

CLASSIFIED: UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE BBFC

T. P. O'CONNOR GROUNDS FOR DELETION

1. Indecorous, ambiguous and irreverent titles and subtitles 2. Cruelty to animals 3. **The irreverent treatment of sacred subjects** 4. Drunken scenes carried to excess 5. **Vulgar accessories in the staging** 6. The modus operandi of criminals 7. Cruelty to young infants and excessive cruelty and torture to adults, especially women 8. **Unnecessary exhibition of under-clothing** 9. The exhibition of profuse bleeding 10. **Nude figures** 11. Offensive vulgarity, and impropriety in conduct and dress 12. Indecorous dancing 13. **Excessively passionate love scenes** 14. Bathing scenes passing the limits of propriety 15. **References to controversial politics** 16. Relations of capital and labour 17. Scenes tending to disparage public characters and institutions 18. **Realistic horrors of warfare** 19. Scenes and incidents calculated to afford information to the enemy 20. **Incidents having a tendency to disparage our Allies** 21. Scenes holding up the King's uniform to contempt or ridicule 22. **Subjects dealing with India, in which British Officers are seen in an odious light**, and otherwise attempting to suggest the disloyalty of British Officers, Native States or bringing into disrepute British prestige in the Empire 23. Incidents indicating the actual perpetration of criminal assaults on women 24. Scenes depicting the effect of venereal disease, inherited or acquired 25. The exploitation of tragic incidents of the war 26. **Gruesome murders and strangulation scenes** 27. Incidents suggestive of incestuous relations 28. Themes and references relative to 'race suicide' 29. Scenes laid in disorderly houses 30. Materialization of the conventional figure of Christ 31. Executions 32. **The effects of vitriol throwing** 33. The drug habit. e.g. opium, morphia, cocaine, etc 34. **Subjects dealing with White Slave traffic** 35. Subjects dealing with premeditated seduction of girls 36. **'First Night' scenes** 37. Scenes suggestive of immorality 38. **Indelicate sexual situations** 39. Situations accentuating delicate marital relations 40. **Men and women in bed together** 41. Illicit relationships 42. **Prostitution and procurement** 43. Confinements



JAMES FERMAN

James Ferman was Secretary (the role later being renamed Director) of the BBFC between 1975 and 1999 and his 24-year tenure saw some of the most significant changes in Board history. The Obscene Publications Act was extended in 1977 to include film works, something that Ferman had campaigned for as it would enable otherwise 'obscene' material to be defended for its artistic merit. Ferman also oversaw the expansion of the Board when it became the designated body for classifying under the Video Recordings Act 1984. Ferman previously worked as a lecturer at the University when it was known as the Polytechnic of Central London.

Source: BFI Stills Archive

One of our favourite London films"
Jason Solomons/Robert Elms
BBC London

"A very, very good film indeed"
Lindsay Anderson, in *Time Out*

"...a smashing Cockney film"
The New Yorker

"miraculously well directed
...impeccably played."
The Times

"Easily the most entertaining..."
Big Issue

"...easily among the greatest..."
Sight and Sound

BRONCO BULLFROG

Del Walker
Ann Gooding
Sam Shepherd

POSTER FOR BRONCO BULLFROG

(Barney Platts-Mills, 1970). Screened at Regent Street Cinema in October 1970, famously pulled from the listings for the Royal Premiere of *Three Sisters* (Laurence Olivier, 1970), prompting a demonstration by the *Bronco Bullfrog* cast and their friends.

SOURCE: PRIVATE COLLECTION OF BARNEY PLATTS-MILLS

La Vie Commence DEMAIN

André LAPARTE
Jean-Paul SARTRE
Daniel CLOACHE
Jean ROSSAND
LE CORBUSIER
PICASSO
Auréli GIDE

MILHAUD
AUMONT
VEDREZ
RUBIN

LA VIE COMMENCE DEMAIN (LIFE BEGINS TOMORROW)

Poster for *La Vie Commence Demain* (Nicole Védres 1950). The film was shown at the Cinema on January 9 1951 and it is believed that this was the first screening of an X film.

CLASSIFIED: UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE BBFC

CURATED BY: Jen Evans (Senior Archivist, BBFC), Anna McNally (Archivist, University of Westminster) and Guy Osborn (Professor at the School of Law, University of Westminster).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thanks to The Cinema Museum, Kennington, the British Film Institute, Barney Platts-Mills, Alex Sinclair, and staff of the BBFC.

