

TITLE: EDWARD SCISSORHANDS

Distributor: FOX

Country of Origin: USA

Film: X Video: Subtv:

Genre: FANTASY, FAIRYTALE, SATIRE

First: X Resub:

Eng. Lang: X

Foreign Lang:

Cuts: Y

No Cuts:

Subtitled:

Dubbed:

Category: 'PG'

	Uc	U	PG	12	15	18	R18	CUTS	REJECT
THEME			X						
TREATMENT				X					
VISUALS: NUDITY									
SEX			X						
VIOLENCE				X					
HORROR									
LANGUAGE			X						
DRUGS									
CRIMINAL TECHNIQUES									
LEGALITY: OBSCENITY									
CHILDREN									
ANIMALS									
BLASPHEMY									
FILM AS A WHOLE			X						

Keywords:

(Synopsis on file)

This is a strangely appealing allegorical fairytale, which lingers in the mind, and on the retina, for a long time. Since seeing it, I've been recalling its many pleasures: the day-glo, almost surreal colours; the mad suburban housewives and their husbands' robot-like cars; Dianne Wiest's kindly daffiness as the local Avon lady; Alan Arkin, as Bill, trying to lay down the difference between right and wrong to his family; but above all Johnny Depp's white, soulful poetic face - a cross between Frankenstein, Caspar Hauser and the late Jim Morrison of the Doors. Every young teenager's dream of the outsider, doomed to be misunderstood and hounded for being "different".

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The Company want a '12' for this - the same category as BATMAN, though not BEETLEJUICE - but most of us watching it in the theatre on its second viewing felt that it would be a shame to deny it to the younger audience (9 or 10 year olds) who enjoyed THE WITCHES, LEGEND and WILLOW without complaints from either children or parents. Though I would suspect that none of Burton's films (which are all quite sophisticated allegories in their own ways) are really aimed at children, their imaginative power and strong sense of Good vs Evil link them up with the fairy-tales and the Disney films on which every modern child (except for the deprived Swedes) has been brought up. Vincent Price's CASTLE has echoes of Frankenstein, but also of THE SLEEPING BEAUTY and SNOW-WHITE; and of course EDWARD SCISSORHANDS takes one straight back to the long-legged Scissor Man of Struwpeter, who gave juvenile thumbsuckers (including me) so many nightmares at the age of 6 or 7.

For me, this is a 'PG' experience overall (like WILLOW) ^{with} and some moments of realistic '15' (not '12') violence at the end. The savagery of Jim's attack on Edward strikes a jarring note, since it is filmed in a way which draws the viewer into the violence (e.g. by the use of close-up of the victim's head as he lies defenceless). Of course we need some of the violence, since Jim's main role in the story is to represent brutish, mindless redneckery (as opposed to Kim's sympathetic romanticism.) To reduce the violence to "establishment only" level would make Edward's retaliation (and killing of Jim) less understandable - more a case of "giving Jim a taste of his own medicine" than of someone driven to self-defence through desperation. I would reduce the battering of Edward to about ~~four~~ ^{three} blows, take out kicks to body and remove the close-ups of the boy's head as he lies on the ground (see above). This would be to reduce violent process, and (hopefully) to remove the possibility of a young viewer getting the wrong kind of "charge" from the scene (i.e. identifying with the aggressor.)

This last sequence, for me, is the only part that takes the movie out of 'PG'; and I think it would be wrong to "solve" the Reel 6 problem (or duck it) by opting for a '12' uncut. (Would we have done this with WILLOW if a '12' had existed then? I hope not.) We have undertaken to talk to Fox about cuts for 'PG' (possibly to be made by Tim Burton himself.) I hope this works out; meanwhile, a test screening on the same lines as the one for WILLOW would not just be helpful, but illuminating about how younger children "read" fantasies like this one. For me, the test screening of WITCHES and WILLOW were not just enjoyable, but a valuable part of re-training now that my own kids are grown up.

P.S. The other sequences which the previous team felt to be (vaguely) unsuitable for 'PG' seemed to me to be OK, in context. The attempted seduction of Edward by Joyce in the hairdressing chair (Reel 4) is funny rather than sexy, and we mustn't read too much of our censor's knowledge into the scissors/corsage juxtaposition. The cuts actually proposed by the scissors (to Vincent Price's face, then to Kevin's face and arm) may be rather bloody, but this won't alarm kids unduly, since they will realise that the cuts are really Edward's caresses (Oh dear! No S & M connotations intended).

So: no cuts in cutting, but some in nasty body-blows, for 'PG' - the same category as for ARACHNOPHOBIA.

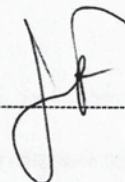
CUTSDate 28/1/91Film / ~~Video~~Title EDWARD SCISSORHANDSSubmitted by 20th Century FoxProposed category 'PG'

Reel 6 In final fight between Edward and Jim, reduce intensity of violence by removing heavy Kick to Edward's midriff as he rests on hands and knees ~~on floor~~ after being hit by falling ceiling and by reducing ~~actual~~ sight of Edward being hit on head by board wielded by Jim to ~~one~~ final blow only.

Resubmit.

[Confirmatory cuts list.]

Examiners



Favourable comments praised the film for being well acted, and based on an interesting story. Phrases like 'good', 'really nice story', 'Johnny Depp is a brilliant actor', 'I'm going to buy it on video' and 'I would watch it again' sum up the enthusiasm that most felt.

Particular annoyances included the granny's make up, confusion about her role as the story teller and the plot itself. These comments were in a minority, and were made by younger children (aged 8/9). Only one boy, aged eleven, was totally dismissive of the film describing it as 'pretty rubbish'.

As well as these suggestions in answer to the question, were a couple of endearing remarks from younger children - one of whom wanted to add 'a happy ending' and another simply wished to add 'hands'.

Of the comments which reflected concern about the film most referred to its 'scary' nature. Others included one six year old boy who felt that parents should view the film with their children, a seven year old boy who claimed he should not have seen the film, a ten year old boy who said it was the scariest film he had seen, a nine year old boy who felt that the swearing should be taken out and a ten year old girl who likened the film to a 'Freddy Horror' film.