

# SECURITY PICTURES LIMITED

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Shepperton Studios  
Squire's Bridge Road  
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Chertsey 2611

J. Trevelyn, Esq.,  
British Board of Film Censors,  
3 Soho Square,  
London. W.1.

17th  
July  
1961.

Dear Mr. Trevelyn,

I take the liberty of enclosing herewith script of "THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS".

I would very greatly appreciate your pre-production comments on same as far as Censorship is concerned.

This picture is being made entirely at Shepperton Studios by this Company and will be starring Howard Keel and Nicole Maurey.

Yours sincerely,

Producer.

Enc:



17th July, 1961.

Security Pictures Limited.,  
Shepperton Studios,  
Squire's Bridge Road,  
Shepperton,  
Middx.

Dear

" THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS "

Thank you for your letter of 17th July,  
enclosed with the script entitled "THE DAY  
OF THE TRIFFIDS".

I will have this read as soon as possible  
and let you have our observations.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

## READER'S REPORT

TITLE OF SCRIPT..... THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS.....

One night, the earth passes through a cloud of meteorites, whose light strikes blind everyone whose eyes have been exposed to the glare. Masen was in hospital with a bandage over his eyes, but he awakes in the morning to a city of the blind - and indeed, a world in nearly as bad a case. The other effect of the meteorites has been to multiply and strengthen the triffids (carnivorous plants) so that they can grow, uproot and stride about the world, holding mankind in terror and devouring those who cannot escape: they kill with a lash of their tongue-like centres leaving the victims a ghostly greenish colour and scarred across the face.

Masen and a ten-year-old girl, Susan, who was running away from school and had hidden in a guard's van during the fatal night, escape from a blind and panic-stricken London in a car to a boat at Dover, whence they cross the channel in an attempt to go to the U.N. meeting of survivors which is meant to take place in Paris. Paris is desolate, so they head for Spain by car. They are pursued by triffids, but escape, and reach a chateau where a woman called Christine Durrant, who can still see, is looking after a band of blind refugees with the help of Professor Coker and his wife Mary. Masen wants to take away the people who can see - he has no room for all the blind; but triffids besiege the chateau and Coker is killed by one of them. As if this were not enough, a number of escaped convicts get into the chateau and terrorise the women, starting an orgy in the great hall. Masen rescues Christine from the convicts and the triffids (who are about to break in) and they drive off to Spain, coming at length to the farm of Luis de la Vega, who has always been blind, but has been taught to be independent by his wife (now expecting a baby). Getting a radio message that a number of submarine crews are all right and are starting rescue operations based on Gibraltar, the party are encouraged to set off for Alicante, where survivors are to muster. They are twice intercepted by triffids, and Teresa, Luis' wife, is now in labour, so they return to the farmhouse, where Teresa is safely delivered but the triffids are on the point of breaking in. Masen electrifies the fence by power from the farm's generator, but the noise of the generator attracts the triffids, so though they are burned up in huge numbers they keep on advancing. Masen turns off the generator and sprays burning petrol on them, though thus fighting a way through for his truck-load of refugees. Perceiving that the triffids are attracted by all sound, Masen draws them off in a car playing recorded music, while the others escape in the truck and get safely to Alicante. Masen draws the triffids to the sea, where he drives into the water and prepares to meet his end. But on contact with salt water, the triffids all shrivel up and die. Masen is safely reunited with the rest of the party.

P.T.O.

I read part of the book - it was very effective, though not my cup of tea. This script is less so, having invented a lot of travelogue stuff and the orgy to keep the cinema audience contented. But it should be horrific enough to please anybody and, on the assumption that the makers want an "X" certificate, I have not much to say. But if they think that it ought to have an "A" because there is a little girl in it, they will have to think again or rewrite the script. Far too much panic and too many grisly visuals of the triffids at work.

Pp.17(66), 18(67) 20(72). A number of shots here of the blind people panicking, being killed and wounded, kicking and clawing. (Especially when the man has got hold of Susan, whom he wants as a guide in his blindness). All this should not be overdone, even for "X".

