



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1400

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JUN 08 1993

Mr. Bruce Hendrix
Senior Vice President
Motion Picture Production
Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 90521-5622

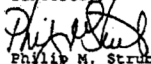
Dear Mr. Hendrix:

As you know, we've reviewed the April 12, 1993 version of "Countermeasures." The areas of controversy are quite substantial. The script conveys a distinctly inaccurate and unpleasant way of life in the Navy, particularly for women. Nearly all the crew members show little respect for their jobs, themselves, and their shipmates.

It appears that only major revisions to the script would alter this depiction, and we assume that you would be unable to accommodate this drastic a change. For that reason, we've described our concerns, here enclosed, only in general terms.

If you believe that it's possible to resolve these difficulties, we would certainly be willing to provide further information, meet with you and your colleagues, or work with you in any other way to reach an agreement. If not, we hope that we'll be able to work together on a future project of mutual benefit.

Sincerely,


Philip M. Strub

Special Assistant (Audiovisual)

cc:
CHINFO
Mr. John Horton

Enclosure:
As stated

Comments on "Countermeasures"

Department of Defense criteria for support:

- Military aspects are feasible, authentic depictions;
- Informs the public about the military;
- Helps military recruiting and retention.

There are a number of fundamental aspects of the April 12, 1993 script that prevent it from meeting the criteria:

1. Characterization of Navy People The overwhelming majority of Navy personnel are completely unrealistic and negative. They're unprofessional, blatantly focussed on personal agenda, and unapologetically sexist if not guilty of outright sexual harassment or sexual assault. Significantly, this behavior extends beyond the criminals to include nearly every other speaking and non-speaking part.

- Even C.C.'s character is initially motivated by pure self-interest. Taking on the assignment, she says, "Get that on my record. Ribbons, Bubby, ribbons!"
- There are racist stereotypes: African-American Seaman Ellis is some kind of servant to the Captain, simplistic and inexplicably devoted. The Captain is attended by a Filipino steward, a scene years out of date.

2. Women Aboard Carriers The astonished reaction of crew members to the presence of a woman aboard the ship is quite unrealistic. Women have been routinely assigned temporarily to aircraft carriers for several years. By the time the film is released their presence will be even more commonplace. By then there may well be women fighter pilots assigned to carrier air wings, with the attendant extensive national media coverage. Audiences are likely to be puzzled or amused by depictions of surprised sailors as they are presently described.

3. Portrayal of NIS Agent Making the principal villain an agent of the (then) Naval Investigative Service fosters a negative perception of the Service, implicates all agents by association, and reinforces the allegations of a lack of professionalism that was widely reported by the media over the last few years.

4. White House complicity in the intrigue There's no reason for us to denigrate the White House, or remind the public of the Iran-Contra affair.

5. Technical Inaccuracies Ancillary compared to above, there are nonetheless a number of these, such as the whole Tomahawk guidance system set-up.