



Annual Report 2004













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# President's introduction



**T**hrough 2004 we undertook an intensive process of consultation about our Guidelines, which express our broad policies and the way we apply them in classifying individual films, videos, DVDs and games.

The new Guidelines, published on 9 February 2005, reflected the views of over 11,000 people across the UK, 7,000 more than contributed to the 2000 Guidelines survey, as well as advice from a variety of experts.

In particular, the new Guidelines were considered in draft with both the Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing (APCV) and our Consultative Council. Indeed both these bodies have, as is described elsewhere in this report, continued to give valuable advice throughout the year on a range of issues. After being in existence for some six years the APCV's membership was refreshed with five new members.

On 9 February we also published a report by Dr Robert Towler, *Public Opinion and the BBFC Guidelines 2005*, summarising the outcome of the public opinion research. Inevitably the detailed results are complex, but the main story is that the public supports the Board's work, thinks the Guidelines are broadly right and is not looking for radical changes to our approach. The public also agrees that our primary business is the protection of the under 18s and supports our increasing emphasis on Consumer Advice.

The Board does intervene with films and videos classified for adults. It patrols the border between '18' and 'R18' and it imposes cuts where necessary, doing so frequently in respect of videos classified

'R18' which are available only in licensed sex shops, most commonly to reflect the provisions of the Obscene Publications Act. In each year a small number of video works are denied classification altogether. These interventions are, however, made on the footing that adults should generally be free to choose their own entertainment within the law and provided that the material does not risk harm to society; and it is noteworthy that our Guidelines research shows that two thirds of people think adults should be free to watch what they like on video or DVD.

Though the research showed broad support for the previous Guidelines, we made, in line with public views, some significant adjustments. These include:

- the Guidelines now make more explicit that in practice we consider not only what is likely to be harmful at the age group concerned, or unlawful, but also what is clearly unacceptable to broad public opinion
- on language (itself an example of an issue of acceptability rather than harm), we have, in response to public views, made our approach less mechanistic – counting the number of words for example – and more sensitive to context, including whether language is deployed aggressively or accompanied by violence
- again on language, an issue which remains a serious public concern, we have put more emphasis on expletives with a racial association and language which offends other sometimes vulnerable minorities. This reflects sensitivities apparent in focus group discussions
- on drugs, we have broadened our concern to include other substance abuse, including alcohol and smoking, and switched from concern with 'instructive detail' (which our

research suggested was not crucial because that was typically available from peer groups) to concern with material promoting or glamorising substance abuse.



**The new Guidelines, published on 9 February 2005, reflected the views of over 11,000 people across the UK, 7,000 more than contributed to the 2000 Guidelines survey, as well as advice from a variety of experts**



We were anxious to use our Guidelines research to probe public understanding of and support for the '12A' category introduced in 2002 for cinema films. It was, for example, one of four issues examined by focus groups (the others being language, violence and drugs). The '12A' category for the first time enabled children under 12 to see such films in cinemas, provided they are accompanied by an adult throughout the film. It was also an important feature of the scheme that Consumer Advice should be available to enable parents to reach an informed judgement on whether their children should see the film.

The research showed that while many people, particularly those with children in the relevant age group, understood and supported the '12A' category, there was also a good deal of confusion about it. There is also anecdotal evidence that very

young children have been taken to '12A' films, sometimes with disruptive results. We therefore launched, in February, a public awareness campaign emphasising:

- '12A' means that a film is suitable for children aged 12 and over
- parents may take younger children on their own responsibility
- the availability of Consumer Advice about the content of the film.

At the beginning of films classified 'U', 'PG' or '12A' immediately after the familiar BBFC 'black card' audiences will now see a further card explaining the meaning of the category in question.

Inevitably, in classifying some 600 cinema films and over 11,000 video works each year, some people, and sometimes in significant numbers, think we get it wrong. We take their views seriously. It is also helpful that at most meetings of our two consultative bodies, which bring together individuals of distinction and those with special interests or expertise, the Consultative Council and the APCV, see and discuss a recently classified film. Equally, it is apparent that in only the most straightforward case could unanimity be achieved.

Some well known titles, released in 2004, illustrate the dilemmas:

- a number of people who saw ***Closer*** thought we should have classified it '18' for its strong sexual references and content rather than the '15' it was given
- some people regretted that in making ***The Passion Of The Christ*** '18' because of its violent content, we prevented younger people from seeing an impressive and inspiring film from which they might have benefited (more



recently we gave a modified, but some felt no less inspiring, version a '15' certificate)

- some people thought that, given its sexual content, **9 Songs** should have been rated 'R18', and thus confined to licensed sex shops or specially licensed showings, rather than being classified '18'. Our own view was that this film was quite different in effect and intention from the sex works for which the 'R18' category was designed, given its context, narrative and tone; and that there were no grounds on which to deny its contents to a general adult audience, given the broad principle referred to above, plainly supported by the public, that adults should be free to choose their own entertainment. (Indeed our research showed that, in respect of works classified '18', but not below, there was much support for the idea that adults should be able to see more sex including 'graphic portrayals of real sex'.)

Of course no decision in a case of this sort is taken by a single individual. It is carefully considered, initially by the experienced and professional examiners, almost always in a team of two, and, depending on the issues, may be seen subsequently by a second team, by a senior examiner, the Deputy Director and the Director or by all three of these. If it is referred to the Presidential team then it will be considered by my two experienced Vice Presidential colleagues, Janet Lewis-Jones and Lord John Taylor, and myself with the aim of reaching, with the Director and his colleagues, a shared view. Most video games are exempt from the Video Recordings Act. But the Board is responsible for classifying those referred to it and which forfeit their exemption because, for example, they depict human sexual activity or gross violence. During the year there has been

concern about some games and the potential for them to have a harmful effect. We have taken a number of steps to ensure that those games which, under the law, need BBFC certification are referred to us and that, once on sale, their classified status is properly labelled.

Once again, I should like to thank Ewart Needham, the Chair of our Council of Management, and his colleagues for their support in ensuring the good management of the Board's work. I am the first President to be made *ex officio*, with the Director, a full member of the Council (which of course plays no part in classification decisions and policy) and I hope this has helped the good functioning of the Board's operations overall.

It gave everyone at the Board, and more widely in the film world, great pleasure that Robin Duval, our outgoing Director, was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours List.

We all welcome our new Director, David Cooke, who joined us, after open competition, in September.



Sir Quentin Thomas

May 2005





**I** took up this post in September 2004, having been appointed by the Council of Management after an open competition in the Spring.

It was immediately clear that Robin Duval had left the BBFC in very good shape. In particular, during his time at the Board:

- productivity and efficiency of decision-making had improved markedly
- so had the consistency and openness of the Board's decisions
- transparent classification Guidelines, based on extensive consultation with the public, had become established and well understood
- the Guidelines process had been repeated, and new Guidelines were in preparation, this time reflecting the views of over 11,000 members of the public.

I was glad to be able to bring the revised Guidelines to publication on 9 February 2005, in the way described by the President in his introduction. I believe that the 2005 Guidelines have been extended and strengthened in significant respects, while at the same time ensuring that we keep closely in touch with the detail of public concerns. As before, the protection of children is our chief objective.

Just before Christmas 2004 I had an opportunity to see the Board's work in an international context when I met my European, US, and other opposite numbers at the most recent European Film Classifiers' Conference, in Paris. (The next conference will be held in London in Autumn 2005.) This confirmed my impression, which can be demonstrated by comparative classification

decisions, that the BBFC is one of the toughest and most interventionist film classification bodies in Europe. But it was also good to discover the respect which international colleagues had for our independence, professionalism, toughness, responsiveness and speed; and to find recognition for the work we have done in developing our own websites and in leading international comparative discussions and debates. The conference also confirmed the lack of enthusiasm for a single, pan-European system of regulation.

**“ We calculate that in 2004 we gave over 10 per cent of new films a higher classification than that sought by the distributor ”**

In spite of what I have just said, it is sometimes put to me that the BBFC is nowadays a laissez-faire body. That is not true. The extent to which we intervene where necessary to cut or even reject works is fully documented in this report. (So far in 2005 we have rejected five works, and there may be more to come.) But to concentrate on cuts and rejections overlooks the extent to which we also intervene through the classification system itself. We calculate that in 2004 we gave over 10 per cent of new films a higher classification than that sought by the distributor. This figure will never be an absolute. Sometimes distributors do not request a particular classification. Sometimes, and increasingly, issues may be resolved (eg as a result of 'advice viewing') before a film is formally

submitted. Nevertheless, it is clear that we do make extensive, although we hope consistent and sensitive, use of the classification system itself to protect children and other vulnerable groups. Examples will be found throughout the report.

I will use the next report to set out more fully how I see the Board's future strategy, and the steps we need to take to remain prepared for future challenges. In the meantime, I will simply draw attention to the following points:

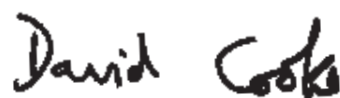
- as this report explains, we are working closely with the games industry and others to ensure that we see all the non-exempt digital games which ought to be referred to us. We continue to conduct a uniquely thorough and well-informed scrutiny, backed by powers, of such games
- we are working closely with the film, video and DVD industries on a number of key issues, including promoting the understanding of '12A' and ensuring that our Consumer Advice is readily available and accessible
- Consumer Advice is, indeed, a key part of the media education and literacy work which we undertake. We believe it will become increasingly prominent and important in the future, alongside our classification decisions
- we will continue to keep closely in touch with public opinion and to ensure that this is reflected in our practice in individual cases
- we are currently following up a review of the BBFC's internal structures to ensure that we are as well equipped as possible for the future
- we continue to improve our websites (we are launching a third, sbbfc, in 2005) and our technical services and systems.

Inevitably, I have spent some of my time since I arrived learning how to examine films, and about the other parts of the classification process. This has included taking a crash course in examiner training, spending two full days experiencing an examiner's daily schedule and learning how to write examiners' reports.

I am very grateful to many people for making my first few months at the BBFC so enjoyable as well as educational. They include:

- Penny Averill, the Deputy Director, and all the staff of the BBFC
- our Presidents, Sir Quentin Thomas, Janet Lewis-Jones and Lord Taylor of Warwick
- the Council of Management, chaired by Ewart Needham
- the Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing, chaired by David Simpson
- our Consultative Council
- colleagues from the industry and from its representative bodies
- members of the public who have taken an interest in our work.

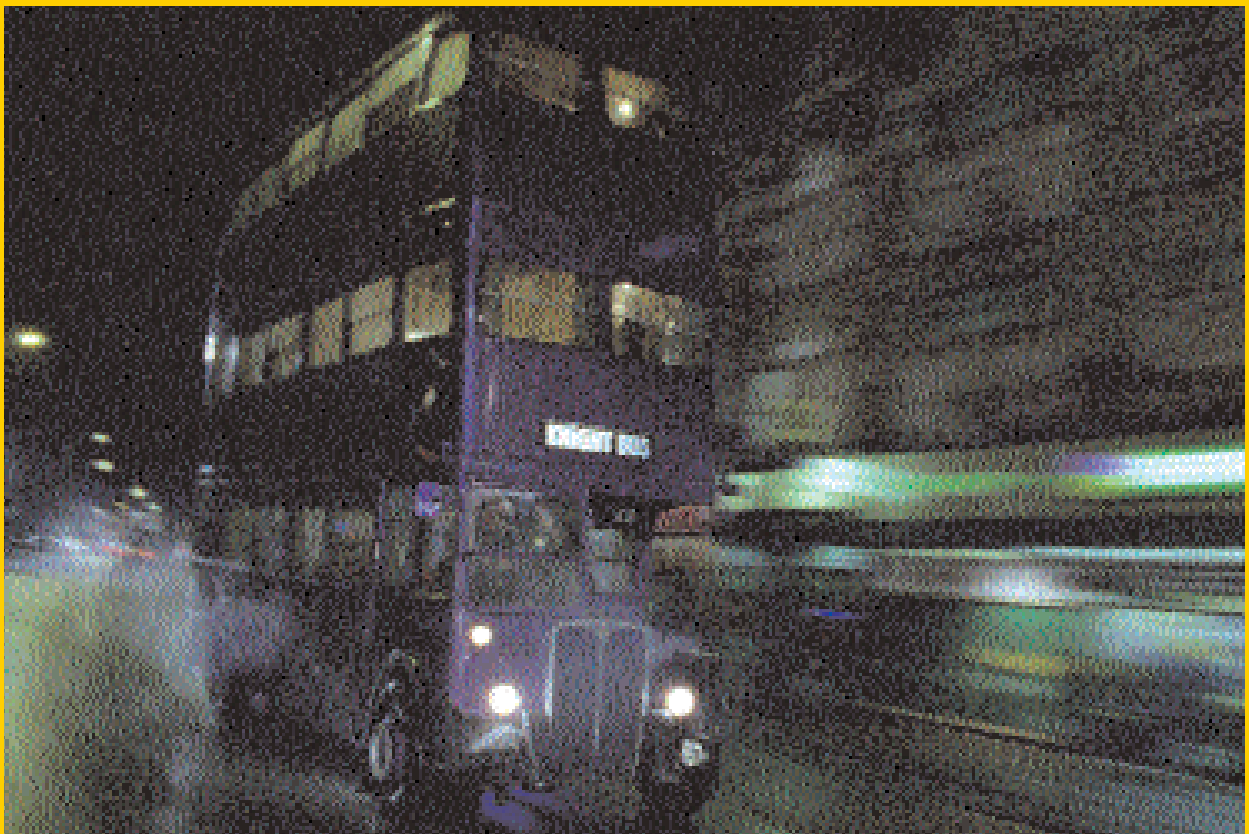
I look forward to working with all our stakeholders over the coming period to build on the achievements of the Board under my predecessor and take us in good shape towards our coming centenary in 2012.



David Cooke  
May 2005









## Accountability

**T**his Annual Report is central to the Board's accountability and openness to the public, the industry and Parliament. It provides information about the classification decisions made by the Board during 2004 as well as information about the Board's financial position. This report can also be found on the Board's main website, and is placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

“  
**The main outcomes of the research were that overall support for the Guidelines went up from 59 per cent in 2000 to 63 per cent in 2004**  
 ”

### Consulting the public

The Board is also accountable through the classification Guidelines. The Guidelines are the result of extensive consultation with the public, industry and other interested parties. To ensure that they stay in line with public opinion, they are updated on a regular basis. During 2004 the Board consulted over 11,000 people across the UK covering all ages and all demographic groups, 7,000 more than contributed to the production of the 2000 Guidelines. This resulted in a new set of Guidelines, published on 9 February 2005.

The research carried out by the Board comprised four elements: hall tests; the QUEST Panel, a panel of 4,000 adults used for a range of media research; a website questionnaire; and demographically

balanced focus groups from around the UK. The hall tests replicated similar research carried out in 2000 and were undertaken by the research company which conducted the 2000 survey. A sample of 1,239 adults aged 18 plus was recruited using quotas for sex, age, class and working status. Respondents were recruited at 24 locations: two in Wales, three in Scotland, one in Northern Ireland, and the remainder spread throughout England. People who had been recruited attended a local hall, used as an interview centre, where they were given the BBFC's classification Guidelines and a questionnaire, which they completed in the centre. The same materials were distributed by post to the QUEST panel.

From December 2003 until March 2004, the BBFC website invited those who visited it to complete an on-line version of the same questionnaire used in the main survey. In addition, other people, including people active in the film industry, were invited to complete the on-line questionnaire, and were directed to the website. Over the three month period 5,738 copies of the on-line questionnaire were completed.



### Film statistics 1994 - 2004

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>U</b>	46	37	42	38	56	65	61	43	71	61	41
<b>PG</b>	92	110	98	113	109	121	112	121	142	132	102
<b>12</b>	60	49	66	60	40	72	88	107	122*		
<b>12A</b>										152	148
<b>15</b>	122	123	166	134	174	192	174	174	201	188	222
<b>18</b>	81	91	75	92	69	73	85	59	48	56	49
<b>R18</b>										1	

\*Inc 12A

Qualitative research, in the form of twenty-eight two-hour focus groups, was also carried out in various locations in the UK. Seven groups discussed the issues surrounding the '12'/'12A' classifications; seven considered drugs classification; seven dealt with the ways language affected classification; and seven looked at violence and its impact on the ratings given to films.

Respondents in the hall tests were the most cautious, or 'conservative', in their replies. Very consistently, the replies given by members of the large panel which made up the sample for the QUEST survey were somewhat less conservative. Respondents who completed the questionnaire

“  
**Well over 90 per cent of parents with children under the age of 11 found the ratings useful when choosing a film to see with children**  
 ”



on-line represented a significantly different constituency. Although large, the sample was self-recruited, ie on-line respondents chose to complete a questionnaire about film and video/DVD classification. This means that the on-line sample is best taken as representative not of the general public – as with the main survey and the QUEST survey – but of people with a special interest in film and film classification. It was unsurprising, therefore, that their views were much more 'liberal' across the range of topics covered by the questionnaire. This was taken into account when processing the results. Before they came to the groups, the focus group members watched films and clips from films which had raised classification issues. They were then questioned in depth about their views and attitudes relating to the topic under discussion. These groups provided a rich source of insights into public attitudes. A summary of the consultation findings can be found on the BBFC main website at [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk) under BBFC/Downloads.

The main outcomes of the research were that overall support for the Guidelines went up from 59 per cent in 2000 to 63 per cent in 2004. On each of the issues of greatest concern – sex, drugs, violence and bad language – support for the Guidelines went up. The value of Consumer Advice was clearly reflected in the fact that 86 per cent of people who knew about it found it useful when deciding which films to watch with children. Well over 90 per cent of parents with children under the age of 11 found the ratings useful when choosing a film to see with children.



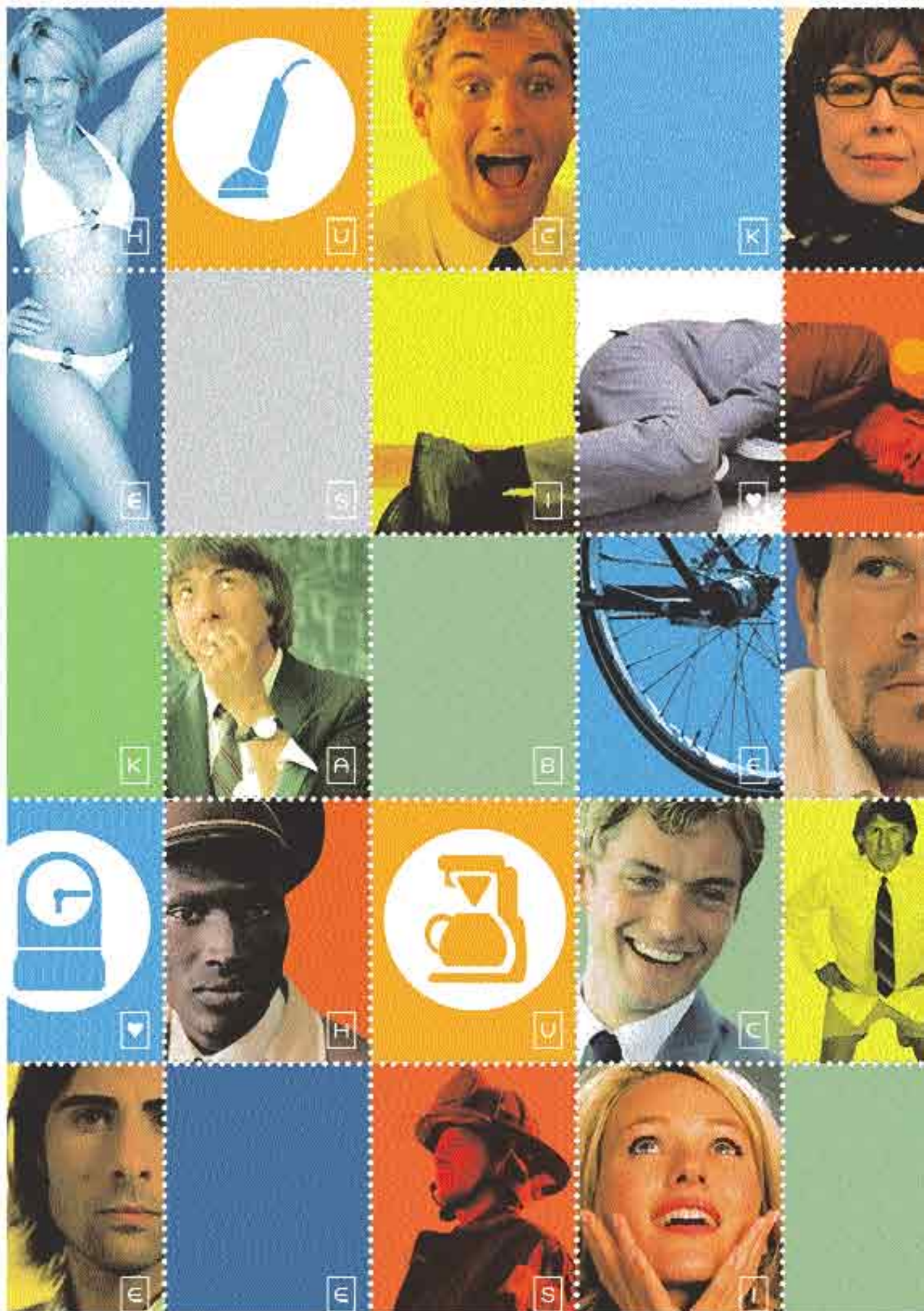
### 12A

When the Board introduced the '12A' category for cinema in August 2002 we promised to keep it under review. As part of our consultation on the Guidelines we asked the public for their views on how well the category was understood and whether there were any changes or improvements we could make. As well as including a section on the category in the questionnaire, which formed the basis for the quantitative research, we also ran focus groups on the topic. What was clear from the research was that there was confusion in the minds of a significant proportion of the cinema going public. But, fortunately, the one group of parents who did understand and appreciate the category were parents of children in the 9-12 age group – the very people the category was designed for.

