

Actor Says Talks With Ex-Addicts Helped Him Salvage His Marriage

By Bob Rose
Chicago Daily News Service

SANTA MONICA, Calif.— Actor Alejandro Rey sits in the hot seat ringed by a dozen former narcotics addicts slamming him with questions peppered with profanity.

"Hey, you, look at me. You sitting there with your handsome face, your playboy smile, your playboy looks—yeah, now big man, how come you look at us that way?"

"I don't know—I'm just depressed."

"Awww, the big playboy is depressed. Now tell us how come, pretty man."

"It's just, well, I got a problem with my girl."

"Look at you, you think you're a big movie actor, and you let this stupid broad spit all over you. You gotta be the dumbest."

Rey, recalling the dialogue in an interview, looked up and said:

"Babying Myself"

"He was right. He made me face myself in one day. This ex-addict who'd been through hell, really hell, made me see my problem wasn't a problem. I was looking for it, I liked it, I was paying attention to myself that way, babying myself.

"It was my way of dramatizing myself, sort of saying 'How else can I know I'm living, unless I'm really "suffering," and being upset and getting home

and saying how miserable I am.'

"I knew I could have said to this girl, 'Don't call me any more.' So, I did. I really did. And it took me off the hook."

Rey, a star of 26 movies in Argentina and Spain and Argentina's top television star, was telling what happened to him when he suddenly came face to face with the Synanon Game" in his first movie, "Synanon," in the United States.

"The Game," as its adherents call it, has spread far beyond the walls of the Synanon Rehabilitation Center for Ex-Narcotics Addicts in Santa Monica to a dozen college campuses and to many living rooms in sophisticated California homes.

It's a kind of self-help group therapy, which usually makes scenes from "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" look strangely mild. The sessions in the private homes may last all weekend, with no sleep for the players.

Featured on TV

Rey, featured as a Puerto Rican playboy in a new Screen Gems—ABC-TV television series, "The Flying Nun," this fall, credits "the Game" with saving—or restoring—his marriage.

"There are sessions for 'squares' but because I was in the movie I got to sit in with the addicts, and that's much

different, much tougher, meaner—they really aim for your guts. It was such a fascinating experience I went every night for 14 weeks.

"My big problem was with my wife. We got married only last year, on June 10, regular June bride, everything. We separated exactly one week later. We were divorced last August. And we remarried in March.