



# Freedom and Entertainment: Rating the Movies in an Age of New Media

*Stephen Vaughn*

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## **Freedom and Entertainment: Rating the Movies in an Age of New Media** Stephen Vaughn

Richard Vaughn's account of the development of the American movie rating system situates contemporary cinema within the turbulent context of the history of censorship, America's cultural wars, and the impact of new technologies that have transformed entertainment. Based on the private papers and oral history of Richard D. Heffner, who headed MPAA's Classification and Rating Administration for two decades, from 1974 to 1994, it chronicles the often tense working relationship between Heffner and Jack Valenti, the long-standing currently 83 year old President and Chief Executive of the Motion Picture Association of America. It also documents the sometimes bruising encounters Heffner had with such Hollywood heavyweights as Clint Eastwood, Oliver Stone, Michael Douglas, George C. Scott, Lew Wasserman, Arthur Krim, Jerry Weintraub, and many others. Heffner's memoirs reveal the conflicted behind-the-scenes history of the American movie rating system from the perspective of a man once called "the least-known most powerful person in Hollywood". Stephen Vaughn has taught the history of communication at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, since 1981. His previous books include *Ronald Reagan in Hollywood: Movies and Politics* (1994), *The Vital Past: Writings on the Uses of History* (1985), and *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism and the Committee on Public Information* (1980). He is General Editor of a three-volume *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*, and has published a two-volume annotated bibliography in electronic format.

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