUALITY

1. Homosexuality isn't funny. Sometimes, of course, anything can be a source of humor. But the lives of 20,000,000 Americans are not a joke.
2. Fag, faggot, dyke, queer, lezzie, homo, fairy, mary, pansy, sissy etc., are terms of abuse. If you don't want to insult, the words are gay, lesbian and homosexual. This doesn't mean that nobody on film can use a dirty word, but if you have general rules about the use of "kike," "wop," "spic," and "nigger," use them for "dyke," "fag," et al.
3. That's it, use the same rules you have for other minorities. For example, if bigots don't usually get away with it if they hate Catholics, they can't get away with it if they hate gays. To put it another way, the rights and dignities of homosexuals are not a "controversial" issue.
4. Stereotypical people do exist, but if such a minority of any group receives exclusive media exposure, that's bigotry. Until a broad spectrum of the gay community has been stressed on film, and the stereotypes are put in perspective, the use of stereotypes is damaging.
5. Homosexuality is a natural variant of human sexuality. It is not an illness, nor is it a "problem" for the vast majority of gays who are pleased and happy to be what they are. If all blacks (or Jews, Irish, Chicanos, etc.) were presented as anguished, oddball or insane, blacks (etc.) would be angry. Gays are angry.
6. If you are doing a drama, comedy, talk show or whatever about homosexuality or gay characters, you have an obligation to do your homework and to free yourself of the myths.
7. There is a wide variety of available themes concerning the place of homosexuality in contemporary society and the range of gay relationships and lifestyles, and many of these can provide viable entertainment for a broad public. Gay people do not want to return to media invisibility.
8. A permanent board of consultants, consisting of gay women and men (including knowledgeable professionals in a variety of fields) is now available to the industry. But there are gay people all around you in your job. It's up to you to provide the climate in which they feel free to speak out.