

WRITTEN REASONS FOR DECISION SECTION 12

TITLE OF PUBLICATION: Hostel

OFLC REF:502373

HEADNOTE

Type of Publication:	Film 35mm
Title of Publication:	Hostel
Other known title:	Not Stated
OFLC Publication Reference No:	502373
Decision:	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.
Display Conditions:	Nil.
Descriptive Note:	Contains violence, offensive language, drug use and sex scenes.

The film *Hostel* is restricted to an adult audience because of its strong scenes of horror/violence, numerous sexual scenes and gratuitous nudity, and blatant drug use.

The film is a violent horror drama with some touches of black humour and several gruesome scenes. It contains frequent instances of strong offensive language, including "motherfucker". The story is about two young American men on a backpacker trip to Europe, looking for excitement, drugs and sex. While exploring Amsterdam with a third man (an Icelander met in Paris), they are told about a hostel in Slovakia where there are beautiful girls who will sleep with any foreigner. The trio head for Slovakia and find women and sex, but the women (and many of the other locals) are agents for an organisation called "Elite Hunting" that kidnaps young travellers and sells them to wealthy clients to torture and kill. Amid mounting tension, two of the men disappear and the audience watches the torture of one young American. The action accelerates when the third man almost meets the same fate. The last part of the film is devoted to his escape.

Matters of sex, horror, crime, cruelty and violence have been considered under s3(1) of the FVPC Act.

Sexual material is extensive. The tone reflects the callow nature of the two young American men "on the loose" in Europe. Sexual scenes include the obligatory visit to an Amsterdam brothel and hot and sweaty sexual encounters between the young Americans and women they meet at the Slovakian hostel. In each instance sex is clearly indicated by position and movement. There is breast nudity but upper bodies are the focus and no genitals are visible. The material includes several other, fairly gratuitous images of breast nudity and a number of coarse sexual references on the level of the phrase "Bang some new pussy". The film uses many of the conventions of the horror genre, such as the use of portentous music to create a mounting sense of unease. Horrendous events take place in dark, dungeonlike rooms. Individual horror images such as bloody froth on a shower wall, pliers closing on a finger and trays of torture instruments add to the "creepy" atmosphere. The horror effects set the scene for violence that includes strong scenes of cruelty and torture ending in death and the suicide of a woman who is rescued but cannot live with her disfigured face. This material has been considered under ss3(2)(f) and 3(3)(a)(i).

The crime at the heart of the story is a clever comment on a society where money really can buy anything and does not require further discussion. However, there are a number of depictions of the use of drugs. In Amsterdam, the young tourists ostentatiously smoke cannabis, both in cigarette form and with a bong, and talk about getting "stoned". Later, pills are swallowed during a scene in a nightclub and an unnamed drug is used by the kidnappers to render victims helpless. Drug use has been further considered under s3(3)(d). The drug use depicted is unlikely to promote or encourage the use of illegal substances. The context is clearly Amsterdam, well-known for its liberal attitudes and laws. Mature viewers will be aware that the use of cannabis, for instance, is illegal in New Zealand.

The film contains depictions of cruelty and torture. One scene in particular is a lengthy record of extreme sadism. The length of the scene – five minutes or more – and the camera's close and lingering focus on the victim's terror raise the question of whether the publication promotes or supports, or tends to promote or support, acts of torture or the infliction of extreme violence or extreme cruelty. The perpetrator plays with a victim chained to a chair, using tools such as a drill and scalpel from a collection laid out in the manner of surgeon's implements. Viewers see the drill entering flesh but the remainder of the torture is indicated by its effects on the victim. The man's face is in shot for most of the scene. He screams, chokes and pleads with his tormentor while blood, sweat and bile run from his mouth and chin. His tormentor tells him he can go, but when he tries to move he finds (and the viewer sees) that the bones at the back of his ankles have been cut. He crawls, screaming, towards the door but is hauled back by the hair. There may well be those who enjoy such depictions of pain and fear. However, the material falls within the conventions of the horror genre, even if it does push the limits of what is acceptable. The film's treatment of torture, although gruesome, cannot fairly be judged as promoting or supporting, or tending to promote or support acts of torture or the infliction of extreme violence or extreme cruelty.

The film has a number of scenes which depict torture (including the scene already discussed) and the infliction of serious physical harm. The drugging, kidnapping and torture of Elite Hunting's victims qualify as acts of significant cruelty. The manner of presentation is often bloody but seldom shows the viewer gruesome sights: the camera cuts away from most acts of violence and torture. Exceptions include occasional horror staples such as sawn-off fingers. A great deal is left to viewers' imaginations, helped by a focus on evocative objects such as surgical instruments. Although it involves several shootings, the escape of one of the Americans is punctuated by black comedy, particularly in his efforts to hang on to his salvaged fingers, his conversations

about the "work" with staff members who think he is one of them, and his encounter with the severed heads of his former companions. Although the escape offers viewers fast-action relief from the torture chamber, the horror and violence continue with the rescue of a woman who has a grisly eyeball hanging from its socket. The young man cuts it off but the woman suicides in front of a train when she sees her destroyed face. The hanging eyeball is intended to make squeamish viewers cringe, but the suicide is handled with restraint: the act is shown only as blood spattering onlookers.