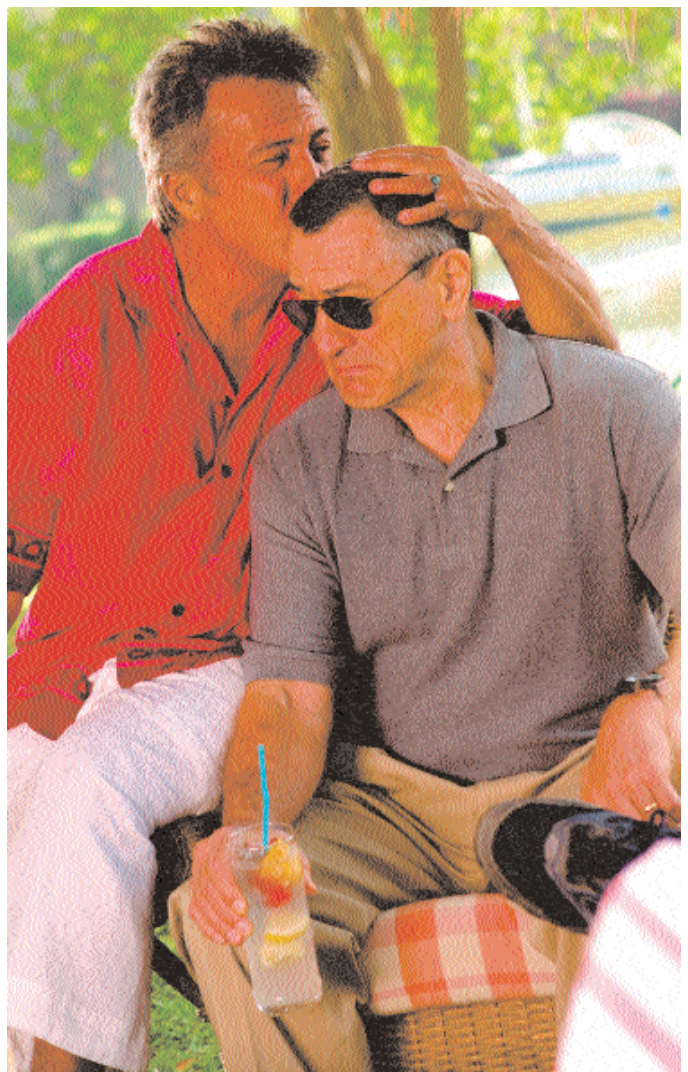
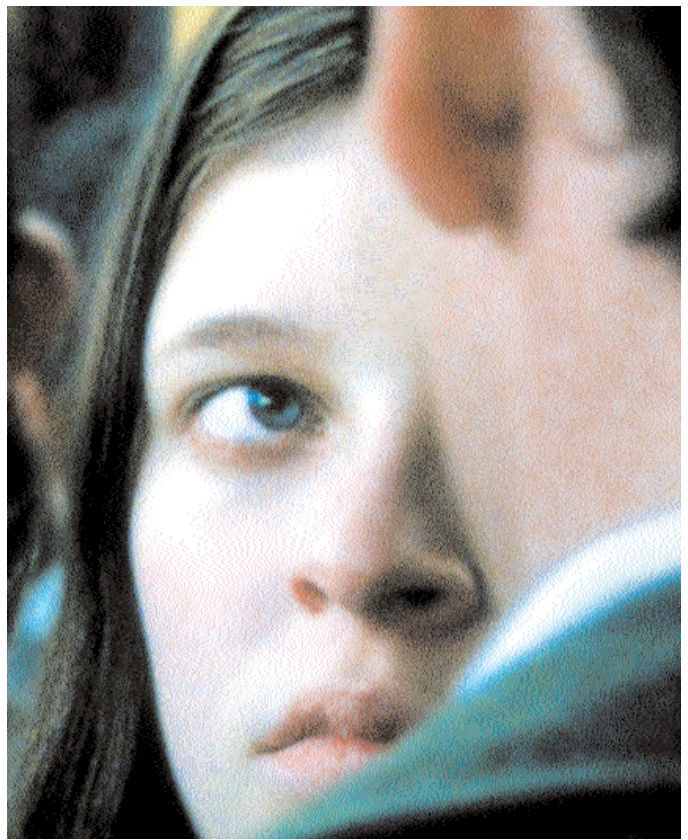
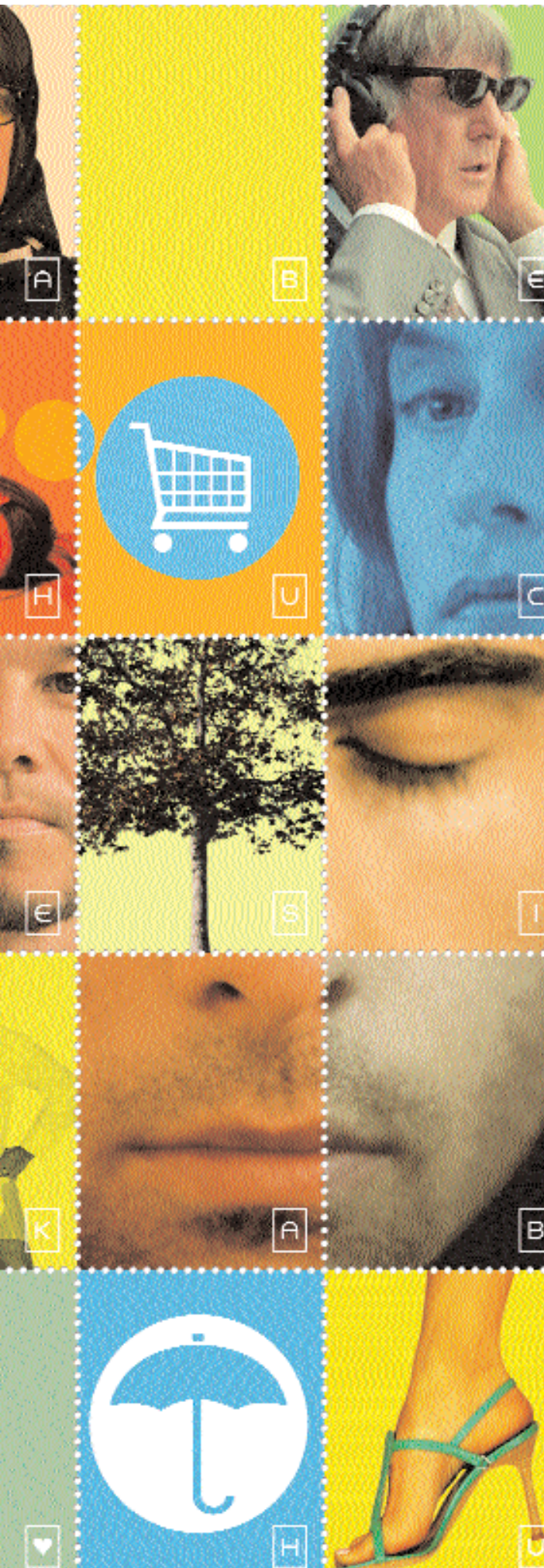
The public raised concerns about parents who were taking very young children to see '12A' films and treating the category in the same way as 'PG'. However, when asked whether a lower age restriction should be imposed, over 50 per cent of people said 'no'. It was also clear that some people mistakenly thought that '12A' was a stronger version of '12', the A meaning that it contained adult themes.

To improve understanding of the three advisory categories, 'U', 'PG' and '12A', and to impress upon parents that they are responsible for making









*I Heart Huckabees - '15'*  
*La Nina Santa - The Holy Girl - '15'*  
*Meet The Fockers - '12A'*



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**The BBFC's Consumer Advice can be found on advertising material for films as a single sentence of information, and on DVD and video packaging in either a grid format or a single sentence**

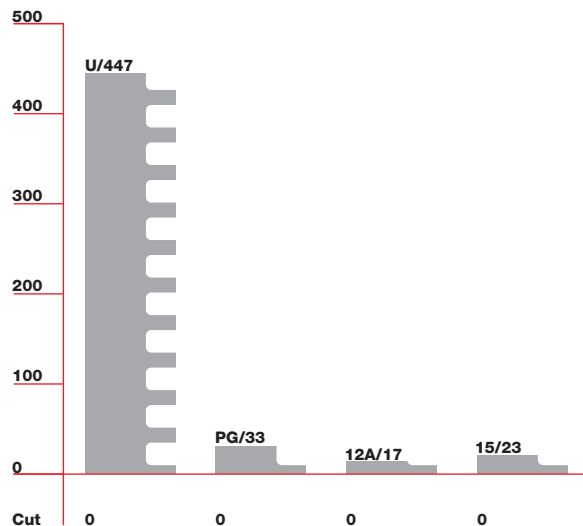
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decisions about their children's viewing, the Board has agreed with the industry that films with those ratings will carry information about what the categories mean. This will appear immediately after the BBFC 'black card' at the beginning of the film. In addition, the Board is working with the Cinema Exhibitors Association to improve provision of information about what the categories mean, both in cinema foyers and at the box office, and with both distributors and exhibitors to improve the visibility and availability of Consumer Advice.

#### Consumer Advice

For every work passed, the Board provides information about its content which indicates why it has been given a particular category and what it contains in the way of sex, violence, bad language, etc. This Consumer Advice is an increasingly important aspect of the classification system. During several public consultations people have told the BBFC that they value such information, which enables them to make informed decisions about viewing. In the latest research 86 per cent of respondents found it 'very useful' or 'quite useful'.

Cinema advertisements – 520



This is particularly true in relation to the new '12A' certificate which allows parents to take younger children to the cinema if they are satisfied they can cope with the film's content. Films can be given a particular category for different reasons. For example, the Bollywood crossover feature *Bride And Prejudice* was taken to '12A' by one use of moderate language, whereas the Will Smith sci-fi film *I, Robot* got the same category because of some moderate violence.

“

**In 2004, we saw a substantial increase in the number of DVDs and videos displaying Consumer Advice (particularly in its concise sentence form), with 86 per cent of top videos and DVDs carrying it**

”





The BBFC's Consumer Advice can be found on advertising material for films as a single sentence of information, and on DVD and video packaging in either a grid format or a single sentence. The Board continues to work with the film and video industries to increase the display of Consumer Advice and public awareness of this information. In 2004, the Board reached an important agreement with the film industry whereby distributors agreed to include Consumer Advice on advertising for films of every category from 'U' to '18'. This followed research showing that more than 90 per cent of the public wanted this. The BBFC welcomes this move and we monitor the provision of Consumer Advice and bring to the attention of distributors any significant problems. Although there are still some inconsistencies in the effective display of Consumer Advice, the situation has improved.

Similarly, the BBFC continues to monitor the display of Consumer Advice on DVD and video packaging, producing detailed figures which are shared with the industry on a quarterly basis. In 2004, we saw a substantial increase in the number of DVDs and videos displaying Consumer Advice

(particularly in its concise sentence form), with 86 per cent of top videos and DVDs carrying it.

### Letters from the public

It is relatively rare for the Board to receive more than one or two complaints about any particular film, and in 2004 only three films produced complaints in double figures. The most complained about film was one which was classified in October 2004 but which did not actually open in cinemas until March 2005. The Board's decision to pass *9 Songs* uncut at '18' received extensive media coverage. This resulted in 48 letters, in what was clearly a coordinated campaign, with people reacting to what they had read, rather than what they had seen. The Board's decision took account of the absence from the film of any issues of sexual violence, lack of consent or harm; the narrative context of the film; its very marked difference from porn works; and the support of the majority of the public for the principle that, at 18, adults should broadly be free, within the law, to decide for themselves what to watch.

“  
**All letters and emails sent to the BBFC receive a full explanation of our decision. We do take very seriously complaints from people who have a problem with a film they have seen**  
 ”



Any suggestion that mild bad language has become acceptable was challenged by 32 people who complained about the use of 'bloody' in the 'U' rated **Shrek 2**. Bad language and sexual innuendo in **Dodgeball – A True Underdog Story**, which was rated '12A', produced nine complaints. **Secret Window** was also rated '12A' and contained one use of 'fuck'. (This is acceptable under the '12A' Guidelines, but nevertheless several people complained about the language even though it had been flagged up in the Consumer Advice.)

In 2002, the Board received many complaints when we gave the first **Spider-Man** a '12' rating (before the introduction of '12A'), because people felt that the comic book violence was suitable for a 'PG' rating. The Board felt that the level of violence, the retribution theme and the whole tone of the work were too strong for 'PG'. A small number of local authorities changed the rating to 'PG' in their area as a result of parental pressure. When **Spider-Man 2** came in to be classified it was clear that the tone of the film was very different. It was lighter and had more comedy than the first film, and the violence had less impact owing partly to toned down sound effects. Nevertheless, 20 people felt that it was too strong for 'PG'. Presumably these people agreed with the '12' rating for the first film.

The topic of horror is always going to divide people. Those who like the genre are not troubled by the blood and violence. It is particularly popular with the older teen audience. The Board's ratings often reflect that, with films like **Jason X** and **Cabin Fever** receiving a '15' rating. The focus groups who looked at violence as part of the 2004 public consultation rated **Jason X** everything from 'PG' to '18', depending on how seriously they took the film. The Board did receive complaints about the '15' rating for both films. But we also received a complaint about the '18' rating for **Dawn Of The Dead**, asking why under 18s could not see the film and others like it.

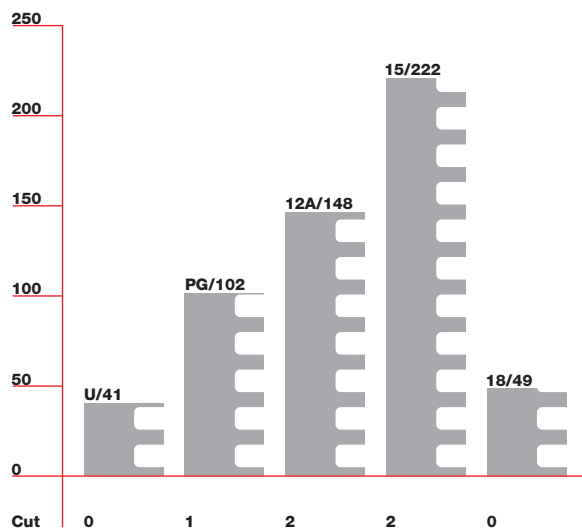
As the Board's main function is to protect children and young people from unsuitable material it might be thought that, speaking for themselves, children would always want access to higher rated films than they are allowed to see. But this is not always so. Each year we get a small number of letters from children telling us that they have seen a film which they thought they should not have been able to see. **Signs** produced a letter from a 13 year old who had seen it and thought it should have been a '15' and not a '12A'.







### Film total – 562



Now and again we receive complaints about something in a film which we could not easily have anticipated, and about which we have no classification Guidelines. ***Austin Powers In Goldmember*** brought in a complaint from one person who took exception to jokes about birthmarks and felt we should not have allowed them.

Some complaints issues have considerable longevity. After over 30 years we had thought that ***Watership Down***'s disappearance from the post bag in 2003 finally meant that there was nobody left out there who had not seen the film. But we were wrong – 2004 saw two complaints about the 'U' rating, saying it was too disturbing and violent for young children.

All letters and emails sent to the BBFC receive a full explanation of our decision. We do take very seriously complaints from people who have a problem with a film they have seen.

### Media education

The BBFC has continued to maintain an active education role in 2004. The Board's examiners accepted invitations to speak about the issues of censorship and film, video and DVD classification at a variety of schools, colleges and universities in the UK and at high profile events such as the Edinburgh Film Festival. In addition, BBFC examiners have continued to host regular student seminars at the Board's premises in Soho Square.

Along with attendance at the annual BFI Media Studies Conference on the South Bank, examiners also hosted presentations and screenings across the UK as part of Film Education's National Schools Film Week in the Autumn. Throughout 2004, the 12-14 consultation exercise that was started in 2003 continued, with the process expected to conclude in 2005. This has taken the form of visits to selected secondary schools during which small groups discussed specific classification issues (such as bad language, sex and violence) following a presentation by examiners. Students were encouraged to express their views and asked to fill in a questionnaire. Each visit provided valuable information on how this age group views the work of the Board and the full findings of the exercise are expected to be available later in 2005.

As a measure of the BBFC's commitment to media education, and in recognition of the Government's interest in increased media literacy among pupils and students, the new post of Education Officer was created in the latter part of 2004. The post will expand on the BBFC's educational activities, contacts and resources.



**Given the effectiveness and popularity of the cbbfc website, much research and development has gone into the creation of a second educational website – sbbfc, Students’ British Board of Film Classification – aimed at media studies students. It goes live in Spring 2005**

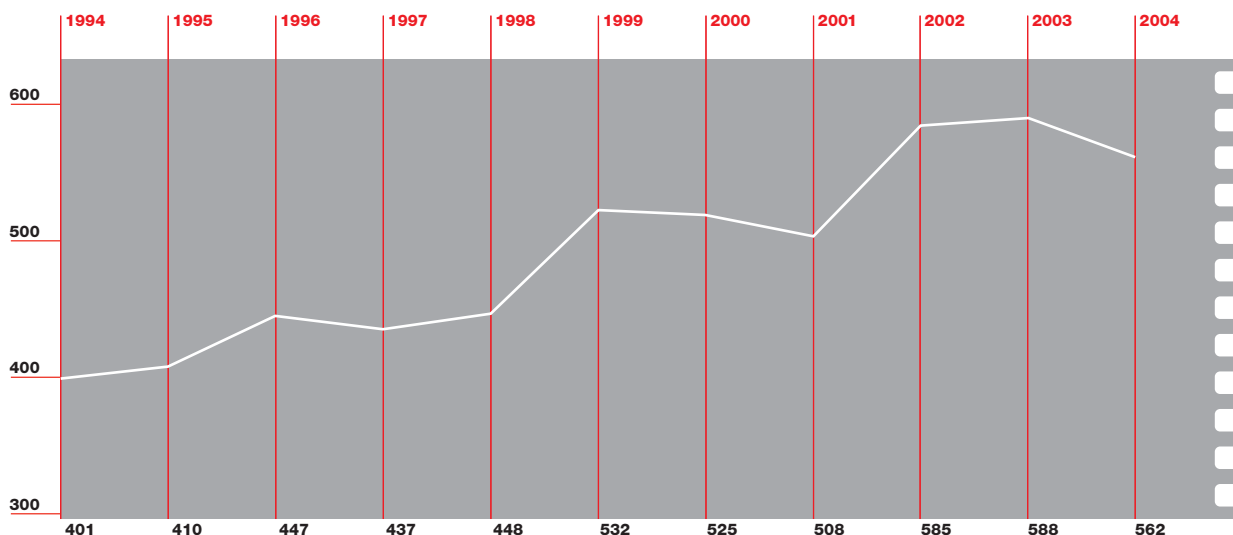


**On-line education**

One of the Education Officer’s primary roles has been further development of cbbfc – the Board’s website dedicated to providing an insight into the classification of films, videos and DVDs for primary school children, their parents and teachers. The site, which was launched in 2003, was the subject of an nationwide tour (in conjunction with Film Education). It played to hundreds of children and featured at events such as the Cambridge Film Festival. This, along with increased awareness of the site’s existence, has seen the average number of visitors more than triple in the past year (it now averages around 50,000 hits per month). It has also continued to provoke interest abroad, and in July 2004 was the subject of a presentation at the Board to the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and a delegation from that country researching media regulation activities in the UK.



**Film submissions 1994 - 2004**











Given the effectiveness and popularity of the cbbfc website, much research and development has gone into the creation of a second educational website – sbbfc, Students' British Board of Film Classification – aimed at media studies students. It goes live in Spring 2005. This will be especially tailored to those studying and teaching the topics of censorship and media regulation as part of media studies courses at various levels and will, we hope prove as popular and informative with students and teachers as cbbfc has. The on-line student guide will provide a unique look at the BBFC's history and role with links to various case studies and other useful resources and is expected to reflect exactly the needs of the National Curriculum's Media Studies programme.

## Research

As well as the extensive research carried out into general public attitudes towards the Guidelines, outlined earlier in this report, the Board also carried out research into the attitudes of the British Asian communities towards Bollywood movies and their classification. The research used entirely qualitative methods, involving 10 focus group discussions and three family visits among British Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian communities; six in depth interviews with video shop owners and a series of short interviews with Asian cinema goers.

What was clear from the research was that these British minority ethnic communities do not view Bollywood films in the same way that they view 'western' films. The films have an important cultural role, providing not just entertainment but an opportunity to keep in touch with cultural roots, tradition and mother tongue. They are also associated first and foremost with family viewing and are therefore deemed to be unlikely to contain anything which could not be viewed by several generations. This is despite the fact that more recent Bollywood movies have included gangster films, political themes and more explicit sexual content.

