

## **BBFC Board of Classification Meeting**

**Wednesday 24 March 2021**

(Meeting held remotely)

### **Present**

Patrick Swaffer	President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Dave Barrett	Deputy Chief Executive
Matt Tindall	Senior Policy Officer (minutes)
Edward Lamberti	Policy Manager (for item 4)
Chris Davies	Compliance Manager (for items 5 and 6)

### **Apologies**

Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
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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.

### **VOD ratings**

3. Matt updated the Board on efforts to ensure greater coverage of BBFC ratings on VOD and streaming platforms, to better protect children and provide trusted guidance to families.

### **Research**

4. Edward briefed the Board on research exploring the risks and public policy responses associated with non-photographic sexually abusive and pornographic content. The Policy team is working on this project with

academics from the onlinePROTECT research group at the University of Lincoln. The aim is to better understand the history and cultural context of this material, its prevalence today, the potential harm impacts, and potential future impact of technological change. The findings will inform BBFC policy and will also be relevant to proposals to tackle online harms.

### **Classification issues: sexual detail at 15/18**

5. Chris presented a number of clips featuring the sight of semen. The guidelines at 15 state: “Sexual activity may be portrayed, but usually without strong detail. There may be strong verbal references to sexual behaviour. Repeated very strong references, particularly those using pornographic language, are unlikely to be acceptable. Works whose primary purpose is sexual arousal are unacceptable.”
6. At 15, the Board considered clips from French drama 120 BPM, British TV series IT’S A SIN, British drama ON CHESIL BEACH, Irish drama RIALTO, short film THRIVE and German comedy-drama TONI ERDMANN. In all cases, the Board agreed that given the brevity and lack of focus on the stronger detail, and the presence of strong contextual or narrative justifications, each work was correctly classified at 15.
7. At 18, the Board considered two clips. The first was from US drama SHELTER, in which a man coerces a homeless woman into sexual activity and she is seen in the aftermath with semen on her face. The Board agreed with the 18 classification due to the more sustained focus on the sight of semen and the abusive context in which the scene takes place. The second clip was from the US drama MOPE, in which a number of male porn performers are encouraged to ejaculate onto a woman’s face with subsequent sight of her face covered in semen. Given the more sustained nature of the sequence, the close focus on strong sexual detail, and the porn shoot context, the Board agreed with the 18.

### **Recent viewing**

8. The Board discussed their recent viewings of the film MINARI (12) and an episode of Alan Bennett’s 2020 TALKING HEADS series, ‘An Ordinary Woman’ (18).
9. MINARI is a US drama in which a Korean family tries to start a farming business in Arkansas in the 1980s. It was classified 12 with the ratings info ‘rude gesture, suicide references’. The Board agreed with the 12 rating, and thought that the film’s scenes of threat and emotional upset were also more comfortably placed at 12 than PG.
10. The TALKING HEADS episode features a mother discussing the sexual lust she feels for her 15 year old son, and her attempt to act on her feelings under the misapprehension that they are reciprocated. The episode was submitted with a

12 request, but classified 18 with the ratings info 'child sex abuse theme'. Aggravating factors contributing to the classification included the degree with which the mother downplays her actions as 'normal'; the relative lack of consequences she faces; and the fact the audience is invited to sympathise with a predator in a domestic setting and position of power/authority within the family unit. The Board agreed with the 18 classification.

## **AOB**

11. There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting: 29 April 2021**