

Los Angeles Times  
Bestiality Film's Screening  
Halted After UCLA Protest



# Anatomy of a Student Film Controversy Gone Mad

BY TODD LONGWELL



Dulla (Karen Alvarado) and Frank Mamber (Jerry Cerwonka) in "a modest third world dwelling."

Film doesn't merit protest | Insensitivity not good cause for censorship

"...sick trash... depraved..."  
L.A. Weekly

"I personally find it offensive,  
tasteless and disgusting."  
Charles E. Young, Chancellor,  
University of California at  
Los Angeles

Fade in on the U.S./Mexican border, the cars file through for inspection. The camera cranes down to reveal ace reporter Frank Mamber. He tells us he's going to take us to the notorious Casa de Hee Haw in Tijuana, where Medulla Oblongata (Dulla for short) performs her nightly sex show with an amorous male donkey. Mamber takes us inside the Hee Haw, a dark grungy bar with black velvet paintings on the walls, crammed with its clientele of American tourists.

shoulder, exposing a breast—the camera cuts to her family's "modest third world dwelling" for an interview with her parents.

Then suddenly, Dulla is under the donkey, pulling him into her with the cold finesse of the big-time American porno star she dreams of becoming. When the donkey is finished, a crown is on his head. Dulla stands beside him, wearing a veil and taking her bows. Two overweight men in sports coats and sunglasses come onstage, waving American flags and showering Dulla with U.S. currency.

It was Wednesday, June 14th, 1989. Inside Melnitz Theater, they rolled the last film of the night. A message flashed on the screen, warning the audience that the film contained material that might be deemed offensive by certain members of the audience. The credits flashed...

A George Cunningham  
Film...

"Hiss."

Animal Attraction...

"Boo."



George Cunningham  
at the gates of UCLA.

The audience is filled with sailors, coke-snorting Shriners in red fezzes and beer-swilling good ol' boys. Is Cunningham going to show a donkey coupling with a woman? The camera teases, taking us one step closer to the forbidden. Each time Dulla and the donkey seem like they are about to do it, the film cuts away—first, to an interview with Dulla's boyfriend, the head chef at Tijuana's only Taco Bell. (Will he or won't he?) Mamber brings the camera crew closer to the action. Dulla slips a dress strap from one

Throughout the film, in between the laughter, there were loud catcalls from the audience—

"Racist!"

"Sexist!"

After the film ended and the lights came up, they were still shouting.

"UCLA funds racism and sexism!"

"No, no," I shouted back, "that's USC. UCLA students pay for their own films."

"How would you like your mother to appear in a film like this?!"

"Huh?"

For a student film to inspire any reaction other than boredom and indifference is extremely rare. Of the 129 films screened that year at UCLA, none received anything but cursory attention, media or otherwise. The controversy had been brewing for some time. When Cunningham screened a rough cut of *Animal Attraction* (then called *Casa De Hee Haw*) in 1988, a Latino protestor demanded that the film be burned.