Whilst British Asian cinema goers might look to the certificates of Hollywood films for guidance on suitability, they tended to rely on their own judgement when assessing Bollywood films. They made their choice based on the stars, the directors, the songs, the publicity and word of mouth. Sexual content was of most concern. What would be deemed mild sexual content in a 'western' film could be unacceptable in a Bollywood family film, particularly for Muslim audiences. Violence, particularly the stylised violence known as 'dishum', was part of the genre

and of little concern, even when young children were in the audience. Attitudes to drug taking depended on the context, with religious or rural settings providing a mitigating factor which would not be acceptable for 'western' British audiences. Bad language was not a strong concern whether in English or in Hindi. Often younger audiences could not understand the Hindi words anyway. Political and religious themes could be highly controversial and offensive.



The interviews with video shop owners showed that they were acting as intermediaries, providing advice and information about the content of films. The BBFC's Guidelines allow some account to be taken of the expectations of a work's particular audience, although this has to be balanced against the need for overall fairness and consistency of decisions. We are undertaking further work into the provision of information about Bollywood films.

### **Information technology**

During 2004 the Board's information systems played a key role in ensuring that the increase in the volume of submissions, which was greater than forecast, did not compromise the quality of decisions or customer service. The investments made in server hardware in 2003 demonstrated their value, with service levels not affected by any server issues.

The greatest success of 2004 was the customer extranet facility. This enables customers to monitor, in real time, the progress of their work through the classification process. This degree of business transparency is still unusual and has been applauded by the industry. Over 90 per cent of all submissions are now tracked using this facility.

The interactive features of this highly secure monitoring system have reduced the time needed to complete a classification by 15 per cent. This is in addition to the cost savings and performance improvements resulting from the improved communication between the Board and our direct customers. In addition, we are moving away from paper based administration. The internal systems have facilities that replace printed letters and forms with electronic equivalents. These changes are geared towards providing a faster and more

flexible service to customers who have little time for form filling.

The public website has undergone the first stages of a design update. The current technology is being phased out and replaced by market leading open source solutions. This has already enabled us to provide a more consistent site, meeting EU regulations for accessibility with improved speed and reliability. The site now provides RSS feeds as options for other websites or individuals who are looking for the definitive guide to film and video ratings. Over the next year we plan to make the necessary major changes to the underlying software that will enable us to continue to build robust, flexible and low cost solutions in the future.

The most significant internal change is to the way the BBFC administers the packaging approval scheme on behalf of the Video Packaging Review

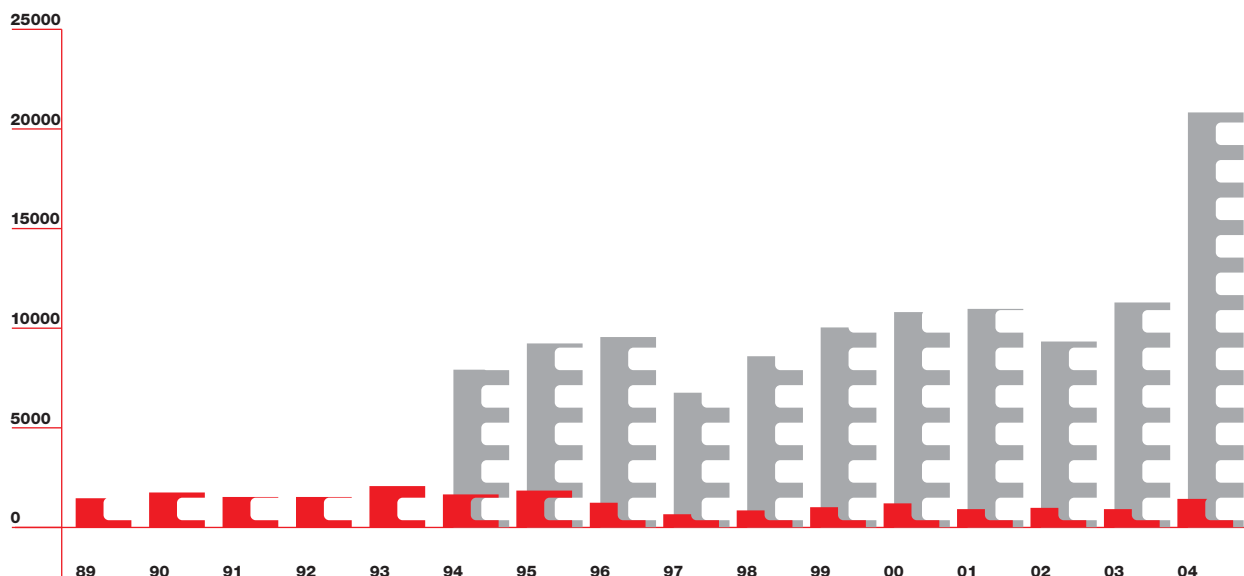
Committee (VPRC). The VPRC scheme was dependant upon meetings and printed documents. This has been overhauled to make the entire process independent of internal paperwork and physical meetings. The turnaround time for packaging has been reduced to a fraction of what it was, while at the same time improving the opportunity for packaging to be examined by all VPRC members if necessary.

The flip side of the accessibility of the organisation is the ease with which email addresses can be obtained by those who use them for virus and spam attacks. We continue to deploy the best available technical and organisational methods to protect our systems. This has prevented any virus incursions at all, with more than 10,000 infected emails detected and at least twice as many prevented from even reaching the mail scanner.

### Enforcement

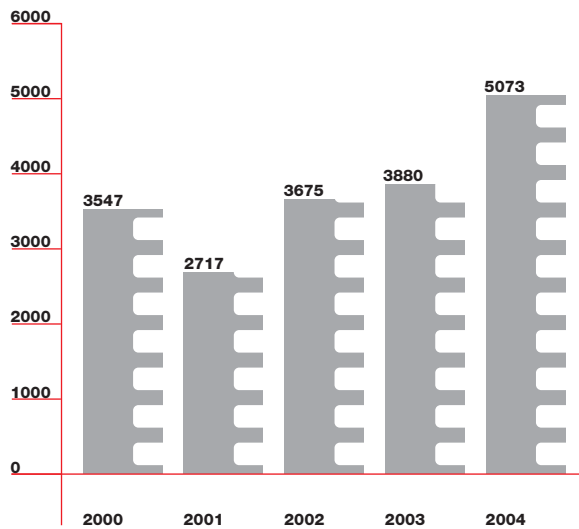
Provision of evidence 1989 - 2004

Submitted works Title only





### Number of Helpline calls



The loss of productivity caused by spam is still too high, despite our systems blocking more than 90 per cent of all such unwanted email. We continue to look for ways to improve our accessibility while reducing our availability to intruders.

The Board was pleased to be able to donate the computers which we no longer required, because of equipment updates, to Computer Aid International, a charity which aims to improve access to information technology in schools and community organisations in the developing world.

### Customer helpline

The customer helpline (020 7440 0299) provides an information service to customers as well as members of the public. The number of calls increased for the fourth year in a row, with 5,073 calls taken, a 31 per cent increase in call volume on 2003. Work in progress queries once again showed the biggest increase in call types, up 45 per cent on 2003. This increase can be attributed in part to the fact that

more and more customers have taken up the BBFC extranet service, which in turn prompts customers to enquire about the progress of their submissions.

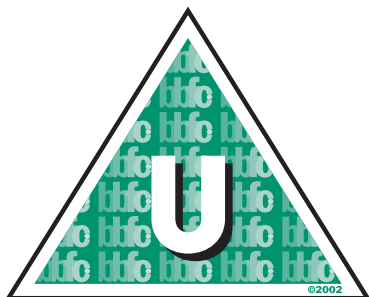
### Enforcement

The BBFC supports the concerted action which a number of organisations and agencies are taking against film piracy. We provide information to trading standards officers and the police to help them with prosecutions under the Video Recordings Act, which saw a sharp increase in 2004. There were over 21,000 queries about illegal videos, DVDs and digital media, the highest ever total and an increase of over 8,000 on 2003. Items submitted for comparison totalled 1,508, which was a 15 per cent fall on 2003's submissions, but there were 19,691 title-only enquiries, 75 per cent up on the previous year.





# Classification



## Universal – suitable for all

The Universal category ('U') provides certain assurances to parents that films, videos and DVDs with this rating will present a safe and benign viewing environment for those over four years of age. This year, while there has been much to delight and engage both young audiences and adults viewing with them, some material has required BBFC intervention in order to maintain the integrity of the Guidelines. We sometimes have to make judgements about what children over the age of four will find too scary, while acknowledging that most children enjoy a degree of tension and thrill in what they watch. Inevitably, we do not always please everybody. We also pay particular attention to removing any on-screen dangerous activities that children might copy. And we do our best to protect them from anything stronger than mild violence and horror.

One of the most popular 'U' films of the year was **Shrek 2**. Before the film was formally submitted, following advice from the BBFC, the distributors

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**a 'U' classification cannot guarantee that infants will not be distressed by what they see at this category, and... parents need to gauge the sensitivities of the individual child when choosing what to allow them to watch**

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removed a vigorous head butt, delivered by Princess Fiona to the smarmy Prince Charming as a reward for a plot to make her fall for him and desert Shrek. This was no mild bump, but a fighting technique in full close-up, arguably made worse by the fact that the recipient is the focus of all eyes as Prince Charming and the audience are expecting a romantic kiss. Where head butts are clearly signalled and the focus of a scene, we are likely to remain concerned. A spoof drugs scene in the same film, in which the palace guards confiscate a plastic package from Puss in Boots, did not violate the 'U' drugs policy, given that the dialogue reference was to catnip.

Language in the film gave rise to a number of complaints. Complaining to the King about the way Prince Charming had been treated, the Fairy Godmother declared: 'He climbs to the highest bloody room in the highest bloody tower...'. Two emphatic uses of 'bloody' were felt to be unacceptable in a 'U' film by a number of parents, who explained that they had to work very





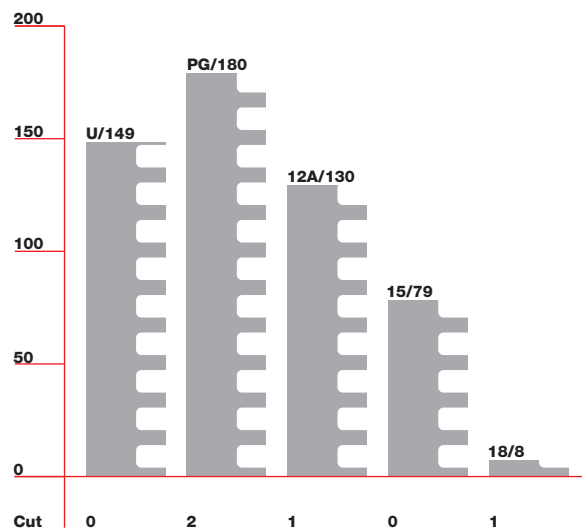
hard to prevent their children picking up swearwords from all kinds of sources. The Board felt that mild swearing of this kind was acceptable in the context of an unpleasant character losing her temper, and that children would not identify with the Fairy Godmother as a role model. Given that the film was a clear 'U' in all other respects, and that the words were relatively mild and not directed at an individual, the Board felt that the language could be accommodated at 'U'. A similar single use of 'bloody' featured in the 1996 **101 Dalmatians** without undue criticism, but the Board, nonetheless, remains sensitive to parents' views on language.

Another film that held attractions for adults as well as children was the live action **Two Brothers**, the tale of two tigers separated as cubs and reunited as grown animals. While examiners felt that this film sat towards the top of the 'U' category, a few parents wrote to complain that scenes implying harsh treatment had upset some very young children. This serves as a useful reminder that a 'U'

classification cannot guarantee that infants will not be distressed by what they see at this category, and that parents need to gauge the sensitivities of the individual child when choosing what to allow them to watch. (Our Consumer Advice is designed to help them do so.) We were able to reassure parents that animals featuring in the film were not cruelly treated and that apparent rough treatment was suggested through skillful editing and digital effects. It should be noted that the Cinematograph Film (Animals) Act 1937 lays on the BBFC the legal responsibility to remove from films any act of genuine cruelty to an animal that has been set up specifically for the purposes of making the film.

Other major children's films included **The Incredibles**, a Pixar animation about a family who use their 'superhero' powers to defeat a villain. The intensity of the action violence in the film led to some close scrutiny and discussion, but it was finally placed at 'U' with the recognition that it lay at the upper end of the category. It was felt to be very much in the vein of the cartoons that children are accustomed to in weekend television viewing.

### Film trailers – 546





More traditional in its treatment was **Five Children And It**, a screen adaptation of the E. Nesbit children's novel. A roaring dinosaur and horrid Horace, the villain, did not push this beyond a 'U' classification. Of course, all is well in the end, including the repentance of Horace. This accords with the requirement in the Guidelines that any sense of threat or horror must be reassuringly counterbalanced.

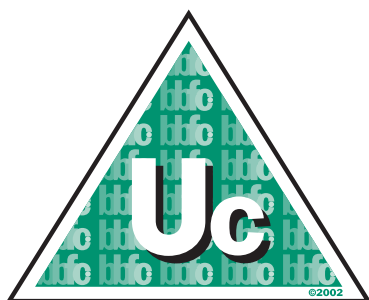
Notable among the year's Hindi releases was **Veer-Zaara**, a handsome film dealing with a forbidden love affair across national and religious divides, but with a good balance of Indian and Pakistani characters and appropriate moral messages for the 'U' audience.

Video and DVD submissions during 2005 produced some interesting issues. In the 'Uc' category, intended for pre-school children, the Board takes pains to ensure that whatever is on screen will be safe for this audience watching on their own. Two episodes of the Welsh S4C television series **Sali Mali**, destined for DVD,

were withdrawn by the distributor after the BBFC expressed concerns. One episode encouraged children to look at wild mushrooms growing outdoors and provided the inadequate warning: 'they're not all good to eat', with no clear explanation of the dangers of toadstools or poisoning. Another showed Sali ice skating on a pond and merely remarked that Sali had looked for a safe place to skate. Again, the scene lacked the clear warnings that BBFC examiners felt should accompany such potentially dangerous images at 'Uc', where the likelihood is that pre-school children will be watching without adults to explain matters to them.

Risks to children through imitable techniques crop up in the most unexpected places. An advertisement for BBC Radio 4 featured comedian Johnny Vegas sitting in a fridge. Although this came with a request from the distributor for a 'U', the Board was concerned by the uncritical suggestion that getting into a fridge was perfectly safe. Accidental death involving children and domestic electrical equipment occurs rarely, but at 'U' we are very careful about the risk of inadvertently encouraging potentially dangerous play of this kind. It was therefore classified '15'.

Another advert, for the European Parliamentary Election campaign, offered images of people making choices, the first of which was a baby deciding which of its mother's breasts to feed from. At 'U', the Board accepts occasional natural nudity, with no sexual context, but the advert was subsequently cut at the request of the Cinema Advertising Association.





A Tampax Compak advert gave rise to a couple of complaints from the public, who felt that the screening of such advertisements should be restricted to adult performances, in order to avoid difficult questions from children. We felt, however, that the 'U' category was acceptable given the tone of the advert.

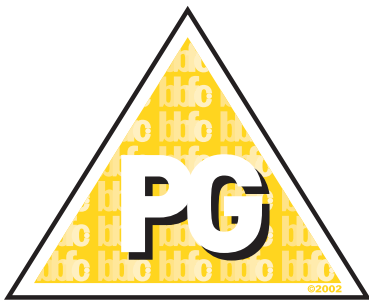
The casual but hurtful slang of the playground led to cuts for 'U' in an animated DVD work *Final Fantasy Unlimited – Yu – The Secret of Gaudium*. The words 'spaz' and 'spastic' were used as derogatory slang in an audio commentary by one of the voice artistes. The Board takes the view that language used in this thoughtless but offensive way has no place in the 'U' category and the words were removed accordingly.



**Parental Guidance – general viewing, but some scenes may be unsuitable for young children**

“**Generally a film at this category should not disturb a child aged around eight or older, but there will always be sensitive children over this age who may be unsettled by even moderate violence or horror**”

The most eagerly anticipated 'PG' films of the year were sequels. *Harry Potter and The Prisoner Of Azkaban* followed the further exploits of the boy magician, offering some scary scenes but nothing that tested the 'PG' category level, while *Spider-Man 2* contained somewhat stronger fare. The first film in this series was classified at '12A', probably raising expectations that the sequel would attract a similar category. However, examiners felt that a 'PG' was appropriate for the moderate fantasy violence, and that the sequel was generally milder in tone than the original. The strongest scene showed Dr Octavius wrecking an operating theatre and attacking the nursing staff. However, the violence lacked detail and was relatively brief. It did prove scary enough, however, to provoke a handful of complaints from adults who felt that it was too strong for a 'PG'. Generally a film at this



category should not disturb a child aged around eight or older, but there will always be sensitive children over this age who may be unsettled by even moderate violence or horror.

Other sequels included *Agent Cody Banks 2 – Destination London* and *Scooby-Doo 2 – Monsters Unlimited*, both unproblematic at 'PG'. *Lemony Snicket's A Series Of Unfortunate Events* was based on a series of popular children's books and starred Jim Carrey in villainous mode, pitted against three resourceful children. It was comfortably contained at 'PG'.

Classic films are sometimes submitted to the BBFC for a modern classification. This can raise issues where classification Guidelines have changed since the award of the original category. *Rebel Without A Cause* was originally classified 'X' in 1955 for cinema release. This was principally because of concerns about possible anti-social behaviour if young people were allowed to see the film. With the passing of time, public attitudes have

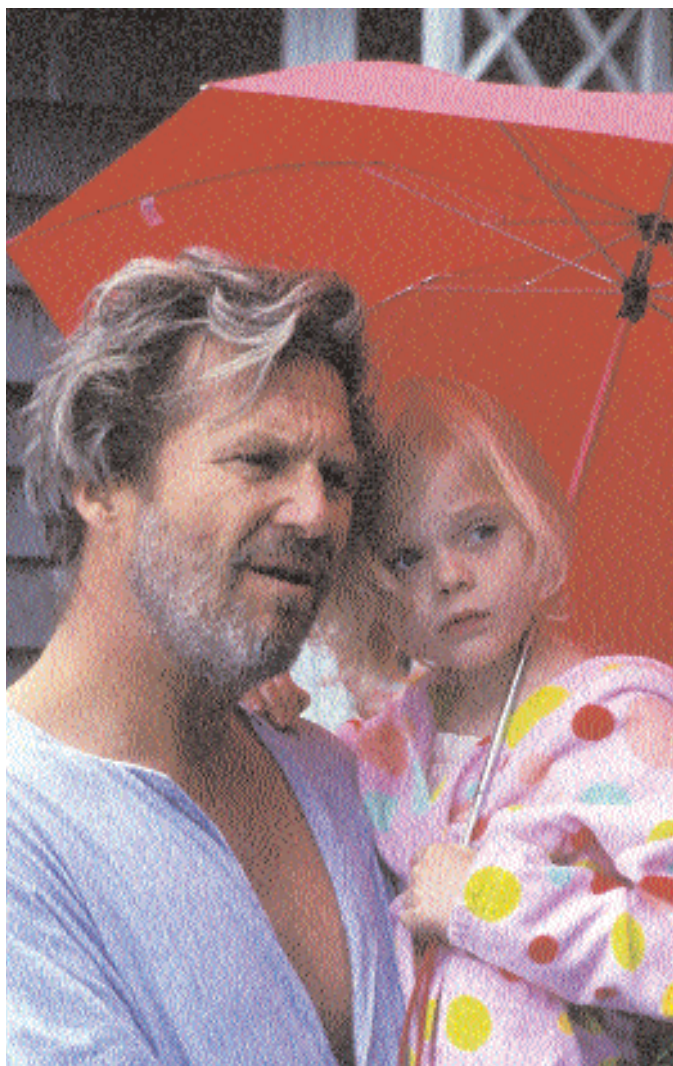


changed, and, in spite of a flick knife fight in the film, examiners felt able to recommend a modern 'PG'. This is not because the Board takes a lenient view of knives at the junior categories (as the cuts required to *Second-Hand Lions* last year demonstrate). Rather it reflects the fact that *Rebel Without A Cause* is a film that holds little attraction for children, and the knife fight takes place in what is now a dated and historic context. There were no details of blood or injury and only 'moderate violence', which complies with the 'PG' Guidelines.

The BBFC continues to be vigilant in monitoring films, videos and DVDs for dangerous combat techniques and other activities that might be copied. A cut was required to the DVD *Soccer Dog – European Cup*, about an American boy who leaves the USA to live with his father in Scotland and teams up with a genetically-modified goal-scoring dog. On the football field, a young man (not the hero, but a role model) delivered a powerful head butt to the conceited villain and







***End of the Century - The Story of The Ramones - '15'***  
***9 Songs - '18'***  
***The Door In The Floor - '15'***

then explained that sometimes it is the only way to resolve matters. This scenario is an excellent example of why we might intervene at 'PG'. Encouraging children to use head butts, especially on the football field, as the best way to resolve a dispute, is a matter of serious concern.

Another cut was required to a DVD extra for *Wild Guitar* to remove instructional detail about how to break into a car. Distributors do have the option to take a higher category as an alternative to cutting. So instructive detail in a hanging scene from a 1954 TV series *The Sherlock Holmes Collection* was moved from 'U' to 'PG', and an episode of an old sitcom *Hogan's Heroes – The Flight Of The Valkyrie* was also classified 'PG' because of a reference to the mixing of two household substances to make chlorine gas. In this case, the 'PG' certificate and the Consumer Advice alert parents to the potential risk.

