VIDEO VIEWING

The controversy that swept through the motion picture business last summer with a half dozen films receiving an X rating from the MPAA Ratings Council has had a different impact on the home video market.

different impact on the home video market.

Distributors of films like "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!," "Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer," "lienry and June," "The Cook, The Thief." and several others rejected X ratings and chose to market their merchandles as "unrated."

Theaters that would not, or could not screen X-rated films had no problem with unrated motion pictures. The ensuing broubhaile do to the establishment of the NC-17 designation, no children under 17 admitted.

Videotape distributors, of course, are not bound by the constraints of theatrical distribution and have long used MPAA ratings while distributing "uncut" versions side-by-side with R-rated films. Use of NC-17 varies with some waiting to see how attitudes evolve while others are leaping right in, knowing quite well that sensationalism sells. There's a hypocritical view in our culture that it's OK to expose children to violence but not to sexually and the NC-17 rating is supposed to deal with that by signifying serious, mature topics considered inappropriate for the younger set without stigmatting them with an X, long considered the hallmark of pernography.

IF THAT'S THE case then RCA/ Columbia Pictures Home Video made the correct decision in publi-

cizing its distribution of Pedro Al-modovar's ("Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown") 'The Me Up! The Me Down" (1990, color, 105 min-ates, in Spanish with English sub-ti-ties) as an NC-17, the rating the film ultimately received after rejecting an X

uillimately received after rejecting an X.
Clearly, the film is explicit and tops with everyone's sensibilities but not for pornographic purposes. The rating is appropriate but that is not to be construed as advertising sensationalism. In "Tie Me Up! The Modern Almoovar uses the explicit of the property of the proper

Ricky has a way with the ladies but is obsessed with Marina (Victo-ria Abril), a reformed junkle and porno star who is appearing in a hor-ror film directed by Maximo. Her sister, Lola is the film's line pro-ducer.

ducer.

Maximo, a great film director in
the classic European tradition, is
confined to a wheelchair since his recent stroke. This horror film within
the film is his comeback but destined
to be his last. His passion for Marina
masks his reductance to complete the
film.

BUT MAXIMO'S ardor for Marina pales in comparison to Ricky's who stalks Marina on the set of the hor-ror film in an extremely effective sequence commenting on illusion and reality in our lives — what is real and how do we know we're not being fooled by someone who has a

bill of goods to sell?
Ricky kidnaps Marina in her own apartment and announces that eventually she will love him, they will marry and have children. Pretty checky, don't you think? While it may sound bizarre, Almodova's direction creates excitement and tension.

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Although captivity is threatening
and unpieasant, Ricky is sincere and
does try to please Marina. But the
film's title and style telegraphs that
eventually Ricky will prevail. When
he does, unfortunately, Marina's
transition from captive to lover is
much too abrept and doesn't fit the
film's realistic style.

Aside from the glitch, "Tie Me Up!
Tie Me Down!" is an excellent film
alternating violence, humor and
compassion quite effectively. Its
well-laken commentary on the hell
people can and do create for themsolves is one significant point Almodovar makes.

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BUT HIS MOST important concept relates to the ways in which we are imprisoned within ourselves and within our own homes. That we enjoy that capitity is an even more teiling trony.
"Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" on cassette is an opportunity to view an exceptional film that didn't last very long at the theaters.

Catching up on video releases this month, MGM/UA Home Video released three new cassettes earlier this month including Bob Hope in "The-Road to Hong Kong" (1982, black and white, no rating 93 minutes). The first "Road" picture in 10 years, this was the last of that series. It features Bob and Bling as well as Dorothy Lamour, Joan Collins and Peter Sellers.

"The Long, Long Trailer" (1954, color, no rating, 103 minutes) stars Lucy and Deal along with MarJorie Main and Keenan Wynn in a humorous honeymoon story with a trailer that won't quit.

Surprisingly, the Peter O'Toole-Peter Sellers-Woody Allen vehicle, "What's New Passycart" (1956, color, no rating, 108 minutes) is appearanced to the property of t

four soms to further his schemes.

"KISS OF DEATH" (1947, black and white, to rating, 38 minutes) also has an all-star cast with Richard Widmark in his first role. Victor Mature is a thief and Brian Donlevy is the D.A.

Nominated for two Oscars, "Panile in the Street," (1950, black and white, no rating, 93 minutes) also stars Richard Widmark along with Barbara Bel Geddes, Jack Palance, Zero Mostel and Paul Douglas. The screenplay for this story of the New Orleans walear(ront won an Oscar, Finally, for viewers with a big appetite for ald gangster film, "Seven Thieves" (1960, black and white, no rating, 1962 minutes) features Edward G. Robinson as the master criminal on the international crime seens with Joan Collins, Ell Wallach and Rod Steiger helping him out.



The first film to receive the controversial NC-17 rating is the story of writer Henry Miller (Fred Ward) and his bizarre relation-

ship with his wife (Uma Thurmond).



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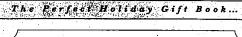
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