

TITLE: INDIANA JONES

DATE: 30 4 84

FILM

VIDEO

DISTRIBUTOR: CIC

FIRST

RESUB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: USA

CATEGORY: PG

CUTS

NO CUTS

GENRE:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SUB-TITLED

DUBBED

FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

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

SYNOPSIS AND COMMENTS:

Difficult to keep a full log with a torch, but briefly the story is of Prof. Indiana Jones finding himself on the quest for a magic stone with Willie a helpless blonde female, and Shortie, a nameless Chinese orphan, in tow. Their adversaries turn out to be an Indian tribe who believe in magic and have captured native children to dig up their catacombs. They also rip out human hearts, apply the lash unstintingly to children and douse their living sacrifices in fire. Needless to say Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) and director Speilberg's latest creation proves too muscular and canny for the forces of darkness.

A fork held threateningly to a woman's bare back, a burning torch plunged into a man's tummy, snakes crawling on a woman's shoulder, snakes and monkey's brains served for dinner, creepy-crawlies doing their worst - even threatening spikes and crushing ceilings endlessly drawn out were legitimate entertainment for a young audience who will shudder and shock as successfully as we adults did to the beginning of the fourth reel, or thereabouts.

over...

But then the violence got stronger and sadistic pleasure crept in. A boy's heart is ripped out - we see close up chest as priest's hands claw away; we see opening and shutting of hole in chest afterwards and we see red throbbing heart held up three times afterwards. Victim is then plunged live and screaming into molten fire and is seen to perish. I don't remember us ever passing a scene like this at 'PG' before. Actually I think we could take the heart removal if we didn't have to see it throbbing in close-up so frequently afterwards and I would probably go for a reduction in the live boy's terror as he is burnt alive. The next scene which worried me more at 'PG', which there is no doubt this film should be, was a mutual whipping of Shortie and Indiana because the latter, after force-feeding of evil blood, has spat it out again in defiance. No blows are seen to land during their punishment but somehow the juxtaposition of whipping with two sequences of forced-feeding from obscene skulls touched something very primitive in me and I felt revolted and also quite frightened. I cannot tell whether this is an individual reaction or whether it would have the same force on children but I have to say I would be worried about the lower range of the 'PG' audience seeing this, and would definitely protect Annie (8 yrs) from seeing it. Without seeing it again, I don't know how to suggest reducing the impact but this scene really disturbed me more than any other in the film. We then have the heroine dangled endlessly over flames but this is all acceptable because the convention that actually the others will save her is terribly powerful. And of course they do. We then have the pre-dénouement fight in which they try to get away from the baddies. I think this fight went on too long for good cinematic reasons and is also too violent towards the end in the struggle with the huge man in a turban for 'PG'. Here a routine reduction in strength of violence is required - one good candidate would be the repeated blows to the chest of the baddy by Indiana. I felt the stone-crushing episode was just okay at 'PG' and, as always with Spielberg, the grisly process of bodily damage is skilfully handled so that we actually see less of the woundings than we think we do. Even the sadistic voodoo activities of the young maharaja were acceptable I thought. The final tussles on the rope ladder I also thought okay at 'PG'.

Thus in summary, and much as I would prefer to leave Spielberg uncut, I think the fight before they take the train is just too violent and prolonged at 'PG' and does need cutting, and I am worried about the whipping/forced-feeding scene and think we should be careful about this scene if other examiners have at all the same reaction. On balance I am more worried about these two episodes than I am the heart-removal scene although in some ways the latter would be more of a new precedent if we take such material at 'PG'. Having dissected it critically - which is my job, I should say I found it a wizzing film and greatly enjoyed it as I am sure most older children will. It is the old dilemma of a large age range at 'PG' and how to protect the younger end of the range from real fear and disturbance while allowing the older range a wonderfully rich and exciting experience.

TITLE: INDIANA JONES AND THE
TEMPLE OF DOOM

DATE: 11 5 84

FILM VIDEO

DISTRIBUTOR: UIP

EXAMINERS: (seen as
part of group viewing) FIRST RESUB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: USA

CATEGORY: PG CUTS NO CUTS

GENRE: Adventure film

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-TITLED DUBBED

FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

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

SYNOPSIS AND COMMENTS:

(NB: There is no synopsis/plot report here, just "2nd paragraph")

Speilberg's 'Raiders' sequel poses a number of different problems for the Board. Firstly, I would like to identify some of the areas that its effects, and the Board's problems, might be grouped under. Firstly the film does have several genuinely scary scenes and the problem is, here, how far down the age range does one have to go before that element might be unacceptable. In other words an eleven-year-old (depending upon individual rates of maturation) might be very scared, whilst a fourteen-year-old (both 'PG' audience range) might not. Secondly, there is the area of revolting or ghoulish images (where the problem would seem to depend upon what levels of squeamishness we presume to exist in various likely audiences). Thirdly, there is the problem of the casual (and possibly glamourising) attitude to quite realistic violence and the place of this within 'fantasy' adventure genres like this.

over ...