While the language in the feature itself might comfortably sit at 'PG', sometimes the DVD commentary or the other featurettes, out-takes or add-ons might present a difficulty. An example of this was the DVD bonus material for *The Cat In The Hat*, a feature based on the Dr Seuss children's book. It contained a mouthed but clear use of strong language, which immediately raised the classification to '12'. The distributor was offered the choice of a cut or a higher category, and in this case chose to cut the offending word.

A similar issue led to the removal of one instance of strong language from the DVD bonus material for the Japanese animated feature *Spirited Away*, and from Blake Edwards' commentary on his Peter Sellers comedy *The Party DVD Special Edition*.

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**It is very important that parents check the Consumer Advice before taking children younger than 12 to see a '12A' film. Some '12A' films, may be closer to '15' than 'PG'**

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Concern about drugs is always high on the list of parental concerns. The Guidelines in use in 2004 allowed no references to illegal drugs at 'U'. This meant that a passing reference to the Opium Wars in the Tagalog work *Otso-Otso Pamela Mela Wan* moved the work up to 'PG'. This strict position meant also that a series of short drugs information films from the Home Office, *Drugs – Talk About Drugs*, designed to encourage parents and children to discuss drugs, were rated 'PG' rather than the requested 'U'. Recognising that it should be possible to pass appropriate anti-drugs messages at 'U', and in line with public concerns about ensuring that references to drugs should not be glamorised, the new Guidelines for 'U' have been amended to reflect this. A second film in the series *Drugs – Hugging* proved more problematic, as it depicted people hugging and embracing one another lovingly, with the voice-over commenting, 'If this was the only effect of Ecstasy, we'd all be doing it. To find out why we're not, talk to Frank'. Given the ambiguity of the message for the very young, and the fact that the dangerous effects of Ecstasy were not made specific, the Board felt that neither 'U' nor 'PG' were sufficient and the final category was '12'.



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**Sometimes classifying films involves considering whether audiences have the maturity to understand particular themes and their treatment**  
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#### **12A cinema 12 video**

##### **– suitable for 12 years and over**

The BBFC considers that '12A' cinema films are suitable for children of 12 and over. The category was introduced because parents felt that some children younger than 12 could and would enjoy some '12A' rated films and that they were best placed to decide what their children should be watching. However, '12A' rated films are not necessarily suitable for all under 12s and parents should bear in mind that the category caters for the 12-14 age group. It is, therefore, very important that parents check the Consumer Advice before taking children younger than 12 to see a '12A' film. Some '12A' films, may be closer to '15' than 'PG'.

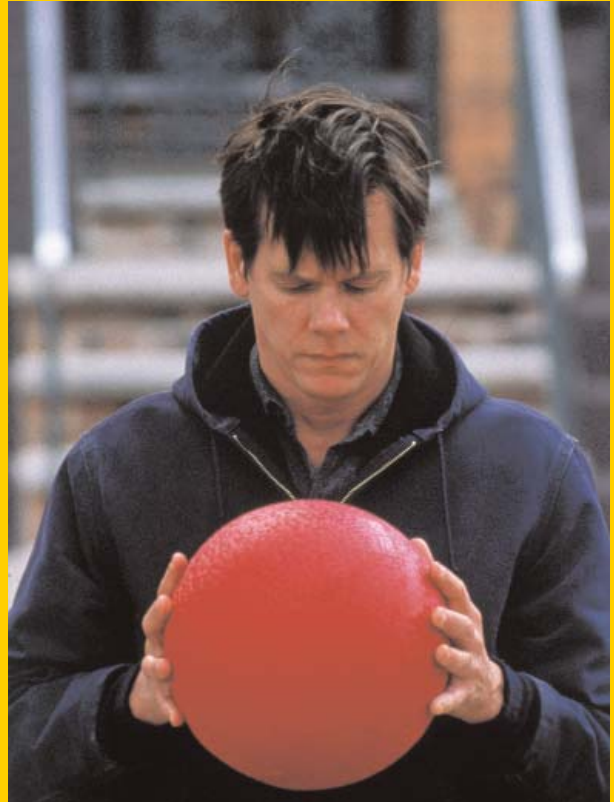
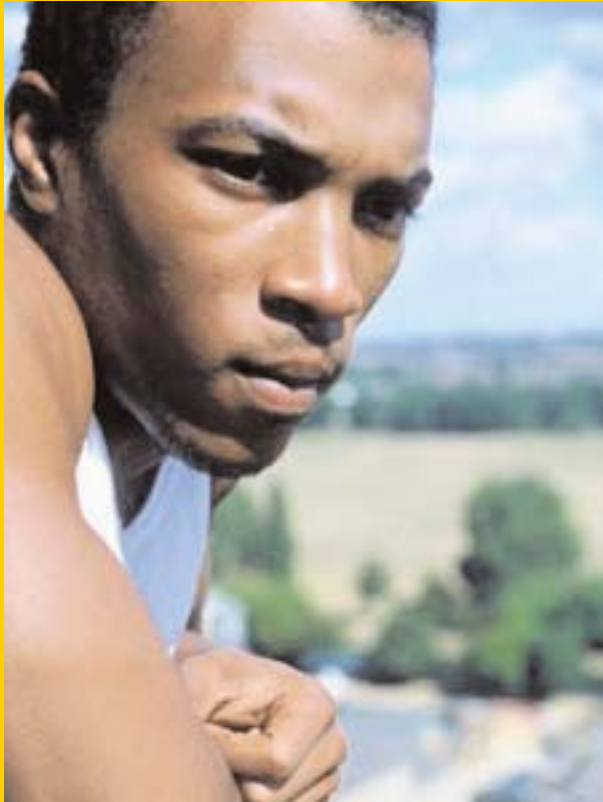
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**Our Guidelines allow for the use of strong language in a '12A' work, though this should be rare and justified by context**  
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One such example was the fantasy-adventure film *Van Helsing*. This story of an end-of-century vampire hunter, complete with the now obligatory computer-generated monsters and demons, did result in seven letters to the Board expressing the view that it was too scary for children under 12. The '12A' rating balanced the film's overall sense of threat, the scary creatures and moderate violence with its self-mocking humour and fantasy context. It also reflected its similarity to television programmes such as *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*; a programme with a huge following in the 12 plus age group. Taken as a whole, it was the Board's view that those in the 12-14 age range were able to cope with the horror aspects of the film without ill effect.

Sometimes classifying films involves not just dealing with relatively clear cut classification issues such as language, sex and violence, but considering whether audiences have the maturity to understand particular themes and their treatment. Such was the case with the period drama *Vera Drake*, about a woman who carried out abortions at a time when abortion was illegal. Recognising the careful and measured exploration of the abortion theme, the discretion with which the abortion scenes were handled, and the film's overall focus on the socio-historical context,



**Bullet Boy - '15'**  
**The Woodsman - '15'**  
**Layer Cake - '15'**  
**Trilogy - The Weeping Meadow - 'PG'**



particularly the repercussions for the lead character, the Board felt that the film was suitable for a young teenage audience and so gave the film a '12A'. Clear Consumer Advice was provided, highlighting the central theme so that viewers were left in no doubt about what the film contained.

The combination of strong language and sexual references can test the boundaries of acceptability at '12A'. ***Dodgeball – A True Underdog Story*** prompted a small number of complaints about these issues. Our Guidelines allow for the use of strong language in a '12A' work, though this should be rare and justified by context. The two uses of the f-word in this film were considered acceptable because they were not used in an aggressive context. More problematic were a number of sexual references that ranged from mild verbal innuendo to implied visual detail. Despite the comic delivery and the probability that the material would go over the heads of young children, parents can be embarrassed by such material when in the company of children. However, we carefully considered the positive way in which the film dealt with issues of friendship, trust and teamwork and took the view that these factors outweighed possible risk of offence.

Occasionally, what is going on in the background of a film can raise possible classification issues. Such was the case with ***Jersey Girl***, a film in which the female protagonist works in a video store. In one scene a stack of videos could be seen in the background with what appeared to be pornographic images and titles. However, closer inspection revealed that the cover photos merely showed scantily clad women and that the titles were indistinct and so the '12A' rating was sustainable.

Mild depictions of sex are permitted at '12A'/'12' as long as they are implied. Additionally, the degree of sex in a film will generally reflect the familiarity of most adolescents with sex education gained through school. ***The Notebook*** presented two love scenes between the main characters. The scenes were discreetly handled, offering head and shoulder shots of the couple kissing, some sense of movement and a long shot of the woman, clearly topless. The lack of detail meant that a higher category was not needed.

A film, video or DVD is cut for one of two reasons: either because it contravenes the Board's Guidelines for a particular category; or because it contains material which is illegal. Where the work contains material which is illegal, there is no room for negotiation. The offending material must be



removed if the work is to receive a certificate. When a work contains material which contravenes the Guidelines for a particular category, the distributor has the option to accept a higher category in order to accommodate the work in its entirety. However, where a distributor has a specific audience in mind, the company concerned will often accept cuts. This is particularly so for works in the '12A'/'12' category since, in many cases, it is the one that generates most income for the distributor. However, it is also the category that generates most difficulties, especially where theme and treatment may sit on the line between '12A' and '15' or where a certain category issue (sex, language, violence, etc) is considered inappropriate at '12A'.

The film ***Dev Shiva Bar Mohe*** was an example of a film cut for '12A' because one scene featured what was assumed to be cocaine snorting without any critical context. This was unacceptable under the '12A' Guidelines. The film ***Hukkle-Hiccup*** was

cut for legal reasons. It featured a shot of a cat seemingly writhing in pain after being poisoned, which contravened the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937. ***Killer Snake, Fox of Shaolin*** required the removal of a scene showing a snake

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**The genre of a film can also influence decisions, providing a context that can do much to dilute what, on the face of it, is strong, bloody violence**

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being cruelly pinned to a tree while a number of shots of dangerous horse-tripping were removed from ***Blade Heart, Fanfan La Tulipe*** and ***Keoma***. The sight of a dog being suspended from a tree by its neck was removed in ***The Passion Of Anna***. (Further details about animal cruelty cuts can be found under *Legal issues*.)

Cuts for bad language were made to a 'deleted scenes' bonus item in the DVD version of ***Win A Date With Tad Hamilton*** because the amount of strong language went beyond what is permitted at '12'. Finally, the video of ***Magic Kid 2*** had potentially dangerous, imitable combat techniques – a head butt and double ear clap – removed for the '12' category.



### 15 – suitable only for 15 years and over

A number of films classified '15' provided interesting issues for examiners to consider in 2004. Drugs remain a serious concern for parents and society in general, and the BBFC seeks to reflect those concerns. Two films submitted in 2004 were the subject of very careful consideration because of their portrayal of substance abuse. ***The Wet House*** was a powerful documentary dealing with the lives of alcohol and substance abusers in an East London hostel, the 'wet house' of the title. On first viewing the strong language and substance abuse suggested that the rating should be '18'. However, after further careful consideration, the Board decided that this work would be of value to mid-teenagers in terms of encouraging them to consider the detrimental effects of alcohol and substance misuse. Although the documentary was non-judgmental, the



unremitting grimness of such broken lives could not remotely serve to encourage others to participate in such a lifestyle.

***Bright Young Things***, adapted from Evelyn Waugh's satirical novel, *Vile Bodies*, depicted the decadent smart set of 1930s London. The film came in with a request for a '12A' rating, but the frequent verbal and visual allusions to cocaine



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**The Board is concerned about material which may spread knowledge of little known and highly effective forms of suicide, especially in works aimed at teenagers, and has taken advice from eminent specialists in the field of suicide prevention**

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throughout the film made the requested '12A' impossible in terms of Board policy and Guidelines. There was, however, sufficient distance between the events and characters of those times and a contemporary audience, along with a lack of instructive detail, to avoid limiting the film to adult audiences.

Violent movies with a vengeance theme were a feature of 2004. These included *Kill Bill – Vol. 2*, *Man On Fire* and *The Punisher*, all of which were passed at the '18' category. However, one such film that did not require confinement to the adult category was *Walking Tall* in which popular WWE wrestler, 'The Rock', took on the role of a former soldier who returns to clear the corruption out of his home town with lethal force. Compared with the films mentioned above, *Walking Tall* was more restrained in the depiction of bloody injuries. This type of violence is referred to as 'process' violence and can be one of the defining factors in deciding which side of the '15'/'18' boundary a

work rests. In the case of this film, the Board decided that the detail was sufficiently restrained to receive a '15' rating.

The genre of a film can also influence decisions, providing a context that can do much to dilute what, on the face of it, is strong, bloody violence. Such was the case with *Shaun Of The Dead*, a British comedy-horror film in which the citizens of London begin, unaccountably, to turn into zombies. The hero of the title, and a few friends who remain unaffected, find themselves battling the undead with a variety of weapons and implements. The visual detail of zombies and people being decapitated, shot in the head, bitten and, in one case, torn apart, complete with bloody special effects, would, in any other context, probably have resulted in an '18'. However, it was clear that the film was a pastiche, and the comedy did much to dilute the impact of the violence. It was therefore passed at '15'.









Mike Nichols' **Closer** used strong sexual references to portray love, obsession and betrayal. The Board considered whether the strong language and sex references should have placed the film at '18'. After careful consideration, the film was given a '15' rating with clear reference in the Consumer Advice to the strong sexual language. We took account of the film's origins in a stage play in which the highly charged language was a central feature.

Only two '15' cinema films were cut in 2004. **Les Diables** was cut under the terms of the Protection of Children Act 1978, and **House Of Flying Daggers** under the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937. Full details of these decisions are to be found in *Legal issues* later in the report.

Animal cruelty was the main reason for cuts to video works at '15' in 2004. The majority of the animal cruelty cuts centred on horse-tripping. In the absence of clear assurances that no animals were hurt, cuts were required to **The Eight Escorts, The Light At The Edge Of The World, Lawman, Yellow Hair And The Fortress Of Gold, Conan The Destroyer** and **Warriors Of Heaven And Earth**. A cut was also required to remove sight of a dog being dangled from a balcony in **Piedras**, and the sight of cockerels actively being made to fight each other in **Giri**.

On a different issue, several uses of the expletive 'cunt' were removed from **Danger! 50,000 Zombies** in order to obtain the '15' category.



### 18 – suitable only for adults

At the lower classification levels, concerns about the suitability of a particular scene or work can usually be dealt with through the award of a higher category, but at the adult level the only option may be to cut or even reject the work. Guidelines for the '18' category therefore reflect a desire to balance concerns about protecting the right to freedom of expression with the need to protect vulnerable individuals, and wider society, from the possibly harmful effects of some film and video material. This position corresponds with the legal framework within which we operate, taking into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Video Recordings Act 1984, the Obscene Publications Act 1959, and other legislation (see *Legal issues*). A number of pieces of research carried out by the Board suggest strong public support for a policy which allows adults to decide for themselves what to watch. We may make exceptions to that principle, but do so as rarely as possible.

Since its amendment in 1994, the Video Recordings Act has placed a duty on the Board to have 'special regard (among the other relevant factors) to any harm that may be caused to potential viewers or, through their behaviour, to society by the manner in which the [video] work deals with: criminal behaviour; illegal drugs; violent behaviour or incidents; horrific behaviour or incidents; or human sexual activity.' During 2004, the BBFC has continued to give 'special regard' to harm issues, using classification at '18' where appropriate and cutting or rejecting material where necessary.

The Board operates on the assumption that adults are far less likely to copy dangerous activity than children but recognises that the potential for harm through imitation does not necessarily completely disappear with age. BBFC Guidelines for '18' allow for intervention where there is any detailed portrayal of violent or dangerous acts which is likely to promote the activities, and during 2004 there were a number of video works containing scenes which fell into that category.

At the adult category the Board is less concerned about stunts which are clearly potentially harmful or difficult to replicate. But the concern remains where activities are less obviously dangerous or are presented in a manner which suggests they are easily imitated. It is heightened further when the activity appears to be fun. In such cases the BBFC may require the addition of warning captions or, in extreme cases, cuts.

Over the last couple of years the reality TV genre that gave rise to the popular, American MTV show *Jackass* has seen numerous spin-off shows, which have occasionally given the Board cause for concern. One of the most well known former

members of *Jackass*, Steve-O, continued with his own brand of humour, following *Steve-O Out On Bail* with *Steve-O The Early Years*. In addition to obviously dangerous activities, the video work contained stunts which were potentially fatal, but which were presented as fun, easily copied and without any apparent harmful consequences. Most notably Steve-O was choked in a headlock until he lost consciousness. The Board took the view that the potential for imitation with possibly fatal consequences was too great and cuts were required. Virtually identical cuts had been made to *Steve-O Out On Bail* in 2003. Also following in the footsteps of *Jackass* were the Welsh team behind the *Dirty Sanchez* series and *Pritchard Vs Dainton*. The latter had cuts to remove sight of glasses being broken over heads. This was not just because of concerns about imitation but also

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**scenes or narratives which offer sexual violence as a pornographic pleasure or which suggest that the victims enjoy or deserve the sexual assault are a particular concern, even at '18'**  
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because the film makers may have commissioned a real criminal offence in the UK in order to produce the sequence. The same activity was cut from the aptly titled *Moronic – 21st Century Idiots!*



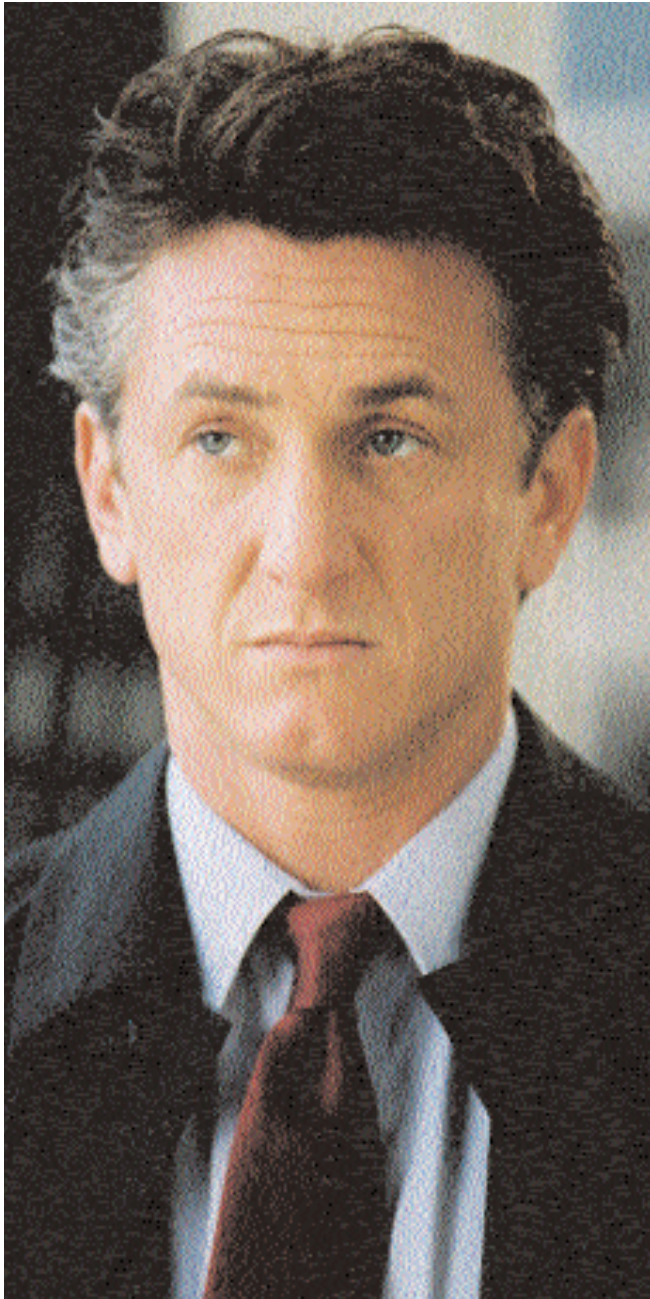
In a number of video works, including ***Crazy Chicks & Party Tricks*** and ***Stunts Gone Wild!! Preview***, the potential for harm through imitation was dealt with by requiring the addition of prominent warning captions as an alternative to cuts. Captions were required at the beginning of the tape, at intervals throughout the tape or over sequences of particular concern, such as dangerous play with fireworks.

The Board is also concerned about material which may spread knowledge of little known and highly effective suicide techniques, especially in works aimed at teenagers, and has taken advice from eminent specialists in the field of suicide prevention. The well known British artist Tracey Emin took very public issue with the Board's decision to classify her film ***Top Spot*** at '18', a category which denied access to the mid-teen audience for whom she argued it had particular relevance. The BBFC's view was that a particular image in a suicide scene, though not detailed enough to warrant cuts at '18', was sufficiently informative about a particularly dangerous means of attempting suicide to justify a classification which excluded non-adults from the audience. The Board listened to the counter arguments presented by the film's distributor but ultimately held firm to the original decision and made it clear that only removal of the particular brief image in question would allow the film to pass at a lower category. Ultimately, the distributor chose to accept an uncut '18' classification.

