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NEW YORK FEST

PRIVILEGE

A Zeitgeist Films release. Written, produced and directed by Yvonne Rainer; camera (color, 16m), Mark Daniels; editor, Rainer; sound, Antonio Arroyo; art directors, Anne Stuhler, Michael Selditch. Reviewed at Toronto Festival of Festivals, Sept. 10, 1990. (Also in New York Film Festival and Independent Feature Film Market, N.Y.). No MPAA Rating. Running time: **103 MIN.**

With: Alice Spivak, Novella Nelson, Blaire Baron, Rico Elias, Gabriella Farrar, Tyrone Wilson, Yvonne Rainer, Dan Berkey, Claudia Gregory, Mark Niebuhr, Minnette Lehmann, Faith Ringgold, Shirley Triest, Helene Moglen, Catherine English Robinson, Evelyn Cunningham, Gloria Sparrow, Audrey Goodfriend, Vivian Bonnano.

Y *Variety* 10/1/90
vonne Rainer's quasi-documentary about women and menopause strives to be entertaining but fails. Grindingly didactic, "Privilege" is best suited for feminist and other politically oriented festivals.

The filmmaker flaunts her artiness, styling "Privilege" as a collage of ruminative talking heads, snippets of risable '50's-era sex education films, scrolled computer data and encounter-style interviews between the filmmaker and friends.

Rainer makes extensive use of unsuccessfully realized, fiction-like "hot flashbacks," in which one subject re-enacts scenes from her life before menopause. These somewhat fantastical sequences restate familiar observations about stereotypes and the linkage of race, class, sex and economic discrimination in America.

An African-American filmmaker who refuses to limit herself to racial issues, Rainer also touches upon the problems of the handicapped. But for all its thematic hopscotching, "Privilege" invariably returns to the life crises of women over 40.

The filmmaker does not let her sisters off the hook: After years of feminist consciousness-raising, women "have achieved nothing," she declares. Through their submission to male-engendered self-images of post-menopausal worthlessness, women have succumbed to precisely the type of "pathetic" self-loathing expected of them, she argues.

Instead of resorting to estrogen therapy or submitting to self-abnegation, women must embrace menopause as a liberating life phase, say Rainer and her subjects.

Regrettably, the viewer must slog through a good deal of preachiness while "Privilege" makes its point. — *Rich.*