The publication requires restriction to an adult audience. It contains strong violence, torture and cruelty, sexual content that includes gratuitous displays of breast nudity, and ostentatious drug use. There is a likelihood of injury to the public good if the publication is made available to children or young persons. Overall, *Hostel* pushes the limits of acceptable horror/violence but nevertheless pays homage to the conventions of the genre. The main characters are callow but authentic and the fairly gratuitous inclusion of sexual scenes, nudity and drug use is in keeping with their rather juvenile preoccupations. These elements require some maturity in viewers. However, the high extent and degree of the violence and cruelty, particularly the scenes of gruesome torture, are likely to disturb young audiences. Material such as this, presented as entertainment, may also play a part in desensitisation to media representations of violence, with the associated risk of desensitisation in real-life situations. Adult audiences are more likely to be critical viewers who are able place the material within its genre.

Written reasons are not legally required for section 12 submissions, but it is the policy of the Classification Office to provide them.

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See also film poster, p139 - 600169

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Date	5/1/06	OFLC Ref	502373
Applicant	FVLIS		
Applicant to Labelling Body	Sony Pictures		
Title (On Screen)	Hostel		
Other Known Title	Not stated		
Director/s	Eli Roth		
Producer/s	Eli Roth, Chris Briggs, Mike Fleiss		
System Format	35mm film	Country of Origin	USA
Language/s	English		

Classification	R18		
Descriptive Note	Contains violence, offensive language, drug use and sex scenes.		
Excision/s	Date Cleared		
File stored 18/1/06			
Total Running Time	94.35	Total Running Time after Excisions	

Screen Gems Notice

L G F Lions Gate

Next

Raw Nerve

Horror

Quentin Tarantino presents

Horror sounds - thunder, drips
Disrupts -

01.09

In
Bloody froth drip down sheer walls
Red bloody blades

Red brick down plughole

Dir Eli Roth

02:22

Cuts to street - loud rock, boys

"Smoke pot"

Hostel sign - Am boys in old city

Smoking cannabis

Amsterdam "We can't rat a girl who is stored"

More smoking - bong

Character with accent "You want to get stored?"

3:59

Club scene

"Fuckin' - Have - sex with her

Quick flick of sexual scene

- man holds out video camera showing scene

4:30

Fight starts "Fuck you" etc x several
Threw out

3 boys walk along canal

Pass windows where women displaying
Scene

"in bang some need pussy"

3 montages of sex - movement panties

One boy walks along corridor, walking
walks in on a ~~to~~ bvd scene

No real detail - woman slapping his
back to camera

"You watch, you pay"

2 boys go on to watch

3rd enters room with large bed, woman "bare breasts"

8.35 Hostel - coarse and offensive language constant

Late - things thrown at them

Inside - st. scene - woman & stude man lying on bank

9.51 "the young man with bony "clitoris" - the serious boy"

11.08 "Alex" - a pimp

Shows quick flash pics of nude groups of women

11.53 Alex - "they fuck you" "so much pussy" "they go crazy for any foreigners" Cont about women - hostel in Slovakia

13.02 Adolescent humor - butt taped to face with black pen

13.39 Older man enters train carriage

15.33 Hand on thigh - "Don't fuckin' touch me" - "What is your name?"

6.28 Portentous music as they get off train K Bratislava "Poricany"

Industrial area - desolate waste, old stone

8.33 Hostel is beautiful old building Women dressing - bare breasts

"Spa!"

"Jugs!"

20.23

Nakedness - but fairly discreet

"I have the smoothest balls in Iceland"
Josh - "foreen removed at birth"

"Hello" - waggles the face on buttocks

22.23

Club scene + music loud

X

Pills - shown women putting in
mouths

Marijuana cigarette - women smoking

23.23

Josh asthmatic - uses inhaler
Music potent.

Small boys surround him - "Small
swords"

The man from the train is back
Josh takes him in for a drink.