The BBFC Guideline relating to dangerous acts at '18' explicitly applies to illegal drug use as well. Promoting or encouraging the use of illegal drugs is unacceptable at any category, including '18'. On the other hand, the existence of illegal drug use in



the real world means that it is bound to feature in a wide range of film and video works, from serious documentaries to big budget feature films. The Board recognises that film makers may seek to make representations of illegal drug use credible but never loses sight of the fact that illegal drugs are a serious social concern, classifying upwards or cutting as appropriate. The BBFC is conscious of the vast amount of information about illegal drug use available to the general public (whether from drug education material, books, TV programmes or the internet) and keeps up to date with current trends in drug use and initiatives in combating it. The Board does not see any purpose, however, in censoring for adult audiences material which merely depicts widely known drug taking procedures provided that it is not promoting such activity.



*The Interpreter* - '12A'  
*Dead Man's Shoes* - '18'  
*Finding Neverland* - 'PG'



THE MEADOWS

# MAN'S AT SHOES





Current policy in this area reflects the most up to date expert advice and the current level of knowledge about drugs and has evolved from the position taken some years ago. The 1972 Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey work *Trash* featured a lengthy heroin injection scene which had been cut on both film and video in the past. The work was resubmitted on video during 2004 and passed without cuts as the Board took the view that the scene offered no new information to the likely audience and was in any case likely to be aversive to most viewers, not least as the drug use is shown to result in impotence. Similarly, a modern American film, *Wonderland*, set in the late 1980s and dramatising the decline of former porn star John Holmes into cocaine addiction and possible involvement in a brutal multiple murder, contained frequent scenes of hard drug use. Given the aversive depiction of the seedy milieu and its dependants, it was judged unlikely to promote or encourage drug use and was passed '18' uncut on both film and video. These decisions were very much in line with others over recent years, including the waiving of previous cuts to *Panic In Needle Park* in 2002 and *Bad Lieutenant* in 2003.

Sexual violence is usually handled responsibly by film makers and is generally dealt with through the classification system. However, scenes or narratives which offer sexual violence as a pornographic pleasure or which suggest that the victims enjoy or deserve the sexual assault are a particular concern, even at '18'. Much of the relevant research into the effects of depictions of sexual violence was undertaken in the USA in the 1980s by researchers such as Donnerstein, Linz, Malamuth, Check, Zillman, Bryant, Berkowitz and Burt. In general it tended to identify three

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**BBFC Guidelines at '18' indicate that cuts to non-sexual violence will be likely only when the depiction is both detailed and likely to promote the activity**

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possible harmful effects, particularly when the victim was shown 'enjoying' the sexual violence: the stimulation of aggressive thoughts and fantasies; the cultivation of anti-female attitudes; and more aggressive subsequent behaviour. Of course, like all 'media effects' research, these findings are hotly disputed. But, in the view of the Board, this is an area in which the evidence supporting the case for possible harm is unusually strong, and the BBFC continues to work on the precautionary assumption that particular violent scenes with the potential to trigger sexual arousal may encourage a harmful association between sexual violence and sexual gratification.

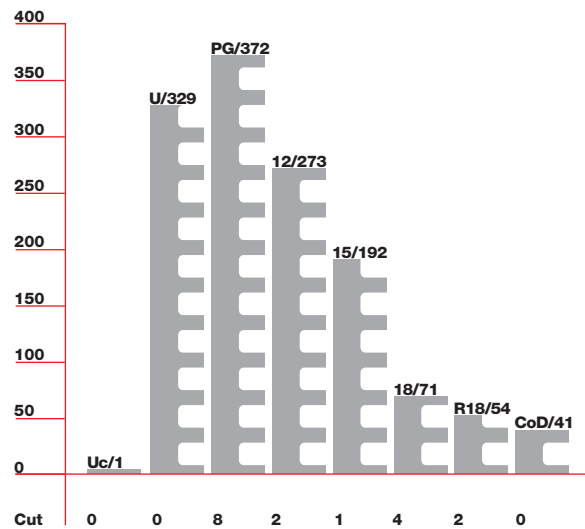
It is evident that this is a policy which commands the support of the public. The research *Where Do You Draw the Line?*, commissioned by the BBFC from Dr Guy Cumberbatch (and reported more fully in the BBFC Annual Report 2002), suggested that only 38 per cent of video renters thought adults had a right to see graphic portrayals of sexual violence. This compared with 67 per cent who thought adults had a right to see graphic portrayals of real sex, and 74 per cent who thought they had a right to see graphic portrayals of non-sexual violence. Crucially, the study also

suggested that acceptability of an individual scene of sexual violence was heavily dependant on the narrative and context of the work.

Not surprisingly, the Board considers each portrayal of sexual violence very carefully and decisions taken at '18' in 2004 reflect the BBFC's continuing concern. In 2004, the Board did not require any cuts to '18' classified cinema works on the grounds of sexual violence. However, the same cannot be said of video works. Indeed, the only two works rejected outright by the BBFC in 2004, ***Women In Cellblock 9*** and ***The Howling – Fake Porn Movie***, were refused classification at least partly because of their pornographic depictions of sexual violence. These two titles are discussed more fully under *Rejects* later in the report.



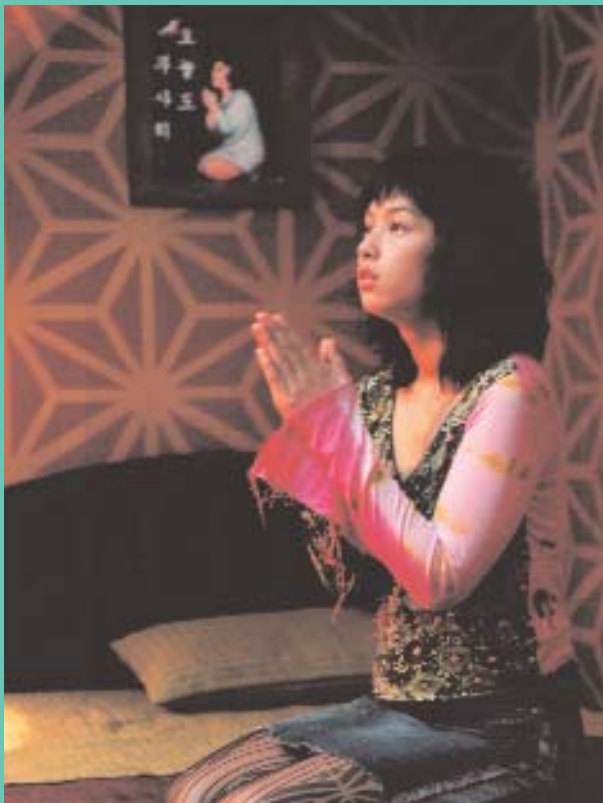
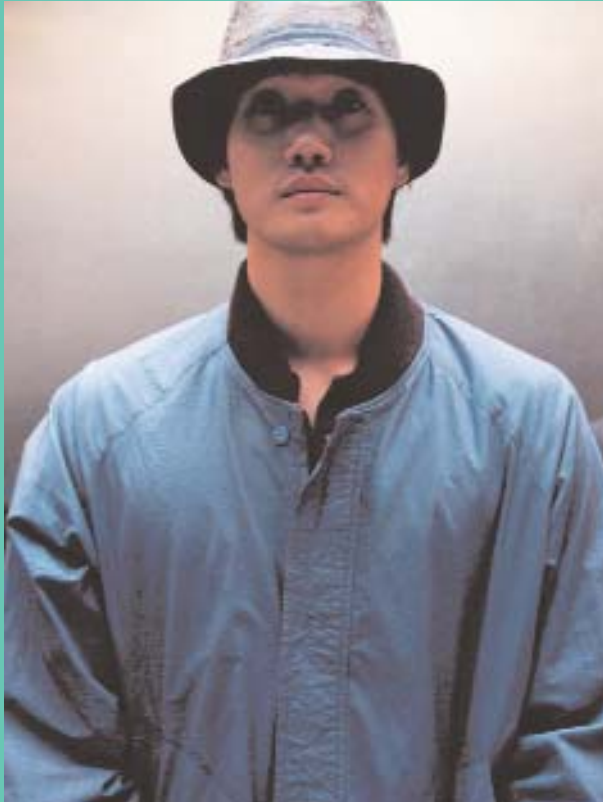
### Video trailers – 1333



***Women In Cellblock 9*** was made by the prolific Spanish director Jess Franco, several of whose works combine scenes showing women being subjected to various forms of abuse set within scenes of consensual sex. Although Franco's production values and plots can make his works appear somewhat dated, the Board still takes the issue of sexual violence seriously in such films. Three Jess Franco features from the 1970s, ***Sexy Sisters***, ***Ilsa The Wicked Warden*** and ***Love Camp***, were cut to remove rape, sexual assault and sexualised acts of violence.

The documentary/horror ***Faces Of Death III*** had cuts to remove images in a video used in a court case involving a sex crime, including forcible stripping, knife threat and preparation for rape. The pseudo-documentary context was not considered a mitigating factor.

Compared with older works, there were few contemporary features which required intervention on grounds of sexual violence. ***Nikos The Impaler*** had cuts to remove sadistic violence





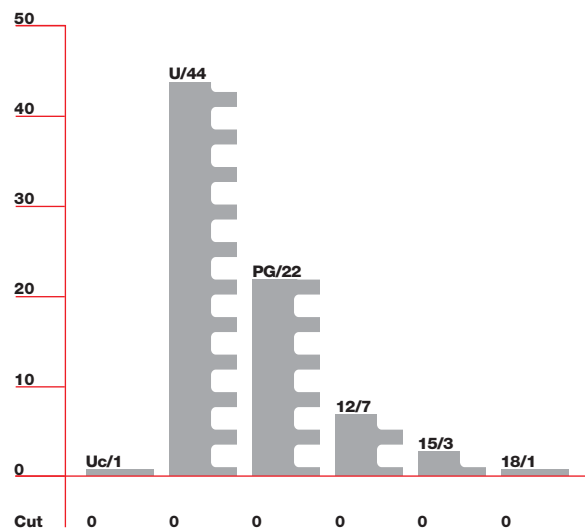
during an attack in a shower because of the significant sexualised focus on the nudity of the woman during the bloody attack. Sexualised violence was also cut from **Angel Blade**; in this case, a knife being drawn around a woman's nipple and the cutting of a woman's breast with blood appearing beneath the blade.

Added-value material on DVDs can pose a problem, not least because short sequences are sometimes presented without much context, a particular concern where sexual violence is involved. **Additional Erotic Scenes**, a DVD 'extra' for the 1973 feature **The Man With The Severed Head**, had two entire scenes (involving a woman being sexually assaulted) removed before the short work (shorter by one third after cuts) was passed at '18'.

Other old films, which had previously been cut on sexual violence grounds, were reconsidered during the year. In some, the passage of time had reduced the impact of the images to a significant degree, making the prospect of harm more remote. As a result, **Russ Meyer's Super Vixens**, the Charles Bronson vigilante feature **10 To Midnight**, and Michael Winner's Western **Chato's Land** all had previous sexual violence cuts waived, though the latter title was still subject to cuts for scenes of real animal cruelty (see *Legal issues*).

When portrayals of violence are not linked to sex, the 'media effects' evidence relating to harm is considerably less convincing and the BBFC's treatment of scenes of non-sexual violence at '18' reflects this. The Board is confident that this differentiation is warranted not just by the available evidence but is also supported by the general public, as outlined in two substantial pieces of

### Video advertisements – 78



BBFC research: *Sense and Sensibilities*, the research undertaken in 1999 to inform the drafting of the BBFC Guidelines published in 2000; and *Where Do You Draw the Line?*, mentioned earlier.

BBFC Guidelines at '18' indicate that cuts to non-sexual violence will be likely only when the depiction is both detailed and likely to promote the activity. In all but a few cases, restricting a work to the '18' category is judged to be a sufficient and proportionate response to the possibility of harm.

During 2004, a number of films and videos were restricted to adult audiences as a result of violent content. These included big budget US films such as Quentin Tarrantino's **Kill Bill, Vol. 2**, the comic book adaptation **The Punisher** and **Man On Fire**, in which Denzel Washington plays a former assassin turned bodyguard exacting violent revenge on those apparently responsible for the kidnap and murder of the girl he is guarding. These works were part of a cycle of new films and videos with vigilante and revenge themes during 2004. Works which present violent vigilante action

as heroic are by no means limited to the USA. The British film *Dead Man's Shoes*, in which a former soldier returns to his home town to exact revenge against a gang of drug dealers for their mistreatment of his mentally challenged brother, touched on similar themes and was rated '18'. However, the tone was more meditative, melancholy and reflective, focusing on the central character's psychology and motivation rather than revelling in the vengeful details.

The critically acclaimed South Korean film *Oldboy* also dealt with revenge, though in a more intelligent and imaginative manner than most. Nevertheless, a number of scenes of strong violence, including torture scenes in which teeth were removed with a hammer, ensured that it could not be passed below '18'. Some other films from Asia were restricted to adult audiences for their depictions of strong and 'heroic' vigilante or revenge violence, including the Tamil language features *Arasaktchi* and *Sulaan*. The only two Pakistani films that were submitted to the Board in 2004, *Badmash Gujjar* and *Puppo Lahoria*, also served up extreme doses of violence. Interestingly, these films were placed at '18' not just for the relatively strong violent detail, but also for the cumulative effect of the frequent violence.

2004 saw the virtual absence of politically sensitive and potentially inflammatory films about the disputes between India and Pakistan. Films full of violence coupled with racial and political aggravation were mainly replaced with stories of anti-extremism and cross-border love. However, racial and inter-community tensions are still a live issue in Britain, and the Hindi language film, *I – Proud To Be An Indian*, highlighted this in uncompromising fashion, with its depiction of a

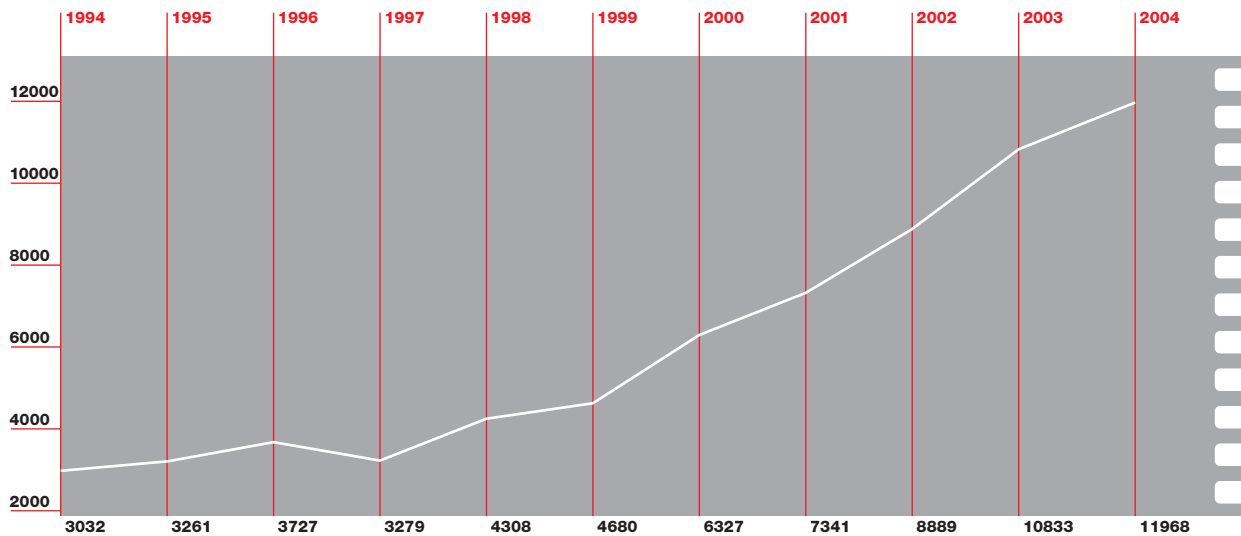
man from the Punjab routing racist skinheads in the East End of London. The racially aggravated and vigilante violence secured the film an '18' classification.

Early in 2004, the Board received a number of letters criticising the decision to pass *The Passion Of The Christ* at '18', mainly from people who had not seen the film, claiming that a lower category would be more appropriate. The Board, however, considered that the film contravened the Guidelines on both violence and horror, which do not allow '15' rated films to dwell on the infliction of pain and injury. Although the content was something of a known quantity, the context of the Passion itself was barely touched upon and the film instead focused on the agony of Christ with extended scenes of strong, detailed and bloody violence that could be potentially extremely distressing to fifteen year olds. (More recently, the Board has given a '15' to a new version of the work in which the strongest violent details have been replaced by less problematic material.)

The British film, *The Football Factory*, based on a series of popular 1990s novels, attracted some press comment for its depiction of the activities of a gang of London football hooligans and included strong violence. The film was not considered likely to promote imitation and was released in cinemas at the climax of the football season without incident.



### Video submissions 1994 - 2004



As in previous years, some older works (particularly from the late 1980s and early 1990s) which had previously been cut to remove scenes of violence at '18', were resubmitted to the Board. In many cases time had diminished their power and impact to the extent that they were no longer likely to prove harmful and so previous cuts were waived to video works such as *Invasion U.S.A.*, *Killpoint*, *Mob War* and *The Exterminator*.

The distinction between sexual and non-sexual violence is also reflected in decisions made by the Board in relation to works which fall under the broad banner of 'horror'. During 2004, a large number of old horror works were submitted for video classification under the current Guidelines. These had often been cut, usually many years ago. Scenes which had been cut on grounds of non-sexual violence and gore were often reinstated, allowing dated horror works such as *Leatherface – Texas Chainsaw Massacre III* (refused a

certificate in 1990) and *Sleepaway Camp 2: Unhappy Campers* to pass at '18' uncut. By contrast, old works containing scenes which eroticised or endorsed sexual violence had cuts re-imposed, including the 1973 film *Les Démoniaques – The Demoniacs*, and the 1974 film *Nude For Satan*.

The BBFC recognises that audiences pay to see horror films because they like being frightened and does not cut films simply because they alarm or shock. Instead, it classifies them to ensure that the young and vulnerable are protected. In practice, this means that horror works which have a strong sexual or sadistic dimension or which dwell on the infliction of pain or injury are likely to be classified '18'. In 2004, strong, gory horror films such as *Saw*, *Creep*, *The Last Horror Movie*, *The Manson Family* and the remake of *Dawn Of The Dead* continued the move away from toned down 'teen horror' noted in last year's report and



secured the highest category for their frequent and bloody excesses.

Portrayals of consensual sex have stimulated considerable debate in recent years. BBFC research (*Sense and Sensibilities* and *Where Do You Draw The Line?*) has demonstrated a generally relaxed view among the majority of the public, especially with regard to graphic and even explicit images in works restricted to adults. Previous decisions to allow scenes containing real sex in feature films, provided the images are justified by context, have not provoked substantial public criticism or alarm, though the '18' certificate awarded to Michael Winterbottom's *9 Songs* did attract media interest. The film (classified in 2004 but opening in 2005) used explicit images of

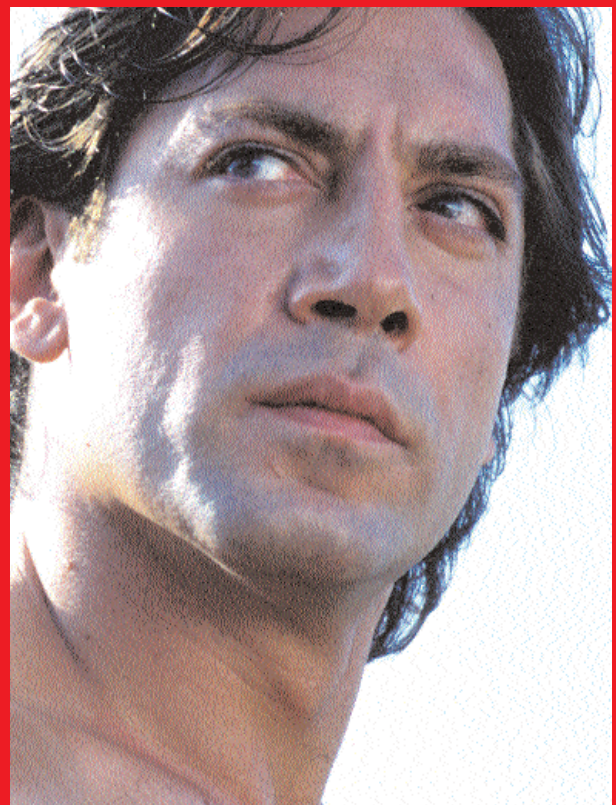
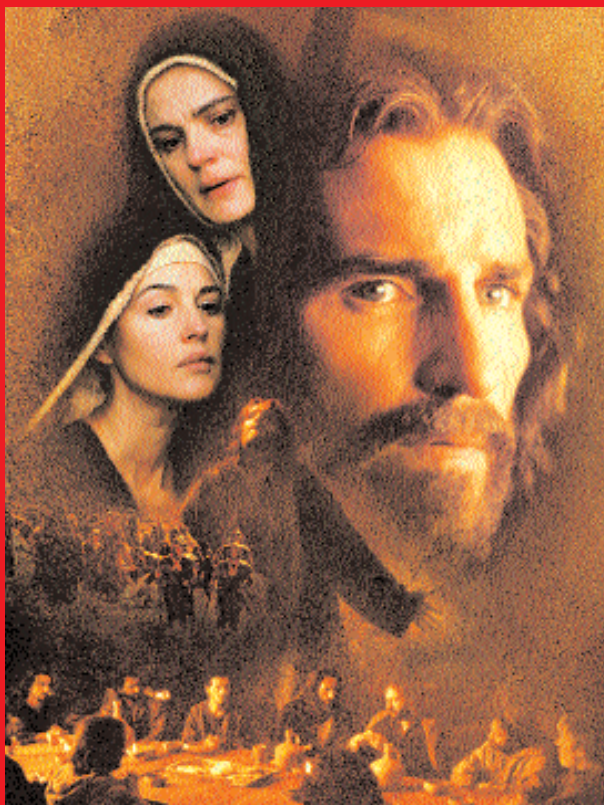
sexual activity as part of a story about a developing sexual relationship. The film as a whole was not thought to resemble the 'sex works' commonly given the 'R18' certificate (which restricts them to licensed sex shops). Furthermore, *9 Songs* did not contain any images which have not been passed at '18' before in serious works such as *Romance*, *The Idiots* and *In The Cut*. Another consideration was that the film raised no issues of sexual violence, abuse or harm.

