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## Prof considers films sacred

By LISA PEDERSEN  
Reporter

Films are sacred to a professor from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry New York.

Professor Joseph Cuneen spoke on "Film as Sacred" last night (2/23/84), suggesting that when handling religious materials in films "less is more".

Films are more religiously suggestive when handled in a subliminally delicate way, Cuneen said.

Earlier films which portrayed religious events or thinking tended to reconstruct biblical events learned from history

in a grandiose aesthetic point of view which didn't bring the audience into the movie in terms of the present, Cuneen said.

"Directors in the past were concerned more with producing a magic show when dealing with religious materials," Cuneen said. "Jesus walking on water ... now that's a good shot."

The films Cuneen emphasized as having a direct impact on the audience religiously were those presenting a religious concern with an underlying meaning.

Cuneen sees the art of minimalism, were no direct reference to religion is seen, as more pow-

erful and perhaps more important than referring to religion physically. An effective way to reveal something is to use the hidden, Cuneen said.

The effects of Jesus on people have a far more significant value as a kind of suggestive aspect then utilizing a particular religious representative, Cuneen said. By leaving something open, the audience can enter in and participate, he said.

Cuneen mentioned directors Dreyer, De Mille, Griffith and Ozu and their different techniques for handling religious

materials in films. Directors, like Ozu for example, who involve participation from their audience have far more possibilities religiously speaking than others, Cuneen said.

Most of the films Cuneen talked about are not mass media products and are hard to find, he said.

Cuneen is presently assistant chairperson of philosophy and religion at Mercy College and editor and chief of a small publication "Cross Current" in New York.

## Dead pauper might have been rich

United Press International

CHICAGO — The Cook County Medical Examiner awaited a relative's identification Thursday of an apparently wealthy hermit who died in a fire in his dilapidated apartment after saving the lives of 19 tenants.

The man, who faced a pauper's burial if his body went unclaimed, was identified by the building landlord as Chauncey M. Briggs Jr., who apparently came from a wealthy family.

The man, who appeared to be in his late 50s, succumbed to smoke after he raced through the apartment building where

he lived to warn fellow residents of the fire Monday.

Authorities said the blaze began in the dead man's basement apartment and was caused by careless smoking.

Businessman Harry Levant, who runs a construction-tool firm, told the Chicago Sun-Times he had known Briggs for 20 years. He said Briggs was a Chicago native, whose mother had moved to Florida years ago and married a millionaire.

Levant said Briggs' brother, Sheldon, was reached in Seabrook, Texas, and was expected to arrive in Chicago to identify the body. The brother was un-

reachable Thursday.

"We're still expecting (his) brother to come in ... at any time. We don't know when,"

said Joanna Krutulis, secretary for Dr. Robert Stein, the Cook County Medical Examiner.

Levant said Sheldon Briggs mailed his brother a monthly \$200 check. In addition, Levant — who often held Briggs' mail for him — said the dead man occasionally received what appeared to be stock dividends.

"He didn't care for money," Levant said. "He lived like a hermit. He looked very unkempt. I guess it was the way he

wanted to live."

He described Briggs as a handyman who did odd-jobs for neighboring businessmen.

Rick Los, landlord in the Northwest Side building, first identified the dead man as Briggs. He said the man lived in the building for nearly a year. His basement apartment had a dirt floor, no running water and no bathroom.

An official at the Medical Examiner's office said the body could remain at there for 90 days, but must be claimed by a relative or identified through fingerprints, medical records or surgical scars. If not, he said, it will be buried in a pauper's grave.

## Attorney General backed by PUC

United Press International

AUSTIN — Attorney General Jim Mattox's opinion that Southwestern Bell Telephone cannot begin collecting a \$279.7 million bonded rate increase until April 22 was affirmed Thursday by the Public Utility Commission.

But the issue was immediately thrown into the courts.

Bell attorney Jon Dee Lawrence said the company would seek a state court judge in Austin Thursday "to hear both sides of the argument."

PUC Chairman Al Erwin conceded before the commission voted unanimously to uphold Mattox's advisory opinion that the issue of the effective dates of bonded rates in Bell's case would eventually be decided in the courts.

