



Age Ratings You Trust

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6<sup>th</sup> November 2013

PO Box 570  
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Dear E. Goodman,

Thank you for your letter, dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

The BBFC Guidelines state that any form of physical restraint which prevents participants from indicating a withdrawal of consent is not acceptable in sex works. This concern is reflected in the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on the Obscene Publications Act which includes, in categories of material most commonly prosecuted, 'bondage (especially where gags are used with no apparent means of withdrawing consent)'.

Consequently, it is likely that the BBFC would require cuts to any submitted work where gags are used on participants, engaged in sexual acts, who are also fully restrained. In such cases it would not be clear that the participant could talk and so say if they wished to withdraw consent and, being fully restrained, they could not easily remove the gag themselves or, for example, indicate a withdrawal of consent by walking away. In practice, in most of these cases, it is not apparent from the video alone that the restrained participant has a meaningful way of withdrawing their consent.

But you are quite right that there are ways that a restrained and gagged individual could indicate a withdrawal of consent and a means of communication could be agreed between parties before they engage in bondage play. In rare cases it has been possible to allow the use of gags, combined with restraint, where it has been clearly established, and demonstrated, that the restrained and gagged individual is able to indicate a withdrawal of consent, for example because the gag and restraints have been loose and shown to be entirely ineffective. In these few cases, because it has been made clear that the restraint does not prevent participants from indicating a withdrawal of consent, the content does not breach the BBFC Guidelines.

I hope that is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Evans  
Senior Information Officer  
BBFC