The context in which explicit imagery occurs is a key factor in the BBFC's decisions. But every work is different and it is not possible to list the sort of situations which justify real sex at '18'. Images of real sex were cut from a collection of erotic short films, *Tinto Brass Presents – 4*, to obtain an '18', on the grounds that the work was too close in tone and intent to a sex work designed to produce sexual arousal. Similarly, explicit imagery was not deemed to have a sufficient narrative justification in the Jess Franco work *Barbed Wire Dolls*, which again blurred the line between erotic drama and sex work.

Even verbal references to sex can occasionally confound expectations and offend a significant number of people at anything other than the adult category. As a result, the British comedy *Sex Lives Of The Potato Men* and the stand-up comedy tape *Jimmy Carr Live* were both passed '18'. Representation of a sexual practice which could be harmful (erotic asphyxiation) was a concern which resulted in an '18' rating for the comedy *Soul Plane*.



**Ray - '15'**  
**The Life and Death of Peter Sellers - '15'**  
**The Passion Of The Christ - '18'**  
**Mar Adentro - The Sea Inside - 'PG'**





Although there are no constraints on nudity at '18', the BBFC will not classify material which is the result of the commission of a criminal offence in the UK. This policy takes into account the new offence of 'exposure' under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which came into force in 2004. The BBFC already had an established policy on public nudity in line with the broader common law misdemeanour of 'indecent exposure'. On these grounds, cuts were made to public nudity in episodes of **Dirty Sanchez** (a Welsh take on the popular US stunt show **Jackass**) and an associated programme, **Pritchard Vs Dainton**, which contained full frontal nudity as men ran along public streets.

The number of softcore 'sex works' submitted to the BBFC for an '18' certificate remained roughly at the 2003 level. Nearly a third of these softcore works were cut in order to obtain an '18' certificate, usually to remove sexual detail that would have required an 'R18'. The BBFC Guidelines for sex works at '18' only allow for apparently simulated sex. If a work contains any explicit detail or activity which is clearly unsimulated the distributor is offered the option of taking an 'R18' certificate without cuts, otherwise the explicit material must be cut to obtain an '18' certificate. In addition to apparently simulated sex, some mild fetish material was passed at '18', such as very mild role-play or focus on wet clothes.

The BBFC continues to pass occasional explicit imagery at '18' in 'sex education' videos. Such imagery is only passed if it is kept to the minimum necessary to illustrate the educational or instructional points being made, and if it occurs within a work which genuinely and manifestly seeks to inform and educate. In the case of

**Modern Loving**, although the work was believed to be a genuine attempt to educate, some scenes of explicit imagery were reduced because they went beyond the level of detail necessary to illustrate the point being made.

Some works are classified '18' purely on the basis of the very strong expletives they contain. Such language, if classified below '18' may confound public expectations and cause significant offence, particularly if used aggressively or without substantial contextual justification. This policy reflects what we believe to be the broad consensus of public opinion. As a result, in 2004, a number of works which would otherwise have been passed '15', were classified '18' because of multiple or aggressive uses of the word 'cunt'. Some episodes of the reality series **The Osbournes**, starring Ozzy Osbourne and his family, contained aggressive use of the expletive, and episodes of the US comedy series **Curb Your Enthusiasm** contained multiple uses in a relatively short running time.

This language policy does not meet with universal agreement. Some people argue that 15 year olds are so familiar with such language that barring them from films that contain these expressions is pointless and excessive. Others think that context should have a greater bearing on the decision and that the potential for offence should be balanced against any positive qualities the work might contain. This was an area explored in the review of our Guidelines during 2004.

Some films attract the adult classification because they contain a range of issues. The prolific Japanese director Takeshi Miike's **Visitor Q** took an over the top look at the breakdown of



behavioural codes in Japan and featured various outlandish and outrageous activities, touching on virtually every classification issue the Board might consider. Although this work clearly had the potential to offend, the blackly comic excess and satire meant that it was not judged likely to cause any harm at '18'. French cinema also lived up to its recent record of producing some works which sit at the very top of the adult category, with ***Haute Tension – Switchblade Romance***, which depicted the apparent murderous rampage of a



killer tracking two young women through the French countryside, and the psychological drama ***Dans Ma Peau – In My Skin***, in which a young woman is driven to extremes of gory self-mutilation in reaction to a seemingly minor accidental injury.



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**just over 20 per cent of videos were cut by the Board – a far larger percentage than for any other category**  
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**R18 – to be supplied only in licensed sex shops to adults of not less than 18 years**

The 'R18' category is a special and legally restricted classification primarily for explicit videos of consenting sex between adults. 'R18' videos may only be supplied to adults in licensed sex shops, to which persons under 18 are not admitted. They may not be supplied by mail order.

The number of works submitted to the Board for 'R18' classification appears to have levelled out. However, during 2004 slightly more of these videos were cut to obtain an 'R18' than in the last two years. In fact, just over 20 per cent of these videos were cut by the Board – a far larger percentage than for any other category. This reflects the Board's strict policies on material which is potentially illegal or harmful, including activity which is abusive, involves a lack of consent or the infliction of pain or harm, is potentially harmful if copied, or is humiliating, degrading or

dehumanising. Some allowance is made for clearly consenting role-playing games.

Some fetish works which do not contain any real explicit sex are nonetheless given an 'R18' certificate because they focus on activities such as urination or bondage, which would be considered unsuitable for sale alongside other '18' works. The Board continues to seek to avoid passing material which is in breach of the criminal law – for example, material likely to be prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act, on which the Board has taken advice from the Crown Prosecution Service. Such material includes sado-masochistic activity which goes beyond mild and consensual, and activities such as urolagnia (urination during sexual activity, drinking and smearing of urine). As a result, 'R18' videos are frequently subject to cuts on grounds of obscenity.

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**In 2004, two works were rejected**

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In 2004 the new Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force. The Act removes the remaining legal discrimination between homosexual and heterosexual group sex in private and clarifies or provides support for other BBFC policies such as those on depictions of incest, bestiality and necrophilia. In creating a new offence of 'voyeurism' it gives weight to the Board's concerns about secret filming and ambiguous consent in sex works. The new legislation also amends the definition of a 'child' in the Protection of Children Act 1978 to mean a person under the age of 18

(rather than 16). This means that it is now illegal to show indecent images of children under 18, which reinforces the Board's existing policy of not permitting anyone under the age of 18 to appear in sex works. The Board routinely asks for evidence of age at time of filming from distributors where participants in pornography appear to be possibly under 18.

The BBFC takes the issue of underage sex very seriously and, in addition to the above legal considerations, tries to assess whether material is likely to encourage an interest in abusive activity in the form of sex with minors. In 2004, the Board took expert advice on examples of various material in this area, including adults role-playing as schoolgirls and babies. This material can vary substantially in tone and implication, and the Board continues to take a cautious line, in consultation with experts in the field.

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**The Sexual Offences Act 2003 amended the definition of a child from any person under the age of 16 to any person under the age of 18**

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The research into the way people buy, view and use pornography, mentioned in last year's report, neared completion in 2004 and we expect the outcomes of the research to be available early in 2005.







### Rejects

Films or videos which contain unlawful or potentially harmful material will, where possible, be cut. If this is not possible, for instance if the cuts are so extensive that a viable release cannot be salvaged from the remaining material, or if the distributor refuses to make the required cuts, then a work may be refused a classification altogether. In 2004, two works were rejected.

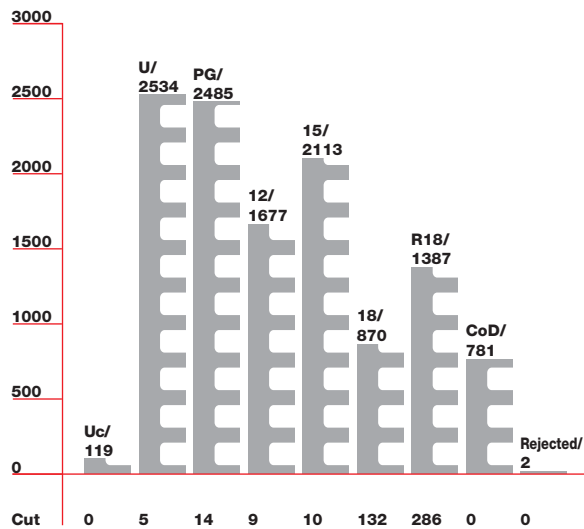
The 1977 Jess Franco film *Women In Cellblock 9*, submitted for video classification in 2004, is a 'sexploitation' film based in a torture camp where female prisoners experience violence, humiliation and sexual assault from their sadistic captors. It contains many sequences depicting the abuse, torture and humiliation of naked women. These sequences were found to be in conflict with the Board's published classification Guidelines, which prohibit scenes that eroticise or endorse sexual assault. The Board's strict stance on titillatory sexual violence is supported both by public opinion and by a large body of media effects research (see the section on sexual violence in the '18' category).

In addition, the Protection of Children Act 1978, as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, makes the distribution and showing of indecent photographs of a child under the age of 18 a criminal offence. One of the lead actresses in *Women In Cellblock 9* was just over 16 at the time the film was made. The Board was in no doubt that many of the sexualised scenes involving her would therefore now be illegal. Although the amendment was not due to take effect until May 2004, the video was rejected in February as the BBFC was not prepared to classify material which would be in breach of the law just a few months later. The Board considered the option of cutting the work. However, the quantity of scenes involving eroticised sexual violence, combined with the indecent photographs of a person under 18, meant that cuts were not a viable option.

The only other work rejected outright during 2004 was a short work, *The Howling – Fake Porn Movie*, intended to appear as bonus material on the DVD of the 1981 Joe Dante horror film *The Howling*. The bonus feature consisted of two silent sequences specially shot for *The Howling* showing women being sexually assaulted. Brief extracts from these sequences, avoiding the most explicit and graphic elements, were used in the original film during a scene set in a sex shop. Within *The Howling* itself, the clips served to illustrate the degenerate nature of one of the characters. However, when presented in

their entirety and divorced from their original context, both sequences merely presented sexual violence in a titillatory and pornographic fashion. The Board's classification Guidelines clearly set out our serious concerns about the portrayal of sexual violence in films and videos and highlight the

### Video total – 11968



unacceptability of portrayals which eroticise sexual assault. The bonus feature was therefore rejected.

### Legal issues

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into the law of England and Wales. The BBFC has to ensure that all its decisions are compatible with the Act, in particular the right to freedom of expression. However, the Board may intervene where something is 'prescribed by law' or where it is 'necessary in a democratic society', for the 'protection of health or morals' or the 'prevention of crime and disorder' (among other considerations). The Act also places the responsibility upon the BBFC for a 'proportionate' response to the breach caused by any given work.

The Board must also balance its responsibilities under the Human Rights Act with its obligations under both the Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA) and the Obscene Publications Act 1959 (OPA). The need to consider possible 'harm' to potential viewers, or to society through their behaviour, is paramount under the VRA. Special regard is given

to criminal behaviour, illegal drugs, violent behaviour, horrific behaviour or incidents and human sexual activity. The BBFC must seek to avoid classifying material which is itself in breach of the criminal law, including the OPA, and must therefore consider whether any work, taken as a whole, has a tendency to 'deprave or corrupt' a significant proportion of those likely to see it. In practice, the OPA has been applied predominantly to sex works submitted to the BBFC.

In addition to this overarching legislation, some very specific pieces of legislation continued to have a significant impact on the work of the BBFC during 2004. The Protection of Children Act 1978 makes it an offence to exploit children by making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of them and penalises the distribution, showing and advertisement of such indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs. A pseudo-photograph is an image, whether made by computer-graphics or otherwise, which appears to be a photograph. The Criminal Justice Act 1988 also outlawed the possession of such images. The Sexual Offences Act 2003, which came into force during 2004, amended the definition of a child from any person under the age of 16 to any person under the age of 18.

The BBFC has always looked very carefully at images of children in the films and videos submitted for classification, particularly where such images involve nudity or the suggestion of sexual behaviour, and has always insisted on cuts to any image of a child that would be likely to be regarded as indecent. However, this is often a very difficult decision not least because the legislation provides no statutory definition of 'indecent'.





***Cinq Fois Deux - Five Times Two - '15'***  
***The Magic Roundabout - 'U'***  
***Trash - '18'***







“

**During the year, 22 videos were cut on the grounds of animal cruelty, apparently organised or directed by the film maker**

”

Whenever there has been any doubt the BBFC has taken advice, from legal experts in the field or from the Paedophile Unit of the Metropolitan Police. Of course, even if an image of a child is not judged to be indecent in law, the harm provisions of the VRA may still justify BBFC intervention because of its potential for misuse.

***Les Diabes***, a critically well received French drama about a pair of juvenile runaways, was considered in relation to the terms of the Protection of Children Act. The film was a sensitive study of two children, one with learning disabilities, struggling on the margins of society. The film focused on their relationship, not just with the wider world, but also with each other. Several scenes suggested that the children were beginning to become sexually aware and sexually attracted to each other. The parts were played by a boy and a girl who were both under 16 at the time of filming and a few scenes involved a certain amount of nudity. The Board took legal advice about these scenes and also consulted a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist about the psychological impact that taking part in the scenes may have had on the young persons involved. As a consequence, most of the scenes were allowed to pass but a cut was required to a scene which

implied that the boy had become sexually aroused while splashing around in water with the girl. Although it was almost impossible to register at normal speed, on freeze frame it was possible to see that the boy's penis was apparently erect. In order to comply with the Protection of Children Act, the potentially indecent images showing his arousal were removed.

Two video submissions of old works highlighted the impact of the change in the definition of a child.

***Love Letters Of A Portuguese Nun*** featured sexualised nudity involving an actress who was under 18 at the time of filming, and ***Der Fan*** featured similarly problematic images involving a person under 18. The BBFC judged some of the images to be indecent and cuts were therefore made. During 2004, a resubmission forced us to consider whether a previously classified sex scene involving a young Christian Slater in ***The Name Of The Rose*** was indecent but we concluded, after careful consideration, that the scene was unlikely to be found indecent in law.

By contrast, the terms of the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937 have not changed in over 65 years. This legislation is concerned with the mistreatment of animals by film makers and prohibits the exhibition or supply of a film which contains any scene organised or directed in such a way as to involve the cruel infliction of pain or terror on any animal or the cruel goading of any animal to fury. When faced with an apparent scene of animal cruelty on film the Board seeks detailed information about how the impression of cruelty was achieved without any real cruelty taking place. In some cases the animal action will have been supervised by the American Humane Association or the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals. In others, the Board may seek the advice of a specialist veterinarian to assess the onscreen evidence. If the Board is satisfied that it is likely that cruelty took place and was orchestrated by the film maker, then cuts are made. Although the legislation applies to cinema films only, it is the policy of the BBFC to apply the Act to video submissions as well.

In 2004, one film trailer and two feature films were cut to remove scenes of real animal cruelty. The trailer for the Korean feature *The Isle* contained some of the images cut from the feature and discussed in last year's report. *Hukkle-Hiccup*, a Hungarian murder mystery, contained a scene in which a cat is poisoned and scrabbles around in apparent pain. The distributor was unable to provide a satisfactory explanation of how the scene was achieved and a cut was required. *House Of Flying Daggers*, Zhang Yimou's



“  
**games that contain strong violence and gore are rarely exempt from statutory classification and are usually rated ‘15’ or ‘18’**  
 ”

Chinese martial arts extravaganza, contained four horsefalls in a chase scene set in a forest. Three of the falls appeared to have been achieved using cruel techniques, including use of trip wires. The production company contended that precautions, such as the placing of mattresses on the forest floor hidden by leaves and sand, the dampness of the land surface and the use of horse trainers and soft ropes, removed any element of cruelty. The sequence was shown to an expert veterinarian, experienced in supervising filmed animal action, who considered and rejected the film maker's arguments. The three cruel and dangerous horsefalls were therefore removed.

There were some media reports about a scene in the Korean film *Oldboy* in which a man appears to eat a live octopus in a sushi bar. However, the Board considered that the scene – which actually cuts away at the crucial moment – represented a quick, clean kill.

During the year, 22 videos were cut on the grounds of animal cruelty, apparently organised or directed by the film maker. This figure is not significantly different from 2003. Many of the cuts were to works made some years ago or productions from countries where this issue is not covered by the same legislation. A large majority



of the cuts were made to images of dangerous horsefalls. Other forms of cruelty included: a snake being cruelly pinned to a tree; a dog being dangled from a balcony; cockfighting; a rabbit being bashed against a tree and left to struggle; a chicken's head being bitten off by a man; a monkey having a tube forced down its throat and having liquid syringed into its eyes; and camels being hit on their heads. Such instances remain very much the exception and most animal action is carried out with due care to the welfare of the animals involved.

#### Digital media

2004 saw an increase in the number of computer and console games submitted to the BBFC, although they remain a very small minority of the works seen by the Board. Of the 42 digital works received, 17 were rated '18', 18 were rated '15', three works were rated '12', three works were rated 'PG' and a simple chess game acquired the only 'U'. None of these works was subject to cuts.

Most games are exempt from BBFC classification under the Video Recordings Act 1984 and instead are subject to a voluntary, self-assessment rating system operated through the Pan-European Games Information organisation. However, those games that contain strong violence and gore are rarely exempt from statutory classification and are usually rated '15' or '18'. That does not mean, however, that only games featuring strong sex, bad language or violence are submitted to the Board. Some developers and distributors prefer the security offered by the BBFC category system because it tends to make a stronger impression on game buyers, especially parents who may not be particularly aware of what a game contains. It is not unusual, therefore, for us to receive games that only require a 'U' or 'PG' category.

None of the games received in 2004 was particularly noteworthy, though the louche character that is *Leisure Suit Larry*, an updated version of a game originally released in the 1980s, found himself being banned in Australia. In the UK this title received a '15' category and we are not aware of its having caused any outrage or objections here.

“

**we cannot stress too strongly our concerns about the potential of '15' or '18' rated games to disturb, worry or frighten those below this age bar**

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Though digital works constitute a tiny amount of the Board's work overall, we continue to monitor a medium that is now a major part of the entertainment industry. Technological improvements in both the processing power of games consoles and in the audio-visual quality of contemporary games mean that images are far-removed from the simplistic, two dimensional 'blocky' characters that were the hallmarks of early games. Characters look and act much more realistically, and, with many games offering the same quality of realism and action found in major feature films, it is clear that some of these works are no longer aimed at children. Additionally, players effectively become actors in their own pre-determined drama as they directly control a

character and navigate him through differing environments. The player-character usually has some particular goal to achieve, but is regularly confronted by obstacles involving puzzle solving and other problems, while having to overcome dangerous enemies determined to stop him from progressing. There is no doubting the excitement and pleasure offered by games which give one the ability to produce different outcomes, but the games targeted at mature users frequently contain strong themes and visual detail that are inappropriate for junior users.

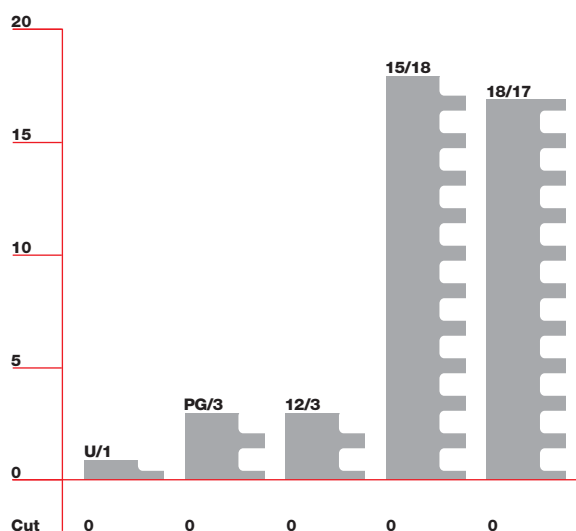
For the generation that grew up before the coming of computer games, console games are often viewed in the same way as board games – harmless fun. This is not always the case for those games that acquire a BBFC '15' or '18' classification. We do appreciate that parents or older siblings come under pressure to buy an age restricted work, but we cannot stress too strongly our concerns about the potential of '15' or '18' rated games to disturb, worry or frighten those below this age bar. In an effort to increase awareness of the content of these games, the computer games industry now includes BBFC Consumer Advice on games packaging and has agreed an increase in the size of the category symbol to emphasise the restriction we place on certain games.