30(129), 41(171), 58(230), 69(280 and 284). Here are corpses. Here, and ~~anywhere~~ anywhere else in the script, it should be borne in mind that there is a limit to acceptable nastiness, even for "X".

P.71-73(292-298). The behaviour of the convicts will want watching, particularly any shots of them handling girls violently and the whole orgy scene, including the shots of the girls. This is particularly distasteful as all the girls except Christine Durrant are blind. They are said to be "more or less willing participants".

P.75(304). The panic when the triffids break in on the blind people will also need to be kept within decent bounds.

P.77(315). There are a number of dead at Toulon. Here again, the caution on corpses applies.

P.95(371 etc.). Truck boring through triffids will be very horrific, but probably all right - one can't be too squeamish about plant life.

P.9(390). Teresa's scream in labour seems hardly necessary, but will be all right for "X" if not too overdone. (But why must we have this sort of irrelevant stuff - or orgies - in a horror film?)

20.7.61.

leaves. Cases needed to, clear the killing of people by triffids of. pages 59 (no. 223), 69 (278) → incident of deaths awaiting death at their hands (p. 76)

F. J.  
297

24th July, 1961

Security Pictures Ltd.,  
Shepperton Studios,  
Squire's Bridge Road,  
Shepperton, Middx.

Dear

"THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS"

We have now read your script entitled "THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS". We think that a film made from this script would almost certainly be put into the "X" category. With the "X" category in mind I have the following points of detail to make:-

- Page 17 Scene 66 In these scenes there are a number of shots of the  
18 Scene 67 blind people in panic, being killed or wounded,  
20 Scene 72 kicking and clawing. These scenes should not be  
overdone. We are particularly concerned about the  
scene in which the man has got hold of Susan whom he  
wants as a guide in his blindness.
- Page 30 Scene 129 In these scenes there are corpses. Here and  
41 Scene 141 elsewhere in the script it should be borne in mind  
58 Scene 230 that there is a limit to nastiness that is acceptable,  
69 Scene 280-4 even for the "X" category. Discretion should be used.
- Page 59 Scene 233 The killing of people by triffids should not be too  
69 Scene 278 nasty or unpleasant.
- Page 71-3 Scene 292-8 Care should be taken in showing the behaviour of  
the convicts, particularly with any shots of them  
handling girls violently, and with the whole orgy  
scene, including the shots of the girls. This is  
made quite distasteful since all the girls except  
Christine Durrant are blind. They are said to be  
"more or less willing participants".
- Page 75 Scene 304 The panic when the triffids break in on the blind  
people will need to be kept within reasonable bounds.

Page/

2.

Page 77 Scene 315

In this scene there are a number of dead people at Toulon. Here again we must advise discretion.

Page 95 Scene 371 etc

Where we see the truck boring through triffids we may have a scene which is very horrific. It is difficult to guess what this will look like on the screen, but once again I must say that there are limits to what we would accept.

Page 99 Scene 390

We would not want Teresa to give unpleasant screams in labour. This sequence seems somewhat irrelevant in this story.

I return your script herewith.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

2nd August 1961

Security Pictures Ltd.,  
Shepperton Studios,  
Squire's Bridge Road,  
Shepperton, Middx.

Dear

"THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS"

When you came to see me about the script of "THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS" I told you that I would put my comments on this script in writing for purposes of record.

First let me say that we see no possibility of a film made from this script in anything like its present form being suitable for anything but the "X" category. To get the film into the "A" category you would have to weaken its impact to a point which, in my opinion, would make the film ineffective and lacking in excitement. However, since you will have to consider this I will let you know what are the main points of difficulty for the "A" category in the present script. These are as follows:-

Page 2 Scene 6

Here we get frightened children. We believe that children tend to identify themselves with children on the screen and for this reason we are always anxious about scenes of frightened children. This is a minor scene which could easily be omitted.

Page 7 Scene 21

As described the reaction shot of the gardener would be much too alarming and distressing.

Page 8 Scene 25

Here there is "a wild and terrifying scream". This would not be acceptable. We only allow mild screams in this category.

