

**TITLE:** "ROBOCOP"

**DATE:** 10 August '87

**FILE**  **VIDEO**

**DISTRIBUTOR:** Rank

**FIRST**  **RESUB**

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** U.S.A.

**CATEGORY:** "18"

**CUTS**  **NO CUTS**

**GENRE:** Science Fiction, Police Thriller

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**  **SUB-TITLED**  **DUBBED**

**FOR BOARD DISCUSSION**

APPROPRIATE CATEGORY:	Uc	U	PG	15	18	R18	CUTS	REJECT
<b>THEME</b>			✓					
<b>TREATMENT</b>					✓			
<b>VISUALS:</b>								
<b>NUDITY</b>								
<b>SEX</b>								
<b>VIOLENCE</b>					✓			
<b>HORROR</b>					✓			
<b>LANGUAGE</b>					✓			
<b>DRUGS</b>								
<b>CRIMINAL TECHNIQUES</b>								
<b>LEGALITY:</b>								
<b>OBSCENITY</b>								
<b>CHILDREN</b>								
<b>ANIMALS</b>								
<b>BLASPHEMY</b>								
<b>FILM AS A WHOLE</b>					✓			

**SYNOPSIS AND COMMENTS:**

Synopses on File.

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to copyright of Verhoeven  
for prohibitions...  
to... (Verhoeven).

Marvel Comic's IRON MAN meets THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN and JUDGE DREDD in an exciting live action comic book which is understandably doing good business in the U.S. Despite the MPAA's problems with this film (reminiscent of recent comic-book movies with excessive violence, such as REMO, UNARMED AND DANGEROUS) it seems to me that the overall tone, which is always slightly offbeat and tongue-in-cheek, serves to ameliorate the loving care and attention with which Verhoeven treats the violence. Children's comics have changed a lot in recent years -

in particular 2,000 AD is worth looking at for its treatment of violence - but by Board standards this is clearly a 'PG' film given an '18' treatment:

- 1/ Reel One: 1214 ft - Very heavy impact shots as a monstrous robot is tested out on an employee of the corporation that produced it. The 'impacts' are shot from more than one angle and edited together for maximum effect.
- 2/ Reel Two: beginning - Murphy, soon to become Robocop, is riddled with bullets. This is the most graphic scene in the film and includes a shot of his hand being blown apart with a shotgun, bullets riddling his body, Murphy pirouetting with blood pouring from the strings of his arm and then a close-up" forehead bullet impact shot. (The wound is seen repeatedly in close-up during the hospital sequence which follows). The effect is again heightened by the giggling of the killer and the line "Does it hurt?".
- 3/ Reel Two: also includes an attempted rape which, although nasty in its suggestion that one of the attackers is about to cut the women's pubic hair with a commando knife, is brief enough to be acceptable. The sequence culminates in Robocop shooting the man in the crotch between the woman's legs. (It looks at first as though the woman is shot in the crotch and it is unfortunate that Verhoeven seems to specialise in dubious frissons like this - I am reminded of the scissors-and-pubic-hair shot in The Sensualist).
- 4/ Reel three: A man is shot in the legs repeatedly and is blown up as he tries to crawl to a table to defuse a grenade.
- 5/ Reel five: includes a man who has been mutated by toxic waste coming apart when a car hits him and lengthy (in both senses) blood spurts as Robocop stabs a villain in the neck.

Add to this a 'fuck' and 'cocksucker' - laden script and this is clearly '18'.

Passed "18" without cuts.

ROBOCOP

DATE 10-8-87

FILE  VIDEO   
 FIRST  RE SUB   
 CUTS  NO CUTS

DISTRIBUTOR: RANK

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: USA

CATEGORY: 18

GENRE: POLICE THRILLER

SH  AGE  SUB-TITLED  DUBBED  FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

APPROPRIATE CATEGORY:	Uc	U	PG	15	18	R18	CUTS	REJECT
CONTENT					✓			
REASONS:					✓			
NUDITY								
SEX								
VIOLENCE					✓		(?)	
HORROR					✓			
LANGUAGE				✓				
TECHNIQUES					✓			
CHARACTERISTICS:								
OBSCENITY								
CHILDREN								
ANIMALS								
BLASPHEMY								
AS A WHOLE					✓			

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REMARKS AND COMMENTS:

Robot 209, a prototype developed by Omni Consumer Products who run the Detroit police (and much else), malfunctions to chagrin of Vice-President Dick Jones (Ronny Cox). The company boss gives ambitious Bob Morton the go-ahead for his own concept of computerised cop. When Murphy (Peter Weller), a cop, is shot to bits by a gang of robbers and coke distributors, Morton uses what is left of Murphy as the basis for Robocop, who is soon out, cleaning up the streets. He is quickly after the gang and tracks down their boss who turns out to be Jones. Robocop, however, is programmed not to arrest an OCP employee. Jones, who has already had Morton killed for challenging him, sets the police onto Robocop, but, helped by his old partner, Lewis (Nancy Allen), he is able to outgun them and to send Jones to his death.

Over....

Explicitly Marvel comic stuff, this is adult cartoon made (partly) flesh. The hero is always on the side of right, and never goes out of control as might be expected, so the film has a firm moral base. Good guys and bad guys are clearly delineated with no grey areas between. Even so, violence is strong and Verhoeven again displays a rather dubious pleasure in pain and gore. The worst instance of this is in the shooting of Murphy in reel 2, where he is not content just to show the hero's hand being blown off and his subsequent anguish, but further shots of him being blasted with a final shot to the head - the whole scene lasts a full minute. It is made acceptable I suppose because the violence is perpetrated by the villains against the hero (who does, implausibly, survive - sort of) so our feelings are of horror and fear for the victim rather than empathy with the hitmen. Still, without the calming presence of IG, I'm not sure that I wouldn't have considered cuts here to reduce the concentration on the pain.

The other moment (reel 5) when Verhoeven's instincts are debatable is in his treatment of the man who is washed in toxic waste and gradually reduced to a horror-film gargoyle. Eventually this goes so far as to become semi-comic, which perhaps saves the sequence, though the returning again and again to the wretched man is both nauseating, cruel and (to my mind) mistaken in terms of the film. The final glee with which Verhoeven has the disintegrating body completely splattered by a speeding car, I found less than admirable.

These were the only instances of overkill to me, though Verhoeven can't also deny himself a near-rape with the aggressors ramming their knife up the victim's skirt after cutting her hair - 'There's more hair down there' (reel 2: 16 mins). In retribution, of course, the man is gunned down with a bullet to the groin (reel 2:15 mins).

Throughout there are numerous bloodspurts and bullet holes in flesh with the torturing of Morton (reel 3: 18 mins) and the death of gang leader Clarence (reel 5: 10 mins) with blood spurting from his chest, notable. Plenty to make this '18' in fact (there is the whole drugs angle with copious snorting in a scene at reel 3: 16 mins). An impressive, but, in some ways, quite nasty piece of work, saved by an element of tongue-in-cheek, the overt humour and sheer verve of the film-making.