Although we have no powers to require individual games to be referred to us, the BBFC does keep abreast of what is being rated under the voluntary system. In the UK, the Video Standards Council (VSC) ensures that retailers are fully aware of their legal responsibilities and obligation to ensure that age restricted works are not sold to underage customers. The VSC also acts as a filter for the games industry, making sure that any game

claiming exemption from statutory classification is in fact exempt. Given that games technology has changed considerably, in 2004 both the BBFC and the VSC sought independent legal advice to establish whether there was a wide variation in the way each interpreted the VRA. As a result, the VSC updated their exemption criteria. In January 2005, the BBFC and the VSC ran a seminar designed to ensure understanding of which games are exempt under the VRA and can therefore be rated under the PEGI system and which games must come to the BBFC.

For those non-exempt games which do come to the BBFC, we are confident that our regulatory scrutiny is among the most thorough and well-informed anywhere in the world. Although we aim wherever possible to resolve any problems with publishers before any question of cuts arises, it is also important to note that we do have powers of intervention (including as a last resort, rejection) which we are prepared to use if there is no satisfactory alternative.

**Digital media – 42**









## The Video Appeals Committee

**T**he Video Appeals Committee (VAC) is an independent body constituted under section 4(3) of the Video Recordings Act 1984 to hear appeals from submitting companies against any BBFC decisions they consider stricter than warranted. There were no appeals to the Video Appeals Committee during 2004.

At the end of 2004 the full membership of the VAC was as follows:

### President

John Wood CB, solicitor; consultant to Morgan Lewis, Solicitors; former Director of the Serious Fraud Office; former Director of Public Prosecutions in Hong Kong

### Members

Nina Bawden, CBE, MA, FRSL, JP, novelist; President, Society of Women Writers and Journalists

Biddy Baxter, MBE, DLitt, FRSA, FRTS, Governor of Trinity London and Advisory Board Member, Victim Support; Board of Directors, the Conservation Foundation; former editor Blue Peter, BBC Television and consultant to the Director General of the BBC; author and broadcaster

Barry Davies, former Deputy Director of Social Services and Chair of Area Child Protection Committee; consultant in child protection and investigator of complaints made by children under the Children Act 1989

Professor Philip Graham, Vice President, National Children's Bureau; Emeritus Professor of Child Psychiatry, Institute of Child Health, University of London

Pauline Gray, District Chairman of Appeals Tribunals; member of the Gender Recognition Panel

Professor John Last, CBE, DLitt, Chair in museum studies at City University, London with part-time teaching contract; Company Chairman and former lay member of the Press Council

Dr Sara Levene, MA, MRCP, FRCPCH, paediatric safety consultant; medical qualified panel member of the Appeals Service; former medical advisor to the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths and to the Child Accident Prevention Trust

Haydon Luke, former secondary headteacher and inspector; education consultant and trainer, working in the fields of secondary education and education in and through museums and galleries

Dr Neville March Hunnings, lawyer; former member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct; editor of the *Encyclopaedia of European Union Law*, author of *Film Censors and the Law*

Robert Moore, BSc (Econ), Dip.App.Soc.St., CQSW; independent consultant in social care; former Director of Social Services and one-time Children's Officer; Chairman of the Northern Ireland Children in Need Appeals Advisory Committee

The Hon. Mrs Sara Morrison, FIC, FCGI, FRSA,  
Chairman WWF; Chairman, University of Bath;  
retired full time director of large industrial plc;  
formerly many non-executive directorships  
including Channel Four TV

Claire Rayner, OBE, author; writer; broadcaster;  
President of the Patients Association; Vice  
President of the British Humanist Association

Peter Rees, Cert.Ed, Dip.Ed, Dip.Psych MA,  
MCMI, retired primary headteacher; independent  
education management consultant; associate  
lecturer at University College Winchester; Chair  
of Holloway School Governing Body; Councillor;  
director and relationship counsellor in  
private practice

Dr Mike Slade, consultant clinical psychologist;  
clinical senior lecturer at Institute of Psychiatry,  
London; Associate Fellow of the British  
Psychological Society

Dr Fay Weldon, CBE, MA, DLitt, FRSL; author;  
playwright; broadcaster





## Consultative Council

Set up as a result of the Video Recordings Act, the Consultative Council now advises the Board across a broad range of classification issues, and in 2004 provided valuable input to the review of the classification Guidelines. The Council includes representatives from the broadcasting, record, and leisure software industries as well as the video industry. In addition, representatives from local government, and persons of individual distinction and expertise bring their knowledge and experience to the thrice yearly meetings. Observers from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Metropolitan Police and Ofcom also attended the meetings and contributed to the discussions.

### Director's reports and discussions

At each meeting the BBFC's Director presented a report reviewing recent Board activity. Members were invited to comment on classification decisions and on related matters of Board business. In 2003, members had debated the Board's policy of not releasing differently classified versions of the same film and had concluded that, provided the packaging was clear, the Board's concerns about likely confusion for parents and retailers could be overcome. The Director was able to report to the February meeting that the restrictions had been lifted as of 1 January 2004.

As a result of an understanding between the BBFC and the Cinema Advertising Association (CAA), dating back at least to the 1990s, cinema advertisements were only classified either 'U' or '15' despite the fact that all other works, including video and DVD advertisements, are classified in the full range of categories from 'U' through to and including 'R18'. The advantage to the CAA is that

'U' rated advertisements can run with any feature film. However, following the publication of the Guidelines in 2000 the Board found the arrangement increasingly incompatible with regulatory transparency and consistency. The Board asked the CAA to end the agreement or to publish a statement making it clear that only 'U' and '15' advertisements would be submitted and the reasons for this. The CAA declined to provide the statement, and as of 1 June 2004, cinema advertisements have been classified using the full range of categories.

Following discussions with the British Video Association, the Irish Film Censor, the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) (for Trading Standards) and the DCMS, the BBFC accepted the simultaneous use of UK and Irish certificates on the external packaging of videos and DVDs where the categories were the same. Dual certification of this kind had been allowed on DVD discs since 1998.

The members heard that the Board was concerned about video games carrying voluntary 16+ and 18+ ratings and had taken legal advice concerning the circumstances under which a game may lose its exemption under the Video Recordings Act. In the early days of video games, the majority of games were clearly exempt because their graphics and quality of game play were relatively crude and unsophisticated. However, the significant increase in the complexity of games raised new issues that needed to be looked at again. The VSC, administrators of the industry scheme under which exempt games are issued with voluntary PEGI ratings, also sought fresh legal advice on their own guidelines as to the stage at which a game required BBFC classification.







### **Guidelines research**

Council members were kept closely informed about the methodology and progress of the Guidelines research process. As well as being able to contribute their own views on the Guidelines they discussed the findings as they became available. Members sought assurances about the demographic mix of the respondents and were reassured that the size of the sample and the way the research was being carried out would ensure a balanced result. Specific issues discussed included the portrayal of drug taking; racial and religious expletives; what made different types of violence more or less acceptable; and the need to improve understanding of the '12A' category and Consumer Advice.

### **Film screenings and discussions**

The practice of showing members a film before the meeting which had raised classification issues was continued in 2004. The films were **Thirteen**, **The Football Factory** and **Paparazzi**. **Thirteen** had been rated '18' in spite of a request from the distributors for a '15' rating. They had argued that the '18' rating would disenfranchise the film's natural audience. The views of Council members were mixed, with some thinking that the film should have been given a '15' but the majority were in favour of the '18' rating because of the lack of consequences. The distributors had been given the option to make cuts to the more problematic scenes to get a lower rating, but had preferred to accept the '18'.

**The Football Factory** dealt with the rivalry between gangs from two London football teams. The violence in the film resulted in the film being given an '18' rating. Under normal circumstances the classification would have been unproblematic,

but the release date had been fixed to coincide with the beginning of the Euro 2004 football Championships. Members agreed that without the issue of timing the film was acceptable at '18'. The representatives from the police on the Council said that the film was unlikely to promote violence, but that it did, to some extent, glamorise hooliganism and might have the effect of reinforcing the attitude of younger hooligans, so the '18' rating was appropriate.

The distributors of **Paparazzi** had requested a '12A' for the film, but the revenge theme and the levels of force used by the main character had resulted in a '15' rating. The message that taking the law into your own hands is acceptable was considered problematic at '12A', particularly as children younger than 12 could see the film. The Council was particularly concerned that the 'goodie' was enjoying using violence to wreak revenge on the paparazzi of the title. Not all Council members thought the violence strong enough to take the film into the '15' category, but those who did were in the majority.



### **Membership of the Consultative Council in 2004 was as follows:**

Kim Bayley, British Association of Record Dealers (BARD)

Roger Bennett, Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA)

Lavinia Carey, British Video Association (BVA)

June Dromgoole, Channel 4 Television

Laurie Hall, Video Standards Council

Cllr Jim Hunter, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

Steve Jenkins, BBC

Cllr Peter Kent, Local Government Association (LGA)

David Kerr, Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA)

Cllr Maurice T Mills, Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)

Cllr Goronwy O Parry MBE, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

David Simpson, Chair, Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing (ex officio)

Roland Stokes, Entertainment Software Retailers Association (ESRA)

### **Independent Members**

Dr Anthony Beech

Professor David Buckingham

Jean Coussins

Michael Marland

Professor Colin Munro

Colin Webb

Sally Whitaker

### **Observers**

Paul Alsey, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Inspector Chris Bedwell, Metropolitan Police

Moira Costello, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Alison Edwards, Policy Officer, Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

Gery McLaughlin, Scottish Executive

Fiona Lennox, Ofcom

Chief Superintendent Bill Tillbrook, Metropolitan Police



## Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing

**W**hen the BBFC set up the APCV in 1999 it was envisaged that members would serve on the Panel for five years. Since 1999, members have provided the Board with extremely valuable advice on a wide range of issues affecting the classification of films for the under 18s. The Board was concerned that were the whole Panel to be replaced we would lose valuable experience and expertise. With this in mind, the Board changed the terms of appointment to allow for new members to be appointed on a rolling basis. As a result five new members were appointed to the APCV following an open competition. The new members bring expertise ranging from children's television programming to child and adolescent psychiatry.

### Guidelines research

Like the Consultative Council, the APCV was kept closely informed about the methodology and progress of the Guidelines research process. As well as being able to contribute their own views on the Guidelines, they discussed the findings as they became available. Dr Robert Towler, former Head of Research at the Independent Television Commission, who oversaw the research exercise, attended the March meeting to explain the methodology used for the Guidelines research, as well as answering questions about media effects research with particular reference to violence. The Panel were able to comment in detail at the November meeting about the proposed wording for the new Guidelines.

Issues which provoked discussion included the '12A' category and the lack of understanding among some parental groups. The Panel, who

endorsed the concept of '12A', were keen that more information should be made available to parents to ensure that young children should not be taken to see inappropriate films because of parental misunderstanding of the meaning of the rating.

Panel members had expressed concerns in meetings held in 2003 that the Board's Guidelines contained no direct advice about racist or discriminatory content in films. Their concerns were mirrored in the public survey and, in particular, in the focus groups who looked at language when they raised the issue of racist, or racially abusive, language as a concern. The new Guidelines, published on 9 February 2005 refer specifically to 'the use of expletives with a religious or racial association and language which offends other, sometimes vulnerable, minorities'. The Panel also raised concerns about the incidence of self harm amongst young people which was also taken into account.

### Film screenings and discussions

The Panel continued to use the film viewing before the meeting as a basis for discussing the Board's classification policies as they relate to children. The issues considered in 2004 were bad language and violence in ***Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines***, the application of the Protection of Children Act with reference to ***Les Diables***, and language and sex references in ***Dodgeball – A True Underdog Story***.

The '12A' rating for ***Terminator 3*** had resulted in a number of complaints from the public about both the bad language (there were three uses of 'fuck') and the violence, in particular a scene where an android thrust its hand through a policeman's



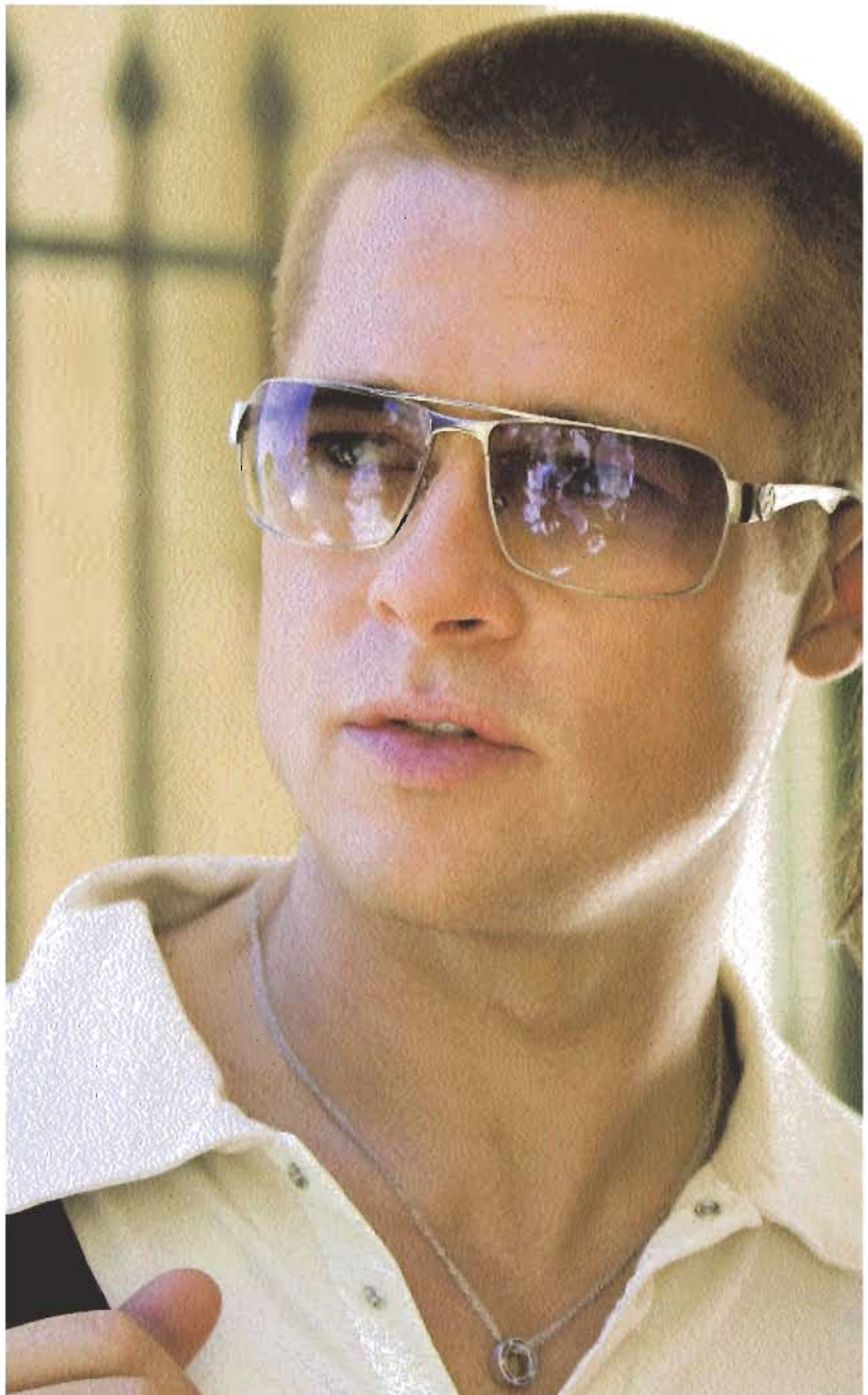
back. The Panel raised concerns about very young children seeing the film, as they would be upset by the violence and the tone of the film with its doomsday scenario. It was also felt that the strong language added to the strength of the violence and gave the film an adult feel. The Consumer Advice which accompanied the film was not felt to be clear enough to indicate the levels of violence and language, but taken all together the film was acceptable at '12A', albeit the high end of the category.

The concerns raised by *Les Diabes*, which was rated '15', were less about harm to the audience and more about the impact on the actors. The Board had cut the film under the Protection of Children Act (further details about this decision can be found under *Legal issues* in this report) following legal advice. The meeting was concerned about the exploitation of the young actors, and issues around informed consent. A clinical psychologist had viewed the film for the Board, and in her view the child actress was well able to understand what she was doing. As the film had been made in France it was not subject to British laws as regards the protection of the actors. There was also some concern about whether paedophiles could use the video or DVD for grooming purposes. The Director had listed a number of other films dealing with sex involving young actors, including well known films like *Pretty Baby* and *Taxi Driver*. The '15' rating was endorsed, with a proviso about concerns as to the welfare of the French actors.

*Dodgeball – A True Underdog Story* raised, in particular, the issue of sexual innuendo and language in a '12A' rated film. The Board had received a small number of complaints, including

one which warned about the normalisation of homosexuality because of a scene where two women kissed. The general consensus was that the film was morally laudable and positive, but the language and innuendo did shock some panel members. They did, however, acknowledge that the innuendo would be likely to go over the heads of a young audience. The question of possible problems from children imitating the training sequence, where the players dodged in and out of busy traffic, was also discussed. The Panel continued to be concerned that unless parents understood that not all '12A' films were suitable for young children and that the Consumer Advice was clear and easily accessible, people's expectations could be confounded. Again, the Panel agreed that the '12A' rating was appropriate, but that the film did fall at the top end of the category and was more suitable for young teenagers who would appreciate the risqué humour.





**APCV Members**

David Simpson  
Youth Court District Judge (Chair)

William Atkinson  
headteacher, Pheonix High School

Dr Jim Barrett  
Head of Research and Statistics,  
UK Film Council – from November 2004

Floella Benjamin OBE  
broadcaster; independent TV producer;  
writer – to July 2004

Professor Vincent Egan  
chartered clinical and forensic  
psychologist – from November 2004

Joe Godwin  
Vice-President, Operations and Interactive  
Director, Nickelodeon TV – from November 2004

Karen Johnson  
Commissioning Editor Children's Education (BBC)

Dr Sue Krasner  
chartered clinical psychologist

Winnie Lacey  
Practice Manager,  
Assessment Services – to July 2004

Frances Lennox  
Senior Crown Prosecutor

Dr Meira Likierman  
consultant child and adolescent  
psychotherapist – to July 2004

Alexander Paterson  
residential school principal – to July 2004

Elsbeth Rea OBE  
independent social work trainer – to July 2004

Naomi Rich  
Senior Commissioning Editor, (learn.co.uk)

Dr Denise Riordan  
consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist –  
from November 2004

Lewis Rudd MBE  
former Controller of Children's Programming  
(ITV) – to July 2004

Professor Jack Sanger  
Visiting Professor at University of East Anglia  
and Innsbruck University

Dr Bill Young  
consultant child and adolescent  
psychiatrist – from November 2004







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## Principal Officers of the BBFC

### **President**

Sir Quentin Thomas, CB

### **Vice Presidents**

Janet Lewis-Jones

Lord Taylor of Warwick

### **Council of Management**

#### **Chairman**

Ewart Needham

#### **Vice Chairman**

Graham Lee

#### **Hon Treasurer**

John Millard

### **Members**

Michael Cox

John Holton

Steve Jaggs

William McMahon

Sylvia Sheridan OBE

John Wilson

### **Director**

Robin Duval – January 1999 – September 2004

David Cooke – September 2004

### **Deputy Director**

Penny Averill

### **Head of Communications**

Sue Clark

### **Systems Co-ordinator**

David Harding

### **Head of Personnel**

Clive Hooper

### **Financial Controller**

Imtiaz Osman

# Report of the Council for the year ended 31st December 2004

## Principal activities

The company, which is limited by guarantee, is responsible for the classification of cinema films and, in accordance with the terms of the Video Recordings Act 1984, for the classification of video works. Its revenue is derived principally from fees charged to distributors for the classification of their product.

## Business review

Submissions increased by 18 per cent in 2004 resulting in an increase of 2 per cent in the Board's income (after reducing fees by 11 per cent in April 2004) compared with the previous year. The Board continually reviews its operational procedures with the aim of providing the best and most cost effective services to its clients. During 2004 the gains from these reviews have resulted in a reduction in expenditure.

In 2005, the Board will continue to move towards a fully digital operation including the acceptance of content for classification on DVD format and the creation of a digitised archive. This should result in a more efficient service for our clients and a possible reduction in income. The Board has also reached the point where some increases in staff and extra accommodation are unavoidable in order to deal effectively with throughput, which has been predicted by the Industry to increase again for the sixth year running. These changes will increase the Board's costs.

## Directors

The Directors of the company are the Members of the Council of Management together with the President.

The Secretary to the Council, Mr. D.A.L. Cooke, was appointed to the Board on 14th October 2004 and he is eligible to be re-appointed at the AGM.

The remaining Directors were all appointed for five year terms expiring in 2009 at the last AGM.

## Directors' responsibilities

Company law requires the Directors to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing those accounts, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and which enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



## Report of the Council for the year ended 31st December 2004 (continued)

### Corporate Governance

The Directors continue to give careful consideration to, and have adopted the main principles of, corporate governance as set out in the Code of Best Practice of the Committee of the Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance (the Cadbury Report). However it is the opinion of the Directors that not all the provisions of the Cadbury Report are appropriate for a company of the size and structure of the British Board of Film Classification.

### Environment, Health and Safety

The company is firmly committed to managing its activities so as to provide the highest level of protection to the environment and to safeguard the health and safety of its employees, customers and the community.