Page 10 Scene 37

While the whole of these sequences at this stage of the film are distressing, such a sequence as that in Scene 37 seems particularly so. I think all this kind of thing might upset children very much.

Page 13-4 Scene 44-8

The suicide of Scames would have to be done with great discretion. The script suggests that it might be.

Page 17 Scene 65-7

The train crash as described might be too alarming

Page 20 Scene 72

for the "A" category.

We do not like this scene at all. The "burly man" gets the small girl to use her sight and treats her with violence. Here we get the question of identification.

Page 23 Scene 84

Here we have the first view of a Triffid, presumably fully grown. This raises the old question of what the Triffids are going to look like. If they are unfrighting in appearance they might be acceptable for the "A" category, but it seems to me that to make them unfrighting in appearance would destroy the impact of the film.

Page 24 Scene 89

The fact that places that are familiar to many children, not only to London children, are shown in a state of destruction, would add to the frightening element in this story.

Page 27 Scene 109-113

Here we have further shots of Triffids. My previous comments apply.

Page 30 Scene 129-133

If the shots of corpses were to be acceptable they would not have to be gruesome or shown in close-up.

Page 34 Scene 144-6

The plane crash might be very alarming and unpleasant.

Page 41 Scene 171

Here we have another corpse. The previous comments apply.

Page 41-3 Scene 175-187

More shots of Triffids. The previous comments apply.

Page 59 Scene 221

More shots of Triffids. The previous comments apply.

Page 59 Scene 229

Here the top of a Triffid is blown off. Whether this will be acceptable will depend on whether it looks like knocking the top off a flower or whether there is anything much more human or animal in the Triffid.

Page 68 Scene 270-74

More shots of Triffids. The previous comments apply.

Page 69 Scene 280

The shot of Coker's face might easily be too gruesome or unpleasant.

Page 74-7 Scene 304-314

The attack of the Triffids is liable to be very frightening and the end of Bettina is very distressing.

Page 71-4 Scene 296-303

These orgy scenes are likely to be wholly unacceptable for the "A" category. As I pointed out in a previous letter, the fact that some of the blind women are "more or less willing participants" adds to its unpleasantness.

Page 77 Scene 315-7

Here we have corpse shots at Toulon. The previous comments apply.

Page 91 Scene 352

Further shots of Triffids. See previous comments.

Page 93 Scene 361

Further shots of Triffids. See previous comments.

Page 94 Scene 367-8

Here the truck runs through the Triffids. This might be squasy and nauseous. I have no idea what it would look like!

Page 99 Scene 390

We do not want the labour pains and scream of the mother.



3.

Page 102 to 103

Page 104-6 Scenes 417-430

Page 114 Scene 477

The whole incident seems unnecessary. Here we have Triffids on the electric fence when they attack again. The previous comments apply. In these scenes we see the Triffids incinerated. Again I do not know what this would look like but think it might be too unpleasant for children. The same applies to the shots of the Triffids going up in smoke as the result of being immersed in sea-water.

I cannot be sure that I have included in the above list everything that might cause trouble for the "A" category. A lot of the trouble is concerned with matters of treatment and with the way in which the Triffids are shown. However, as I said earlier, I think that to modify the treatment to a point acceptable for the "A" category would result in greatly weakening the impact of what might be a very exciting film.

I return your script herewith.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

Secretary.

Security Films, , have asked for the possibility of an 'A' cert for "Triffids". They have toned it down since script stage & wld take cuts. They will confirm the missing scenes in writing, which appear to be effects.

Then scenes may need alteration:

- R.2. Man at Kew is terrified → killed by Triffid. ? Blind people at hospital.
- R.3. Panic at railway station.  
Triffid advances on bus and then a car.
- R.4. Panic on airliner.  
Blacked man in car. Triffids advance on car.
- R.5. Triffid attacks a man, → <sup>then</sup> advance across field.
- R.6. Triffids advance towards house → chase Mason → Cohen. Cohen turns from.  
Osgy in chateau - 2 men → fire on floor - man's hand on fire leg - man forces fire upstairs.  
Triffids break into chateau.
- R.7. ? Reduction of Triffids when car can't break through them.

