

NEW OBSCENITY LAW POSSIBLE

Feds target violence

By SEAN DURKAN
Ottawa Bureau

OTTAWA — Material depicting extreme violence may be banned under a new obscenity law, Justice Minister Allan Rock said yesterday.

The problem is "the undue exploitation or glorification of horror, cruelty or violence," in entertainment and the media, the minister said.

"I am persuaded that this issue deserves serious review," Rock said.

But he would not say whether movies like the Academy Award winning *Pulp Fiction* or the critically acclaimed *Reservoir Dogs* might fall into his definition of gratuitous violence.

Rock promised a discussion paper by late summer and said he hopes to be ready to announce next March details of a bill.



ALLAN ROCK
Extreme cases

A new law would deal "only with the most graphic and extreme expressions of violence," Rock said. But he warned that even then, it would not be upheld by the courts as a justifiable infringement on freedom of expression unless the government could demonstrate a need for such censorship.

"The government must have sufficient, but not necessarily conclusive evidence that materials that have as a dominant characteristic the undue exploitation of horror, cruelty or violence would pose a substantial risk of harm to society if they were not prohibited," Rock said in a letter to Warren Allmand, chairman of the Commons justice committee.

Rather than put all its eggs in one basket, Rock said the government will "enlarge our strategy" and consider other options for fighting violence, including alternative legislative approaches and voluntary measures by various entertainment media.