25.23

Tattoo on arm focused on

Bedroom - hot sweaty sex -
two couples - horseplay

26.35

Josh on back have breastfed women
on top - movement but faces
upper bodies - evocative music
used. Fade at orgasm

28.57

Mystery -

30.53

Dly tells Josh about a girl drowning

Small children - suddenly in party,
hand out - "Bubble gum"

- 32.00 "Museum forty"
 Guillotine - bloody spatter - does
 tickets
 screams in distance
 "Sond "crushes"
- 32.56 Catch up with man they've been following
 - wearing the missing man's jacket
- 33.53 Head of Oleg - in dungeon?
 Woman tied to chair
- 34.31 Pliers around fingers - music
 portentous but cuts to show
 to woman cutting toenails
 Conversation - talk about "Fukin'
 these girls"
- 36.32 Disco - Josh drinks something
 face screwed up -
 hallucinates - sees friend
- 37.47 Josh now obviously ill - back at
 hostel
- 38.42 Portentous; creepy, man's legs
 Pax - dark young man, staggering
 to toilet - lock
 Group outside door don't react to his
 banging
- 40.41 Faces - shifts to torture chamber
 instruments laid out, - seen through
 narrow beam torch
 Man enters (masked - man from train)
- 41.53 Josh tried to chant
 "please, please" "Fuck"

Chairs shown

X Drill enters flesh - screams
Tray of instruments - drill
replaces

Wide shot of Josh choking

Man from train reveals himself

43.26 "Why" Man from train holds up
scalpel. "I always wanted to be a
surgeon"

Josh "Let me go please" Bloody,
sweaty, dripping -
torque cord - sounds of
something too while camera

X - tries to leave but finds
that bone at back of ankles
is cut

Crawls, screaming, headed back by
hand

47.37 Pax enters another hostel room
diff woman

48.35 Small children attack

Pax almost chokes one

50.02 "You are so far from home"

Music cut potentoung

Pax in bar - talks with the two
girls they had sex with
They confuse him but he goes

- with one. — "Art Shows"
 even you looks heavy-eyed - older,
 dark under eyes etc
- 54.23 One of the women takes Pax to
 what looks like an unbalanced
 building. Drivers wait outside.
- 55.73 Pax suspicious asks someone who
 comes out what 'H's' like
- 56.59 "Mr serious Anderson" - faint
 portentious man - walk along
 corridors - old
- 57.47 Shows the "surgeon" working on
 the open chest
 "Fuckin' bitch"
 "I paid a lot of money for you
 and that make you 'my bitch'"
- Pax set upon by two men - dragged
 along corridor to past bloody sights
 - little detail - grips steel
 chained to chain
- 59.53 Blank screen
- Two men - one puts a gun to his face
 "Tall"
- Hear Pax sobbing as one man
 masked, approaches with blade
 Clashes scissors close to face the
 snips a sample - puts in packet.
- Pronged instrument - "Some"
 but not seen

Pax begins speaking German
 Man stops him and leaves
 Further: coming and going.

03 35 Ball. gag in mouth - threatened
 - with instrument to head

Sound of buzz-saw - music
 crescendoes

Saw held in front of face

X Pax trying to shout, in extremes
 - choking.

Saw used to suddenly take off
 finger.

Man trips and drops saw on self

Josh Pax trying to re

Shot - Pax shoots on head

X Room from above - blood-
 spattered

Guard enters room - Pax
 shoots

X 1.06.52 Pax gathers up fingers - bloody
 music again portentous

Pax wearing horned mask - hiding

Body parts - body hauled out
 on trolley

Pax ? on trolley

M. 08.34 Hose cleaning down the
 slaughteryard

stamp of limb, hand falls off
trolley, the man clings to
Muscle cut posteriorly

10.11 Pax opens eyes - sees heads of
friends
claps of fingers
Limbs on benches
The worker is feeding body
parts into fire

Blow with hammer - from behind

12.11 Man, cut urgent
Pax now in a room
with locked etc

Pulls gloves on to hide damage

13.50 "Someone comes in"

"Big spider - he's preparing
for the job."

"Pussy, pussy"

thinks

"I want to feel it"

the man
assumes that
Pax is one of
the killers

"Fuck that shit"

"Motherfucker"

Over the top; black humor

17.31

Woman's screams from inside
- Pax runs back in
Echoes screams,
Pax shoots - the man.

1.19.23 Pax cuts off her eyeball - hanging
out - oozes white down
face

Stumbling out of building
Muscle urgent -

1.20.35 Car chase

Trunk movie - shows the
woman they were with and
the pimp Alex

Runs car and crashes into
the tree

Then runs back over one body
Very fast - blood seen but
shocking rather than

1.23.06 Children attack - there is a
gunfight - children beat a
man - bloody face
Road block - police returning
man on ground

1.24.23 Pax and woman - at train

Woman sees herself in a mirror
surface

Clay ruined face

See body bundle in front of train

Blood on faces of bystanders

1.26.47 Pax on train
Hears the man who joined them
on the train before

28.

Pat follows the man at sta
In toilets

Elite Hunting card

Pat suddenly carves off
fingers - clump and bloody

Pats head in toilet bowl

Screams

Slides forehead - leaves hand in
toilet

Finger - severed clump

130.33

Muscle now: shot of station

130.53

Hostel

Credits roll © 2005 Lionheart

134.25

Ends with notices as ~~re~~ beginning

1.34.25