T.P.D.

Tiffins lead up by fence of farm.

Tiffins hunt.

Secretary.

Security firms, Mr. Glasser, have asked for the possibility of an 'A' cert for "Tiffins". They have found it difficult to get a cert & will take care. They will continue the missing scenes in writing, which appear to be effects.

2/15/76

- 1.1. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.2. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.3. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.4. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.5. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.6. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.7. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.8. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.9. Tiffins hunt.
- 1.10. Tiffins hunt.

28th May 1962

Security Pictures Ltd.,  
Shepperton Studios,  
Squire's Bridge Road,  
Shepperton, Middx.

Dear

"THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS"

We have considered the question of whether THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS can be made acceptable for the "A" category. We think that in order to make it acceptable you would have to lose a good deal of material that is important to the picture, but this is a matter for your decision. I will give you a list of minimum cuts, and if you care to make these, we will consider whether the film can be given an "A" certificate or whether further cuts will be needed.

The minimum cuts will be as follows:-

Reel 2

Remove the close-up of the gardener's face after the Triffid has stung it. There is a missing scene just before this shot. If, as we assume, this is a shot of the triffid lashing out, it would probably not be acceptable.

Reel 3

When the train crashes at the station the resultant panic of the people should be reduced, and you should remove as many as possible of the screams. You should also reduce the distress of the small girl when the blind man seizes her.

When Susan returns to the car with rocks, you should remove the close shots of the triffid stalking her. The shots of the triffid approaching the car when the girl is in it maybe acceptable, but it might have to be removed.

Reel 4

There is a missing scene just before the Japanese radio announcer is incinerated. If this is horrific, it should come out.

Substantially/

Substantially reduce the panic of the blind passengers in the aircraft. Remove as much as possible of the screaming and sounds of distress.

Remove the shot of the dead man slumped over the steering wheel of a car at the garage.

Reel 6

Reduce to an absolute minimum the shots of the "wild party", especially scenes of the couples embracing. The shot of the man pawing a woman's leg must be removed entirely.

The scene in which a convict hustles a woman upstairs, with the obvious intent to rape her, should be omitted or start only when she pushes him downstairs.

You should reduce to an absolute minimum the scene in which the triffids break into the room and cause screaming and panic.

Reel 9

There should be considerable reduction in the scenes in which the triffids are electrocuted on the fence.

Remove closer and macabre shots.

You should remove as far as possible all shots of the blackened remains of the triffids after they have been burnt to death.

If you decide to make these cuts, please let me know and I will arrange for the whole film to be seen again in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

Directors

PHILIP YORDAN (USA)  
H. T. SILVERBERG (USA)  
K. G. ALLISON  
W. P. ROBINSON  
G. L. CANHAM

SECURITY PICTURES LIMITED

BRITISH LION SHEPPERTON STUDIOS  
SHEPPERTON · MIDDLESEX · ENGLAND  
TELEPHONE CHERTSEY 2611

29th May 1962

Mr. Trevelyan,  
British Board of Film Censors,  
3, Soho Square,  
London, W.1.

Dear Mr. Trevelyan,

"The Day of the Triffids".

Thank you for your outline of modifications necessary for "The Day of the Triffids" to qualify for an 'A' Certificate. The Executive Producer, Mr. Philip Jordan, and the Rank Organisation will view the film in its present form next week, and I hope for a decision on their part regarding possible modifications to the film.

The present footage of the 'X' version of the film is 8,215, and the Special Effects scenes missing at the time of screening were as follows:

- REEL 2. Triffid tongue lash.
- REEL 4. Shot of Tokio ablaze, and the harbour blowing up.
- REEL 10. Triffids disintegrating in salt water.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,  
For and on behalf of Security Pictures/  
Limited.

30th May 1962

Security Pictures Ltd.,  
British Lion Shepperton Studios,  
Shepperton, Middx.

