

## **BBFC Board of Classification Meeting**

**Thursday 12 March 2020**

### **Present:**

Patrick Swaffer	President
Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Murray Perkins	Policy Director
Craig Lapper	Head of Compliance
Matt Tindall (minutes)	Policy Officer

### **Apologies**

Dave Barrett	Deputy Chief Executive
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### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

### **Matters arising**

2. There were no matters arising.

### **Domestic Abuse Research**

3. Mr Lapper presented the findings from the BBFC's research into depictions of domestic abuse in film and video material. This project was initiated after the Board considered a range of clips featuring domestic abuse at the meeting held 26 February 2019. Its aim was to establish how members of the public wish the BBFC to classify such depictions, and how the issue should be described in our ratings info.
4. The research was supported by Women's Aid and Respect, who helped recruit participants for the focus groups. The groups comprised both female and male survivors of domestic abuse, experts working in the field, and the general viewing public. Focus groups took place in London and Manchester.
5. Participants were asked to view a range of content depicting domestic abuse, including the feature films *Custody* and *I, Tonya*, the documentary *Minding The Gap*, the television drama *Murdered By My Boyfriend* and an episode of *Call The Midwife*. At the focus group

sessions, they also viewed a pair of public information films by Women's Aid and a selection of relevant clips.

6. Participants agreed that the BBFC had classified the various works at the appropriate levels. They also agreed with the classifications awarded to the Women's Aid public information films. There was strong endorsement of the BBFC's policy position of classifying such works less restrictively than commercial advertisements and trailers because of their educational value and their importance in raising awareness.
7. However, it was felt that the range of terminology used in ratings info (e.g. 'domestic violence', 'scenes of domestic violence', 'themes of domestic abuse', etc.) was potentially unhelpful. It was highlighted that the widely understood catch-all term of 'domestic abuse' was much better placed to describe such scenes, as it is considered broad enough to include psychological and economic abuse, gaslighting and non sexual abuse of children.
8. Therefore the BBFC will now use 'domestic abuse' instead of 'domestic violence' or other formulations. The BBFC will also restrict use of the term 'child abuse' to cases where the abuse is sexual in nature, as respondents confirmed they always interpret that phrase as having a sexual meaning. Additionally, where space permits, the BBFC will always flag scenes of domestic abuse in ratings info, even where it is not category defining.
9. Mr Lapper has drafted an internal policy document which sets out these changes, and will share this for consideration by the Board.

### **Film for discussion**

10. The Board viewed and discussed *Love Camp 7*, a 1969 film set during World War II in which two female agents must infiltrate a Nazi prison camp where women are kept as sex slaves.
11. The film was previously refused a classification for DVD release in 2002 on the grounds of pervasive sexual violence after referral to the BBFC's Director and Presidents.
12. The film was recently submitted for classification for VOD release. Given its status as a previously rejected work it was viewed by the entire Compliance team and certain members of the Policy team before referral to the Board.
13. The Board considered the issues raised by the film, and discussed the balance to be struck between the principle that adults should generally be free to choose their own entertainment and the risk of harm posed to vulnerable viewers by material that makes sexual violence look appealing. The potential for the BBFC to reject such material is set out in our Classification Guidelines:

*“The BBFC may refuse to classify a work, in line with the objective of preventing non-trivial harm risks to potential viewers and, through their behaviour, to society. We may do so, for example, where a central concept of the work is unacceptable, such as a sustained focus on rape, other non-consensual sexually violent behaviour or sadistic violence.”*

14. The Board noted that there are a number of prolonged scenes of non-consensual sexual activity, including rape, in *Love Camp 7*, in many cases featuring a focus on female nudity. Such scenes are frequently gratuitous, both in terms of length and detail, going some way beyond what is required by the narrative, and in some cases perpetuating harmful rape myths. These issues were considered in relation to the BBFC's 2019 Guidelines consultation, which found depictions of sexual violence to be of particular concern to the public.
15. The Board discussed the extent to which the film's datedness and risibility limits its impact, and considered the film's likely appeal and audience. It was observed that, while aspects of the film are dated, the sequences of sexual violence and abuse are not. It was also noted that while the film is different in many respects to modern pornography, its close and repeated focus on nudity means the sequences of sexual violence and abuse still have the potential to arouse.
16. The Board concluded that because that as *Love Camp 7* is largely comprised non-consensual sexual activity, including rape, presented in a manner that is intended to arouse viewers, its central concept is unacceptable and the sexually abusive material too pervasive for cuts to be an effective solution. Accordingly, the Board agreed that the BBFC should refuse to classify *Love Camp 7*.

#### **AOB**

17. There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting: 8 April 2020**