(Given time, one might perhaps include a fourth area - ie: the stereotypical images that the film trades in. However, this last area does not affect category decision or whether to cut or not and so may be put to one side for the moment. Linked to this area - in one way - is the treatment of sexual attraction between the hero and heroine. There are, for example, dialogue lines about "wearing jewels to bed and nothing else".

However, this turns out not to be true even, and there is no sex as such to affect category.) I do consider that the film as it stands contains some shots and images which are a problem for our current 'PG' level. However, (as discussed at Board briefly) I also think the film (whilst hugely enjoyable for some adults) is excellent for older kids, and as such should (ideally) be a 'PG' and not a '15'. Before summing up I shall just list some of the shots that I think might cause problems.

Reel One: during the very stylish and pacey fight in the restaurant (which sets the breathless tone of the whole yarn), there is a shot when IJ (Jones) hurls a flaming kebab into a Japanese (?) baddie. The held shot of the screaming impaled man is not what I'd normally consider a 'PG' shot.

Reel Three: about two thirds of the way into the reel, when IJ is being garrotted in his bedroom, he (and Short Round, his side kick) manage to get the baddie caught in a ceiling fan. Again, the full sight of the man winched up and hung could be distressing to many kids. (There are many shock effects where things like partially decomposed bodies pop out and scare the heroine (sic). These shots - like the hideous snake and beetle meal in Reel 3 - are legitimate straight scares which just happen to be very well handled.)

Reel 4: Probably the most problematic shot of the whole film (as far as the hoped-for 'PG' is concerned) is the ritual ripping out of the heart that occurs in the Thuggee (?) ceremony. Again, special effects being very good may, ironically, cause the film to be more susceptible to cutting. We see the hand appear to enter the victim's body and the hole that is left. We must remember that this is fantasy and that the miraculous closing of the body reinforces this. However, sadism is present in the scene since we hear the onlookers say that the victim is alive as we see him lowered screaming into the flames. The shot of him screaming and on fire could also, perhaps, come out. At the end of Reel four, we also see a strong (but really cleverly suggested) scene where a man is crushed on a stone-crushing machine. (I would not cut the scene where the child is whipped in the slave colony).

At the very end of the film (Reel 6) there is a longish realistic scene of a baddie priest bouncing off a cliff face. This may not need cutting, but a reduction for 'PG' would certainly not be overly strict by previous standards. I recommend a 'PG' with four or five cuts, if that is possible.

FILE

BRITISH BOARD of FILM CENSORS

3 Soho Square, London W1V 5DE

President: THE RT. HON. THE LORD HARLECH K.C.M.G.

Secretary: James Ferman

15th May 1984

Telephone: 01-439 7961

UIP (UK)

Mortimer House
37/41 Mortimer Street
London W1V 2AJ

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

There can be few films to which members of the BBFC looked forward with more pleasure than the sequel to RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, one of the great masterpieces of kids' entertainment and possibly the most thrilling adventure film ever made. It is thus with real sadness, indeed bordering on despondency, that we found ourselves, unanimously, confronted with the realisation that Reels 4 and 5 of this sequel go so far beyond the limits of the British 'PG' category that the film cannot be considered for a junior audience without cuts. There is absolutely no precedent in children's entertainment in Britain for the very real world of terror, ritual violence, black magic and nightmare imagery which takes over this film quite suddenly in the Temple of Doom sequence. All of us at the Board are deeply concerned at the effect which these reels could have on a young audience, and yet boys of 8 or 9 upwards will be breaking down the doors of cinemas all over Britain if we stop them seeing the sequel to RAIDERS.

To tamper in any way with a Spielberg-Lucas film seems a sacrilege, and I hope that our previous handling of their work is an indication of the respect and admiration we have for them. The BBFC gave a 'U' certificate to ET and to the STAR WARS trilogy, while the MPAA made them all 'PG'. In this country, we could simply not bring ourselves to attach to any of these smashing movies the warning: "Some scenes may be unsuitable for young children." In the case of ET we overlooked a few mild, muttered expletives as well as the potential scariness of the white-coated technicians and the profound sadness of ET's death, because the overwhelming mood and message of the film was to recreate the wonder of childhood and to endorse all the hopes and dreams of children for a loving and benevolent world. With the STAR WARS trilogy, we felt that the scenes of battle and menace were incorporated in the structure of an epic saga of good and evil which could only enrich the experience of children, and again we felt confident in the 'U' ("UNIVERSAL - Suitable for all"), despite the extent to which the Jabba the Hutt sequence in RETURN OF THE JEDI threatened at one point to push the film into 'PG'. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK was, of course, a far more violent entertainment, but it seemed to us never to lose that reassuring never-neverland quality of the old Saturday serials in which threatened heroes always make unlikely escapes and duff up battalions of cardboard villains in the process. The heroine, Karen Allen, was a tough cookie who was never really endangered by the appalling scrapes she got into, and Indiana himself, rumpled, world-weary, but endlessly brave and resourceful in the cause of truth and goodness, was a knight in shining armour for our own tarnished age. If only the sequel could have sustained this tone.

