

NEW YORK

NEW YORK INTELLIGENCER

By James Brady



Perich: TV free-for-all?

The Primal Screen

The underground film-maker who sent Time Inc. Chairman Andrew Heiskell into media shock is Anton Perich, a lank, 28-year-old Yugoslavian with hair like corn fritters and the sense of humor of a stag-night emcee. Perich works out of a second-floor loft on Wooster Street. Every week he scripts, casts and video-

tapes 60 minutes of gamy short features to be shown on cable television late Sunday nights. On February 11, Sterling Manhattan Cable Television (controlled by Time Inc.) screened his *Price of the Party*, *Mr. Unusual* and *The Painter*. Perich thinks it was the last two that shocked Heiskell with their bizarre situations, semi-nudity and descriptive language.

Perich came to New York three years ago and worked for fashion photographers before going into movies. His career started when he went to Sterling Manhattan, asked for an hour of their public-access broadcast time and got it. He did the same at TelePrompTer. On public-access television, anyone can book time as long as the films offered meet with channel standards, but until a month ago no one was bothering to screen the films beforehand. Since Heiskell tuned in, Sterling Manhattan has been

showing Perich's films with about twenty minutes censored-out of each 60.

I spent an afternoon with Perich; screened several of his tapes and found them occasionally funny, rather amateurish, but hardly shocking. Perich himself refers to them as "humorous, satiric soap opera. It's realistic, with the kind of language you'd hear anywhere." In the films I saw, there was no total nudity, no intercourse, only some grappling and raunchy language. The outrage is that the high camp of drag, homosexual clowning and strange situations (a painter painting with the brush in his behind, a boyfriend visiting a girl and her mother with rolled-up comic books in his pants) have never been shown on television before. I'm not sure there's any redeeming social value in it, but I'd rate it Parental Guidance for anyone but Andrew Heiskell. Moral indignation, however, must be rampant. Last week the Federal Communications Commission announced that it would look into the matter of obscenity on the air.