But he added, "I think it is appropriate to have the burden of proof on the utility in this case."

What the courts must determine is whether Bell's pending \$1.3 billion rate filing last June comes under an old state law or a new law that took effect last Sept. 1.

Bell filed for a \$1.3 billion rate hike on June 24, 1983, before the new law took effect, but Mattox ruled the company's case was not finalized until Oct. 19, 1983.

Lawrence said Bell "feels very strongly" it has the law on its side, citing an earlier ruling in Bell's favor by a PUC administrative law judge.

"They (opponents) feel strongly they're right and we feel strongly we're right," he said. "Whichever way the commission goes, the issue is joined at the courthouse, where it belongs."

Public utility counsel Jim Boyle, who represents resi-

dential ratepayers, filed suit Wednesday when it appeared the PUC would reject Mattox's opinion and allow the bonded rates to go into effect Thursday.

Bell filed a cross-action to that complaint Thursday and sought an expedited hearing.

John Cunningham, executive director and acting general counsel for the PUC, urged the three commissioners to accept Mattox's advisory opinion.

"It's been our practice to follow the attorney general's opinions in the past," he said. "We didn't always agree with them, but that never stopped us from following them."

Mattox, who attended the PUC hearing, said, "I think they (PUC) made an appropriate decision."

Under the company's proposed rate hike, the average monthly bill for Texas residential ratepayers would jump by \$2.75.

Boyle said it amounts to a 25 percent increase for residential customers and warned that "thousands" of Texans would be forced to give up their telephones should Bell win the rate hike.

The nearly \$280 million in bonded rates would be in addition to a \$653.3 million interim rate increase granted Southwestern Bell in December. The PUC has said it plans to decide Bell's chief rate case by mid-April.

There was speculation that Gov. Mark White may have influenced the three commissioners, all of whom are his appointees. But White would not say whether he played any role in the PUC decision.

"I was delighted to read about that in the newspaper this morning," he quipped. "It has been my long held belief as a former attorney general that everybody ought to listen to the attorney general when he issues an opinion."

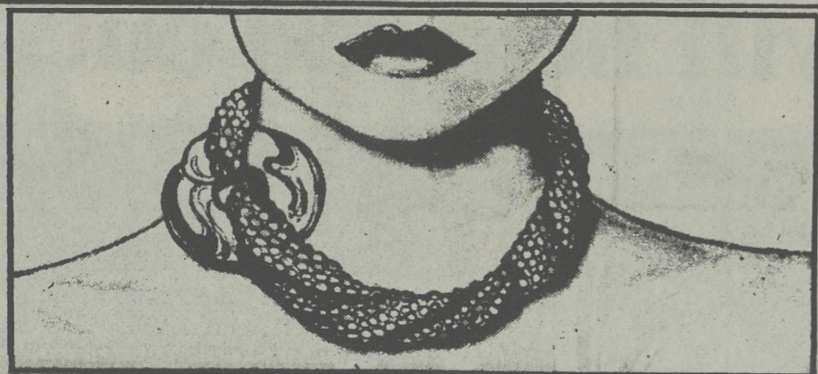
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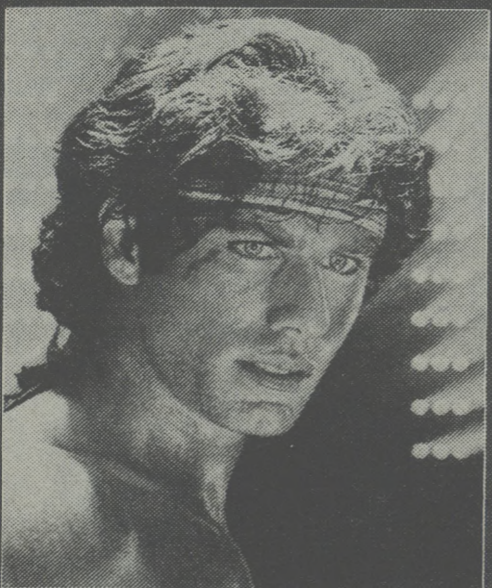
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