Continued

Fourteen members of the Board, including Lord Harlech, have seen this film, and each, reluctantly, has conceded that the film in its present form cannot be passed below the '15' category, barring all children below that age whether accompanied or not. Most of us are parents, and all of us love movies and love taking our children to movies, but the predicament we find ourselves in is a serious one. It was summed up in this report by one member of our team, who said:

"There is a fundamental difference between scaring children and worrying them. Children often choose to frighten themselves by daring to confront normally threatening places and people in a spirit of challenge and bravado. Much of this film is on that level: hands suddenly popping out of walls, crumbling, mummified remains lurching at the heroes as they crawl down a dripping, insect-infested tunnel, and spikes impaling skeleton hands and chests while on their way to air-conditioning the bodies of the heroes themselves. All of this is good clean, if deliciously terrifying stuff, and I would have as few objections to kids being exposed to it as to their experiencing some of the screech-filled rides at the funfair. There are moments, however, when this film tips over into horror imagery, and the heroes (that is, representatives of the audience) are threatened by a kind of evil made manifest that is not easily perceived by a child as surmountable, because not within childish fantasy vocabulary. A child will easily understand the threat of a teeming heap of insect life, because he or she knows that there are obvious ways of countering that threat. If exposed to even a moderate outpouring of contemporary media, that same child will happily know that heroes always escape from rooms whose ceilings are cranking down on them and from airplanes whose fuel tanks are empty. But children are not prepared (at least by the media created specifically for them in the UK) for voodoo-inspired powers who are able to reach into live bodies and tear out pulsating hearts. This is an image for which there is no fantasy antidote because it is based in a conceptual leap that I don't think many children have made."

This conviction was echoed in report after report, one examiner writing that:

"by the end of Reel 4, with its unrelenting emphasis on violence, pain, blood and sheer noise, I was feeling very alarmed - and the violence of Reel 5 compounded my worries about the possible effect, not just on small kids but on 13 and 14-year-olds. Kids like to be scared, sure - but not scared so much that they hide under their seats, or have nightmares night after night about human sacrifice and men having their hearts torn out. I don't think I am being unduly protective or middle class in thinking this. Having gone to many films with my kids over the years (including every James Bond) and watched TV with them too, I feel I know what their thresholds are."

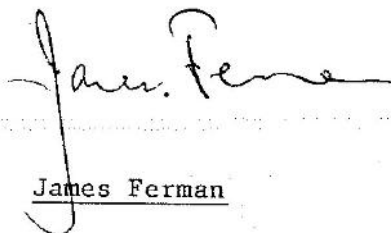
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In Britain, the violence in Reel 5 is as much a problem as the ritual terror in Reel 4, with the hero himself, having been first suborned by magic to the side of evil (and the withering blow he strikes at Shortie must shatter the confidence of every trusting child in the audience), being able once more to champion the cause of right only by becoming as brutally violent as his enemies. In England now, with a universal outcry against the increasing violence of American films and video, this glorification of violence for a junior audience is worrying indeed.

I enclose the cuts list we would normally issue on such a film, but we will be happy to treat this list as the basis for discussion. On the other hand, there should be no misunderstanding of how seriously we take the problem this film presents. In its present form, it is a '15' at least, with the sacrificial ceremony bordering on '18'. And in reducing the violence, may I point out that sound will be as important as visuals.

Needless to say, I will make myself available in any way possible to assist in resolving this unhappy situation.

Yours sincerely,



James Ferman

Enclosure:

EXCEPTIONS

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

15th May 1984

UIP (UK)

Proposed category: PG

The following modifications are required for the 'PG' category:

- Reel 4
- (a) In the sacrificial Thuggee ceremony, remove entirely the tearing out of the young victim's heart and all subsequent sight of it bloody and pulsating in the High Priest's hand.
 - (b) Greatly reduce the prolonged terror of the victim as he is slowly lowered into the fiery vortex, removing in particular
 - (1) the low-angle shot of him screaming as the cage descends towards camera, and
 - (2) all later shots of him being lowered past camera to emphasise his agonised anticipation of death.
- [We suggest that after the first reaction shot of Indiana and Shortie, followed by drumming and chanting, there should then be a cut of 35 feet, resuming on the side-angle shot of the victim falling into the flames. The shorter this scene is, the less the audience will be asked to share either the agony of the victim or the sadistic bloodlust of the spectators.]
- (c) Reduce the forced drinking of blood and the brutal whipping of Indiana, and remove entirely the flogging of Shortie.
 - (d) Reduce the scenes of Willie being lowered into the flames and minimise her realistic screaming throughout.
- Reel 5
- (a) Greatly reduce the brutality of the fight between Indiana and the huge, turbaned overseer, reducing the sounds of all impact blows, and removing at least some of the following details: sledgehammer blow at overseer's body, very heavy punches to his back and chest, heavy blows to Indiana's face and chest throughout the sequence, fighting with pickaxes, and close-ups of Indiana's foot pressing down to crush his opponent's chest.
 - (b) Also reduce the sadistic horror of the overseer being dragged under the stone-crushing roller, and remove the sight of blood on the roller after his death.
- Reel 6 Remove High Priest's head bouncing off rock face as he falls into water.

Please resubmit these three reels.