The company's Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) policies provide the guiding principles that ensure high standards are achieved and afford a means of promoting continuous improvement based on careful risk assessment and comprehensive EHS management systems. These policies are reviewed at regular intervals. This work has given greater emphasis to formal management systems, which bring a systematic improvement in performance.

Over the past years the company has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve environmental and health and safety performance. This has included considerable investment in the improvement of the office premises to reduce safety risks, improvements to planning of site health and safety actions.

### Transfers to reserves

The retained profit for the year of £985,589 has been transferred to reserves.

### Fixed assets

Information relating to changes in the tangible fixed assets is given in note 8 to the accounts.

### Donations

During the year the company made charitable donations totalling £100,200.

### Auditors

A resolution will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting that Wilkins Kennedy be appointed as auditors to the company for the ensuing year.

### By Order of the Board

D.A.L. Cooke  
Secretary

3 Soho Square, London, W1D 3HD.

# Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of British Board of Film Classification

We have audited the accounts of British Board of Film Classification for the year ended 31st December 2004 which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the Related Notes numbered 1 to 17. These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out therein.

## **Respective responsibilities of the directors and auditors**

The directors' responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards are set out in the statement of directors' responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the accounts in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and United Kingdom Auditing Standards.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the accounts give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Directors' Report is not consistent with the accounts, if the company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and transactions with the company is not disclosed.

We read the Directors' Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

## **Basis of opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the accounts. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the accounts, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the accounts.

## **Opinion**

In our opinion the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31st December 2004 and of its profit for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

Wilkins Kennedy  
Chartered Accountants  
and Registered Auditor,  
Bridge House,  
London Bridge  
London, SE1 9QR.

## Profit and loss account for the year ended 31st December 2004

	Note	2004	2003
<b>Turnover</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>6,323,169</b>	6,204,967
Operating costs		<b>(4,884,017)</b>	(5,073,233)
<b>Operating profit</b>		<b>1,439,152</b>	1,131,734
Interest receivable and similar income	<b>(3)</b>	<b>111,347</b>	103,875
Interest payable and similar charges	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(162,555)</b>	(110,391)
Profit/ (loss) on current asset investments:			
- realised		<b>(103,540)</b>	(75,816)
- reversal of provision for unrealised losses		<b>132,786</b>	185,035
<b>Profit before exceptional items</b>		<b>1,417,190</b>	1,234,437
<b>Exceptional items:</b>	<b>(13)</b>		
Provisions no longer required		-	678,500
Unamortised deferred expenditure written off		-	(260,570)
<b>Profit on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>1,417,190</b>	1,652,367
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(431,601)</b>	(419,776)
<b>Retained profit for year</b>		<b>985,589</b>	1,232,591
Retained profit at beginning of year		<b>4,610,503</b>	3,377,912
<b>Retained profit at end of year</b>		<b>£5,596,092</b>	£4,610,503

### Continuing operations

None of the company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above two financial years.

### Total recognised gains and losses

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the profit or loss for the above two financial years.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this profit and loss account.



## Balance sheet 31st December 2004

	Note	2004	2003
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	(8)	<u>5,318,559</u>	<u>5,413,854</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Deferred tax asset		85,555	110,880
Debtors	(9)	437,209	390,079
Investments	(10)	1,551,802	1,470,936
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>2,533,051</u>	<u>1,464,478</u>
		<b>4,607,617</b>	3,436,373
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	(11)	<u>(1,629,752)</u>	<u>(1,392,953)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>2,977,865</u>	<u>2,043,420</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<b>8,296,424</b>	7,457,274
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due after more than one year	(12)	<u>(2,677,081)</u>	<u>(2,823,520)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u><b>£5,619,343</b></u>	<u>£4,633,754</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Capital reserve	(14)	23,251	23,251
Profit and loss account		<u>5,596,092</u>	<u>4,610,503</u>
<b>Accumulated funds</b>	(15)	<u><b>£5,619,343</b></u>	<u>£4,633,754</u>

Approved by the Board of Directors 10 March 2005.

**E. J. Needham - Chairman**

**J. R. Millard - Treasurer**

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this balance sheet.

## Cash flow statement for the year ended 31st December 2004

### Reconciliation of operating profit

to net cash flow from operating activities	Note	2004	2003
Operating profit		1,439,152	1,131,734
Depreciation charges		189,092	443,471
Loss on sale of tangible assets		-	(808)
(Decrease)/increase in debtors		(43,023)	43,136
Increase in creditors		50,437	268,767
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		<b>£1,635,658</b>	<b>£1,886,300</b>

### Cash flow statement

		2004	2003
Net cash inflow from operating activities		1,635,658	1,886,300
Return on investments and servicing of finance	(16a)	(55,315)	(6,360)
Taxation		(229,344)	(665,259)
Capital expenditure	(16b)	(93,797)	(5,650,760)
		1,257,202	(4,436,079)
Management of liquid resources	(16c)	(51,620)	(56,635)
<b>Increase/(decrease) in cash</b>		<b>£1,205,582</b>	<b>£4,492,714</b>

### Reconciliation of net cash flow

to movement in liquid funds	(16d)	2004	2003
(Increase)/decrease in cash in the year		1,205,582	(4,492,714)
Increase in current asset investments		80,866	165,853
Change in net liquid funds		1,286,448	(4,326,861)
Net liquid funds at beginning of year		(25,114)	4,301,747
<b>Net liquid funds at end of year</b>		<b>£1,261,334</b>	<b>£(25,114)</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this cash flow statement.

# Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2004

## 1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies, which have been consistently applied are:

### a Basis of accounting

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

### b Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at original cost. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write-off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset on a straight line basis over its estimated useful life as follows:

Movable furniture and equipment	25 per cent per annum
Computer equipment	33.33 per cent per annum

Long leasehold property is amortised on a straight line basis over the duration of the lease.

Expenditure on leasehold property and immovable furniture and equipment is written off as incurred.

### c Current asset investments

Current asset investments are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

### d Taxation

The charge for taxation is based on the profit for the year and takes into account taxation deferred because of timing differences between the treatment of certain items for accounting and taxation purposes.

Provision is made at current rates for tax deferred in respect of all material timing differences.

Deferred tax assets are only recognised to the extent that they are regarded as recoverable.

The company has not adopted a policy of discounting deferred tax assets and liabilities.

### e Turnover

Turnover comprises the value of sales (excluding VAT) of services supplied in the normal course of business.

### f Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases are recognised in the profit and loss account as incurred.

### g Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme to provide retirement benefits for its staff. The amount charged to profit and loss account in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable and provided in the year.



## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

### 2. Turnover

The turnover and operating profit are attributable to the principal activity of the company.

### 3. Interest receivable and similar income

	2004	2003
Bank deposit interest	75,208	65,208
Income from current asset investments	<u>36,139</u>	<u>38,667</u>
	<u><u>£111,347</u></u>	<u><u>£103,875</u></u>

### 4. Interest payable and similar charges

	2004	2003
Loan interest	<u>162,555</u>	<u>110,391</u>

### 5. Employees

	2004	2003
Average monthly number of people employed by the company during the year:		
Presidential Team	3	3
Management	6	6
Administration	13	13
Examination	33	26
Technical	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>
	<u><u>73</u></u>	<u><u>64</u></u>

#### Costs in respect of these employees:

Salaries	2,980,291	2,593,519
Social security costs	326,554	278,610
Pensions	126,042	110,745
Life assurances	<u>6,833</u>	<u>5,718</u>
	<u><u>£3,439,720</u></u>	<u><u>£2,988,592</u></u>

#### Directors' remuneration

The remuneration of the directors during the year was:

Emoluments	226,557	176,796
Pension contributions	<u>22,162</u>	<u>15,731</u>
	<u><u>£248,719</u></u>	<u><u>£192,527</u></u>

#### Highest paid director

The above amount for remuneration includes the following in respect of the highest paid director

	<u><u>£107,276</u></u>	<u><u>£112,607</u></u>
--	------------------------	------------------------

## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

<b>6. Profit on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation is arrived at, after charging:		
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Directors' remuneration (including benefits)	<b>248,719</b>	188,562
Depreciation and amounts written off fixed assets	<b>189,092</b>	443,471
Auditors' remuneration	<b>21,000</b>	21,000
Rental of equipment	<b>8,687</b>	8,486
Rental of premises	<b>-</b>	160,942
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>7. Tax on profit on ordinary activities</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Reconciliation of tax charge to profit:</b>		
Profit on ordinary activities multiplied by standard rate of corporation tax in the UK of 30 per cent (2003 - 30 per cent)	<b>(425,157)</b>	(495,710)
<b>Effects of:</b>		
Expenses not deductible for tax purposes	<b>(4,120)</b>	(3,599)
Investment gains not taxable	<b>8,773</b>	32,766
Depreciation in excess of capital allowances	<b>-</b>	(43,473)
Capital allowances in excess of depreciation	<b>2,149</b>	-
Reversal of property deferred expenditure - not taxable	<b>-</b>	50,914
Franked investment income not taxable	<b>9,198</b>	8,075
Other items tax deductible	<b>-</b>	242
Marginal relief	<b>2,881</b>	857
Overprovision of tax	<b>-</b>	(72)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>(406,276)</b>	(450,000)
Deferred tax asset arising from the interaction of depreciation and capital allowances	<b>(25,325)</b>	30,224
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Tax on profit on ordinary activities</b>	<b>£(431,601)</b>	£(419,776)
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

### 8. Tangible fixed assets

	Long leasehold property	Long leasehold property expenditure	Furniture and equipment	Total
<b>Cost</b>				
At beginning of year	5,180,700	29,383	2,057,126	7,267,209
Additions	-	-	93,797	93,797
Disposals	-	-	(3,170)	(3,170)
	<u>5,180,700</u>	<u>29,383</u>	<u>2,147,753</u>	<u>7,357,836</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At beginning of year	27,630	29,383	1,796,342	1,853,355
Charge for the year	41,446	-	147,646	189,092
Disposals	-	-	(3,170)	(3,170)
	<u>69,076</u>	<u>29,383</u>	<u>1,940,818</u>	<u>2,039,277</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At end of year	<u><b>£5,111,624</b></u>	<u><b>£-</b></u>	<u><b>£206,935</b></u>	<u><b>£5,318,559</b></u>
At beginning of year	<u>£5,153,070</u>	<u>£-</u>	<u>£260,784</u>	<u>£5,413,854</u>

### 9. Debtors

	2004	2003
Trade debtors	<b>292,479</b>	272,547
Others	<b>25,464</b>	27,364
Prepayments and accrued income	<u><b>119,266</b></u>	<u>90,168</u>
	<u><b>£437,209</b></u>	<u>£390,079</u>



## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

<b>10. Current asset investments – listed</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Cost</b>		
At beginning of year	<b>1,685,556</b>	1,704,737
Additions	<b>462,777</b>	404,968
Disposals	<b>(514,697)</b>	(424,149)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of year	<b>1,633,636</b>	1,685,556
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Provision for unrealised loss</b>		
At beginning of year	<b>(214,620)</b>	(399,655)
Decrease in provision	<b>132,786</b>	185,035
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of year	<b>(81,834)</b>	(214,620)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cost less diminution provision at end of year</b>	<b>£1,551,802</b>	£1,470,936
	<hr/>	<hr/>
UK Government securities	<b>49,051</b>	204,002
Other UK investments	<b>1,502,751</b>	1,266,934
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>£1,551,802</b>	£1,470,936
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Market value of listed investments at end of year</b>	<b>£1,737,618</b>	£1,563,744
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Bank loan (secured - see note 12)	<b>146,438</b>	137,008
Trade creditors	<b>299,347</b>	289,485
Corporation tax	<b>404,880</b>	227,948
VAT	<b>144,753</b>	81,134
Other taxation and social security costs	<b>236,444</b>	223,273
Other creditors	<b>264,975</b>	254,310
Accruals and deferred income	<b>132,915</b>	179,795
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>£1,629,752</b>	£1,392,953
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

<b>12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Bank loan (secured)	<u><b>£2,677,081</b></u>	<u>£2,823,520</u>
Due within 1-2 years	<b>154,602</b>	146,438
Due within 2-5 years	<b>518,276</b>	490,455
Due after more than 5 years	<u><b>2,004,203</b></u>	<u>2,186,627</u>
	<u><b>£2,677,081</b></u>	<u>£2,823,520</u>

The company's bank loan is secured by a fixed legal mortgage over the long leasehold property. The company's bank loan bears a fixed rate of interest of 5.64 per cent and is repayable in quarterly instalments. The final instalment is due for payment on 6th May 2018.

### 13. Exceptional items

During 2003 the company purchased a long leasehold interest in its premises. As a result of this, the previous lease fell away and provisions made in the accounts relating to obligations under that lease were no longer required. This gave rise to the following movements in the leasehold property dilapidations provisions:

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Provision at beginning of year	-	678,500
Provision no longer required:		
-Amortisation	-	(219,430)
-Financing element	-	(198,500)
-Deferred expenditure	-	(260,570)
	<u>£-</u>	<u>£-</u>
Provision at end of year	<u>£-</u>	<u>£-</u>

In addition, the unamortised deferred expenditure of £260,570 has been written off in 2003.

<b>14. Capital reserve</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
At beginning and end of year	<u><b>£23,251</b></u>	<u>£23,251</u>

The capital reserve represents surpluses realised on sales of fixed assets prior to 1984.

## Notes to the accounts (continued) for the year ended 31st December 2004

<b>15. Reconciliation of movements on accumulated funds</b>		<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	
Profit for the financial year after taxation		<b>985,589</b>	1,232,591	
Accumulated funds at beginning of year		<b>4,633,754</b>	3,401,163	
<b>Accumulated funds at end of year</b>		<b><u>£5,619,343</u></b>	<u>£4,633,754</u>	
<b>16. Cash flow statement</b>		<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	
<b>a Return on investments and servicing of finance</b>				
Interest received		<b>71,101</b>	65,364	
Income from current asset investments		<b>36,139</b>	38,667	
Interest paid		<b>(162,555)</b>	(110,391)	
		<b><u>£(55,315)</u></b>	<u>£(6,360)</u>	
<b>b Capital expenditure</b>				
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		<b>(93,797)</b>	(5,652,258)	
Receipts from sale of tangible fixed assets		-	1,498	
		<b><u>£(93,797)</u></b>	<u>£(5,650,760)</u>	
<b>c Management of liquid resources</b>				
Purchase of current asset investments		<b>(462,777)</b>	(404,968)	
Sale proceeds of current asset investments		<b>411,157</b>	348,333	
		<b><u>£(51,620)</u></b>	<u>£(56,635)</u>	
<b>d Analysis of change in net funds</b>	<b>At beginning of year</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>Other non-cash changes</b>	<b>At end of year</b>
Cash at bank and in hand	<b>1,464,478</b>	<b>1,068,573</b>	-	<b>2,533,051</b>
Bank loan repayable within one year	<b>(137,008)</b>	<b>(9,430)</b>	-	<b>(146,438)</b>
Bank loan repayable after more than one year	<b>(2,823,520)</b>	<b>146,439</b>	-	<b>(2,677,081)</b>
Current asset investments	<b>1,407,936</b>	<b>51,620</b>	<b>29,246</b>	<b>1,551,802</b>
	<b><u>£(25,114)</u></b>	<b><u>£1,257,202</u></b>	<b><u>£29,246</u></b>	<b><u>£1,261,334</u></b>

### 17. Guarantees and other financial commitments

#### Pension arrangements

i The company operates a defined contribution scheme to provide retirement benefits for staff.

ii The total pension charge for the year was £126,042 (2003 - £110,745)



## The Role of the BBFC

The BBFC classifies films, videos and digital media. It does this on behalf of the Local Authorities, who are responsible for cinema licensing and classification, and as the designated authority under the Video Recordings Act.

The BBFC is funded solely from the fees charged for its services.

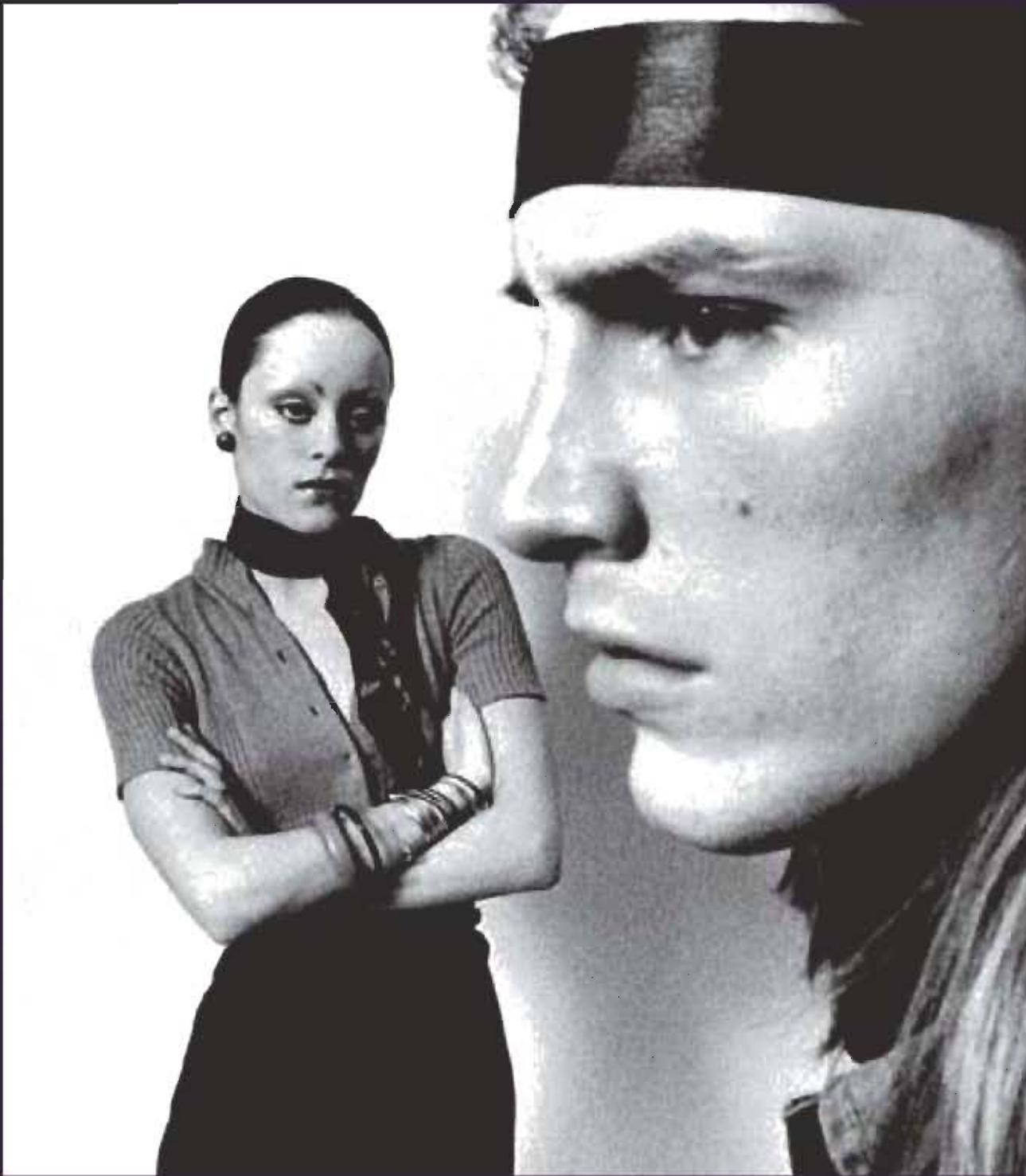
### Statement of Purpose

1. To provide the public with the means to make informed decisions about the films, videos or digital media which they, or those in their care, may wish to view or play.
2. To classify works into appropriate categories with regard to relevant legislation and in accordance with the Board's published Classification Guidelines. In doing so, to preserve a proper balance between social responsibility and freedom of expression.
3. To provide a reliable and efficient service to the Board's client industries.
4. To operate at all times in an independent, fair, consistent and transparent manner.
5. To be accessible and responsive to the public and its representatives.
6. To ensure a sound financial base for the Board's work and to preserve its independence and integrity.

### Aims

The BBFC, additionally, has the following aims:

- i To ensure that the Classification Guidelines are in line with current legal requirements and contemporary public opinion. To that end, to engage in regular and wide ranging consultation with the public and its representatives, with expert and specialist advisers and with the relevant entertainment industries.
- ii To seek at all times, in the implementation of the Guidelines, to ensure that the younger and more vulnerable members of society are protected from harm.
- iii To monitor closely research into the effects of the media and changes in public opinion; and to participate in relevant research projects.
- iv To promote clear, effective and efficient working practices, lines of communication and accountability, in all aspects of the Board's work.
- v To treat all submitting clients fairly and impartially and to promote openness by providing information and advice about Board policy and procedures.
- vi To continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the Board's performance at all levels through ongoing internal review and early response to developments in the industry and in technology.
- vii To ensure that the Board is responsive to new requirements for classification services.
- viii To achieve a high level of courtesy in all forms of communication.
- ix To keep under review appropriate means of informing audiences about film, video or digital media content and to promote their use.
- x To explain the Board's function and activities to the public clearly and fully.
- xi Through the application of equal opportunities and fair employment policies and practices, to develop the Board's staff to their full potential to enable them to secure the aims set out here.



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