Dear

"THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS"

Thank you for your letter of 29th  
May and for sending me notes about the missing  
scenes. I should think that for the "A"  
category the shot in Reel 4 will be acceptable,  
but I doubt very much whether the shots in  
Reels 2 and 10 will be acceptable.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

he saw Reels 2, 4, 10 with the missing  
scenes added: they are the right for 'X'.  
There seem to be some new scenes (eg. of the  
submarine) in R. 10.

P. C.  
2/7/62



## THE RANK ORGANISATION

### WORLD FILM DISTRIBUTION-U.K. DIVISION

127 WARDOUR STREET, LONDON, W.1 · GERRARD 7311 TELEGRAMS: JARFIDIS WESDO LONDON

25th February, 1963.

J. Trevelyan, Esq., O.B.E.,  
British Board of Film Censors,  
3, Soho Square,  
LONDON, W.1.

Dear Mr. Trevelyan,

May we ask if you will reconsider the "X" certificate given to "THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS", with the view to changing this to "A"?

Although this is a science fiction subject we feel that the Director has definitely kept away from all the established horror gimmicks, and has succeeded in making an essay more in the H. G. Wells tradition. We agree that there are one or two eerie spots, but these are well offset by very long periods of normal action, and even when the Triffids are seen, there is nothing unusually gruesome and everything is down to minimum action.

Frankly, this is a well produced film, and a very expensive one which, we think, will do better in an "A" programme, and we do not want to jeopardise revenue recovery by a weak "X" certificate. As you well know it needs only a facetious remark by a critic, such as "why the X" (i.e., "SODOM AND GOMORRAH"), to give the impression that we are exploiting the X to sell the film, which in this case is obviously untrue. The situations in this film bear no comparison with the usual horrific monsters, bloodstained bodies, coffins and ghouls, etc. As we have said, it is Wellsian in outlook and action.

Any consideration you can give this matter will be appreciated and we await your reply with interest.

Yours sincerely,



20th March, 1963

Rank Film Distributors,  
127, Wardour Street,  
London, W.1.

Dear

Our Examiners looked at the whole of "THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS" yesterday and they have given me the following list of minimum cuts that would be required if the film is to be considered for the "A" category.

- Reel 1 Remove all close shots of triffid that kills man at Kew, and all shots of his face close to triffid and after the killing.
- Reel 2 Reduce to a minimum shots and sounds of passengers' panic after the train crash.  
In scene where triffid tries to attack Susan and car, remove close shots of it, and sound of her scream.  
Drastically reduce panic in aircraft.
- Reel 3 Reduce to a minimum attacks by triffid in lighthouse, in particular removing close shots of it, and sounds of girl's screams.
- Reel 4 Reduce to a minimum scenes of the convicts with the girls: only enough of these can be shown to establish that Bill rescues one of them. The deletions should include all shots of a girl being dragged upstairs by one of the convicts.  
Reduce to a minimum shots and sounds of the triffids breaking in, and of the consequent panic.
- Reel 5 Shorten the scenes in which the triffids attack the couple in the lighthouse. The deletions should include the shot of a tentacle approaching Karen and sounds of her screams.

You will note that these are minimum cuts, which gives us the opportunity to ask for more if we feel it is necessary after the above cuts have been made.

I shall be glad to hear what you decide to do about this film.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.



**THE RANK ORGANISATION**  
**WORLD FILM DISTRIBUTION-U.K. DIVISION**

127 WARDOUR STREET, LONDON, W.1 · GERRARD 7311 TELEGRAMS: JARFIDIS WESDO LONDON

21st March, 1963.

J. Trevelyan, Esq.,  
B.B.F.C.,  
3, Soho Square,  
LONDON, W.1.

Dear John,

Many thanks for your letter of March 20th concerning "DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS", and please accept my thanks for having another look at this one.

Whilst I am appreciative of the trouble you have taken I am a little shaken by the extent of the cuts you would require for an 'A' certificate, which would materially change the whole character of the film.

Under the circumstances, and since you wanted to know I propose retaining it in the 'X' category.

Sincerely yours,

RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS LIMITED

DIRECTORS: F. L. THOMAS, *Managing Director*

JOHN DAVIS

KENNETH WINCKLES, M.B.E.

C. R. YOUNG