

BBFC

BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CLASSIFICATION

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From: Robin Duval *Director*

19th April 1999

Cllr E Goodman  
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Castlefield Road  
Reigate  
Surrey  
RH2 0SH

Dear Cllr Goodman,

Thank you for your latest letter of 15th April.

I am afraid it is you, not the BBFC, that is in error. The Press Statement on **Seul Contre Tous** is an accurate account, as we know from our own communications with relevant bodies including the police. The Met is of course not the only force involved. Also Section 3 action does not require the consent of the DPP.

Yours sincerely,



President  
Andreas Whittam Smith  
Director  
Robin Duval

A Limited Company Registered in England  
Registered Number 117289  
Registered Office as above

1999.

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**PRESS STATEMENT****SEUL CONTRE TOUS**

The French cinema film, SEUL CONTRE TOUS, has been classified by the BBFC as '18' without cuts.

However, the BBFC required that two scenes, taken from a pre-existing porno film, should be modified. The distributor decided to soften the image optically in each case so that the pornographic material became less graphically explicit. This has been accepted by the Board.

The scenes occur at a point in the film in which the central character, an out-of-work butcher, visits a porno cinema and meditates on his own miserable condition. The loveless images on the screen reflect his bleak views about sex and human relationships.

The Board recognized that the images performed a function within the context and structure of the film as a whole. They were nevertheless of a particularly extreme nature which exceeded the boundaries of acceptability for BBFC classification in any medium. Their extended duration also placed them in breach of the requirement set out in the Board's published guidelines for '18' classification which require that "Images of real sex must be brief and justified by context". (Material of this kind is regularly the subject of prosecution under Sections 2 and 3 of the Obscene Publications Act 1959).

It has been suggested that the explicit Japanese film AI NO CORRIDA (IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES) might have provided the Board with a precedent for allowing material on this occasion. AI NO CORRIDA was granted a cinema '18' certificate in 1991 (it has never been given a video classification) after many years on the uncertificated arthouse circuit without legal challenge. The most apparent difference, however, between that film and SEUL CONTRE TOUS is that the images of sexual penetration in the latter are much more graphic and detailed.

Similarly, a recent BBFC decision to pass THE IDIOTS uncut despite an image of sexual intercourse was based on considerations which did not apply in the present case. The image in THE IDIOTS was only fleetingly seen and was much less graphically explicit in its effect.

The Board regrets any necessity to impose cuts or modifications upon a work. However, it acknowledges the care taken by the distributor on this occasion to reduce the pornographic explicitness to an acceptable level, while retaining a reasonable sense of what the director had intended.

**Andreas Whittam Smith - President**  
**Robin Duval - Director**

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