This exhibition, hosted by the University of Westminster and held in conjunction with the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), is an opportunity to celebrate the centenary of the BBFC in a venue with an enviable film heritage. The Old Cinema became the birthplace of British Cinema when it was chosen to demonstrate the moving pictures of the Lumière brothers in 1896, and went on to be a venue for 'X'-rated and avant-garde films.

Established as the British Board of Film Censors in 1912, the BBFC has sought to represent public opinion and provide child protection for 100 years. It has moved from considering "indecorous dancing" in films in the 1910s to online classification of downloadable content in 2012, and the milestones of film classification are represented here through original artefacts and documents.

By examining items from the archives of the University and the BBFC we can appreciate the rich development of cinema history from a unique perspective. The impact of legislation upon film exhibition becomes clear from the rarely seen papers of the BBFC, while the work of the School of Law at the University further underlines the connection between the two through its innovative research on film and law.



THE CINEMA AT THE UNIVERSITY

The theatre at 307 Regent Street was opened in 1848. Originally part of the Royal Polytechnic Institution, it was designed to show large-format magic lantern slides and other 'optical exhibitions'. It seated 1000 people in two tiers, and shows ran twice a day. On 21st February 1896 the theatre was rented out to the Lumière brothers for what was to be the first showing of moving film to a paying audience in Britain. Photograph of the interior of the Regent Street Cinema, believed to have been taken around 1910.

Source: University of Westminster Archive

BBFC DIGITAL SERVICES

In 2008 the BBFC and the home entertainment industry carried out research that showed a strong public desire for trusted labelling for Video On Demand content. In response the BBFC launched a voluntary, best practice service to help consumers, and parents in particular, judge the suitability of films and videos for themselves and their families. BBFC digital services provide the BBFC's trusted and recognised classification symbols for film and video content being distributed online, with over 38 studios and content platforms now using the system.

bbfc
British Board of Film Classification
www.bbfc.co.uk

Powered by
BT Vision

The following work has been classified for supply by digital delivery

THE WOMAN IN BLACK
[DFC20466]

Quentin Tarantino
Director

Daniel Craig
Director

Contains intense supernatural threat and horror
Suitable for 12 years and over



T. P. O'CONNOR

When T. P. O'Connor was appointed President of the BBFC in 1916, one of his first tasks was to give evidence to the Cinema Commission of Inquiry, set up by the National Council of Public Morals in 1916. He summarised the Board's Policy by listing forty-three grounds for deletion laid down for the guidance of examiners. This list was drawn from the Board's annual reports for 1913-1915. The list shows the strictness necessary if the Board was to earn the trust of the public and relevant bodies, including Government. Reasons for deleting scenes from films included "Bathing scenes passing the limits of propriety", "Indecorous dancing" and "Situations accentuating delicate marital relations".

ELIZABETH II c. 39

Video Recordings Act 1984

1984 CHAPTER 39

An Act to make provision for regulating the distribution of video recordings and for connected purposes.
[12th July 1984]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Preliminary

1.—(1) The provisions of this section shall have effect for the interpretation of terms used in this Act.

(2) "Video work" means any series of visual images (with or without sound)—
(a) produced electronically by the use of information contained on any disc or magnetic tape, and
(b) shown as a moving picture.

(3) "Video recording" means any disc or magnetic tape containing information by the use of which the whole or a part of a video work may be produced.

(4) "Supply" means supply in any manner, whether or not for reward, and, therefore, includes supply by way of sale, letting on hire, exchange or loan; and references to a supply are to be interpreted accordingly.

A 2

VIDEO RECORDINGS ACT 1984

In 1984 the Video Recordings Act (VRA) was passed following the arrival of video in the UK. The BBFC became the authority designated by Parliament for classifying videos, and changed its name to the British Board of Film Classification. The VRA made it an offence for a video work to be supplied if it had not been classified, or to supply a classified work to a person under the age specified in the certificate.

Image used under the Open Government Licence v1.0.

CLASSIFIED: UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE BBFC

BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS
CARLISLE HOUSE, SOHO, W.1.
CINEMA 1670 (WINE)
SECRETARY: J. BROOKE WILKINSON.

This is to Certify
that "The Fall of the House of Usher"
has been Passed HORRIFIC for
Public Exhibition when no children
under 16 are present

Examiner N.S. ARW.
H.P. W. Harris
President.

Image: courtesy of The Cinema Museum, Kennington

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

