

A LANDLORD HERE TO SHUT SEX SHOPS

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Finch Corp. Says Offending Tenants in Midtown Will Be Ousted by Spring

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By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Sex - oriented bookstores, movie houses and peep shows in properties held by Edward R. Finch, a prominent real-estate man and lawyer, will be removed by spring, a spokesman for Mr. Finch said yesterday.

The first establishment to vacate, Peepalive, a live sex show at 109 West 42d Street, will close today, according to a statement by Mr. Finch and released through the spokesman.

Two sex bookstores with peep shows next door, at 107 and 105 West 42d Street, will close by Dec. 31, and a male sex cinema and bookstore at 1111 Avenue of the Americas, between 42d and 43d Streets, will vacate by March 31, the statement said. Their removal, enforced by legal action, is tied to expiration of the leases.

The statement by Mr. Finch, who is the uncle of one of President Nixon's sons-in-law, Edward Finch Cox, came in response to an inquiry after the name of the Finch Corporation turned up on a list of property owners of sex establishments compiled by the Mayor's Office of Midtown Planning and Development, which is heading a cleanup drive in Times Square.

Others landlords listed in-

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cluded the Bankers Trust Company, Brandt Theaters, and two major Manhattan real-estate men, Seymour B. Durst and Sol Goldman. A number of them described their involvement as inadvertent and a consequence of large real-estate purchases of rundown properties for eventual redevelopment.

Last week, after Rockefeller Center was identified as the principal landlord of a sex theater, the Paree at 753-9 Seventh Avenue, a hastily concluded agreement closed the premises.

Weekly Reports Planned

In another development in the city's drive on midtown pornography, First Deputy Commissioner Henry J. Stern of the Department of Consumer Affairs said his agency would soon begin issuing weekly public reports of action taken against offenders.

The move, he said, is partly in response to orders from Mayor Lindsay for tougher action by city agencies.

The Mayor, it was learned, is furious over recent disclosures in New York Magazine that some prominent realty men have turned out to be landlords of the targets of his cleanup drive. Mr. Lindsay reportedly reprimanded his aides at a meeting on Nov. 16.

It was also learned yesterday that the Capri Cinema at 738 Eighth Avenue was closed Saturday after summonses were issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs for alleged operation without a license. The license had been suspended earlier for the alleged display of obscene films.

Although Mr. Finch initially

declined to discuss his properties with a New York Times reporter, a spokesman at a public-relations firm that represents him, Howard J. Rubenstein Associates, later issued a statement from him.

"The Finch Corporation," it said in part, "has spent considerable time and money in its efforts, all of which have been successful, in eliminating from its properties pornographic bookstores and a movie house. The Finch Corporation deplors the illegal occupation of premises by these pornographers and would continue to do its utmost to upgrade the area."

At the Peepalive premises on 42d Street yesterday, customers were still climbing the stairs to drop quarters into a slot that then opened a window giving them for several moments a glimpse of a woman, clad only in fish-net stockings, spinning slowly on a small round stage. The cashier declined all comment about the scheduled closing today, referring inquiries to a manager who was unavailable.

Managers were similarly unavailable at the cinema and bookstore on the Avenue of the Americas.

At Bob's Bargain bookstore at 107 West 42d Street, an employe, Chester Nevins of Queens, said: "This isn't degrading the streets. We're not forcing people to come in here. The panhandlers, that's what's degrading the city."

The owner, Bob Brown, who was reached later, asserted that the shop sold only "legal sex" literature and devices. He said he had agreed to move out by Dec. 31 after losing a court case to renew his eight-year lease, which expired a year ago.

Bank Explains Ownership

The Bankers Trust Company was identified by the city as the owner of property at 1541 Broadway, site of the San Francisco, a sex theater. A bank spokesman said the property was being held as an investment for pension funds and had been leased to the Astor Thea-

ter Corporation, whose president, Peter Sharp, recently announced plans to build a 2,000-room hotel on the site.

Meantime a legal spokesman for Mr. Sharp said the corporation had been trying for months to force out the sex cinema for alleged wholesale violations of the lease. Another court session is scheduled for today.

A sign at the theater, formerly Ripley's Believe It or Not, between 45th and 46th Streets, advertises: "Last Days of Porn."