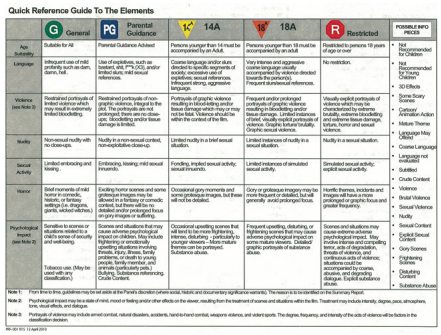
Written by Chris Alexander
Saturday, 17 April 2010 08:52

U.S. filmgoers know all about the MPAA, and if you're a scholar of American horror, you understand the long, tortured history of the battles between the ratings board and that most explicit and provocative of genres. But here in Canada, our film ratings system is radically different, and varies from province to province.

Here in my home, Ontario, we have run the gamut from ultraconservative (the '80s were a sanitized wash; try sitting through the butchered, bloodless Ontario hack-job edits of DAY OF THE DEAD or TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 for prime examples) to rather liberal today (Lars von Trier's ANTICHRIST got an R—which in Canada means no one under 18 admitted—without any scissoring; same with Darren Aronofsky's disturbing REQUIEM FOR A DREAM several years back). It's unpredictable when certain taboos will be socially accepted and when they'll be hidden from the supposedly easily corrupted public eye, and a study of what offends different countries and cultures is always a point of interest in film study.

Well, the Ontario Film Review Board (OFRB) have just moved their Toronto location, and in the process has sent around their current ratings guide. I've attached that chart for your enlightenment and amusement. Even if you don't reside in Ontario, it's fun to compare, if you dare, what shocks and scares the maple-syrup-fed censors, as specifically noted in the sixth column from the top.

Here it is…



Quick Reference Guide To The Elements

	G General	PG Parental Guidance	14A	18A	R Restricted	POSSIBLE INFO PIECES
Age Suitability	Suitable for All	Parental Guidance Advised	Persons younger than 14 must be accompanied by an Adult.	Persons younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult.	Restricted to persons 18 years of age or over	• Not Recommended for Children • Not Recommended for Young Children • 3D Effects
Language	Infrequent use of mild profanity such as damn, darn, hell.	Use of expletives, such as bastard, shit, f**k (OO), and/or limited slurs; mild sexual references.	Coarse language and/or slurs directed to specific segments of society; excessive use of mild profanity and expletives. Infrequent strong, aggressive language.	Very intense and aggressive coarse language usually accompanied by violence directed at specific segments of society. Frequent sexual references.	No restriction.	
Violence (see Note 3)	Restrained portrayals of limited violence which may result in extremely limited bloodletting.	Restrained portrayals of non-graphic violence, integral to the plot. The portrayals are not prolonged; there are no close-ups. Bleeding and/or tissue damage is limited.	Portrayals of graphic violence resulting in blood-letting and/or tissue damage which may or may not be fatal. Violence should be within the context of the film.	Frequent and/or prolonged portrayals of graphic violence resulting in bloodletting and/or tissue damage. Limited instances of fatal violence. Frequent instances of violence. Graphic torture/ bullying. Graphic sexual violence.	Visually explicit portrayals of violence which may be characterized by extreme brutality, extreme bloodletting, torture, sadism, sexual violence, torture, horror and sexual violence.	• Some Scary Scenes • Cartoon/ Animation Action • Mature Theme • Language May Offend • Coarse Language • Language not Recommended • Subtitled • Crude Content • Violence • Brutal Violence • Sexual Violence • Nudity • Sexual Content • Explicit Sexual Content • Gory Scenes • Frightening Scenes • Disturbing Content * • Substance Abuse
Nudity	Non-sexual nudity with no close-ups.	Nudity in a non-sexual context, non-exploitative close-up.	Limited nudity in a brief sexual situation.	Limited instances of nudity in a sexual situation.	Nudity in a sexual situation.	
Sexual Activity	Limited embracing and kissing...	Embracing, kissing; mild sexual innuendo.	Fondling, implied sexual activity; sexual innuendo.	Limited instances of simulated sexual activity.	Simulated sexual activity; explicit sexual activity.	
Horror	Brief moments of mild horror in comedic, historic, or fantasy settings (e.g. cartoons, gnome, wicked witches.)	Exciting horror scenes and some grotesque images may be allowed in a fantasy or comedic setting. Infrequent use of detailed and/or prolonged focus on gory images or suffering.	Occasional gory moments and some grotesque images, but these will not be detailed.	Gory or grotesque imagery may be more frequent or detailed, but will generally avoid prolonged focus.	Horrific themes, incidents and images will have a more prolonged or graphic focus and greater frequency.	
Psychological Impact (see Note 2)	Sensitive to scenes or situations related to a child's sense of security and well-being. Tobacco use. (May be used with any classification.)	Scenes and situations that may be sensitive to children, impact on children. May include frightening or emotionally disturbing scenes, verbal threats, injury, illness, family problems, or death to young people, family member, and animals. (Tobacco/alcohol pets.) Bullying, Substance referencing. Crude Content.	Occasional upsetting scenes that will tend to be more frightening, intense, disturbing - particularly to younger viewers – More mature themes can be portrayed. Substance abuse.	Frequent upsetting, disturbing, or alarming scenes that may cause adverse psychological impact on some mature viewers. Detailed/ graphic portrayals of substance abuse.	Scenes and situations may cause adverse or extreme psychological impact. May involve intense and compelling themes, prolonged or graphic threats of violence, and/ or continuous acts of violence; situations could be accompanied by coarse, explicit or disturbing dialogue. Explicit substance abuse.	

Note 1: From time to time, guidelines may be set aside at the Panel's discretion (where social, historic and documentary significance warrants). The reason is to be identified on the Summary Report.

Note 2: Psychological impact may be a state of mind, mood or feeling and/or other effects on the viewer, resulting from the treatment of scenes and situations within the film. Treatment may include intensity, degree, pace, atmosphere, tone, visual effects, and dialogue.

Note 3: Portrayals of violence may include armed combat, natural disasters, accidents, hand-to-hand combat, weapons violence, and violent sports. The degree, frequency, and intensity of the acts of violence will be factors in the classification decision.

RF-001 R10, 12 April 2010

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