

**Ontario
Film Review
Board**

1075 Millwood Road
Toronto ON M4G 1X6
Tel: (416) 314-3626
1-800-268-6024
Fax: (416) 314-3632

**Commission de controle
cinematographique
de l'Ontario**

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December 15, 2003

Valerie Smith
PO Box 90598
Markham Eglinton PO
Toronto ON M 1 J 3N7

Dear Ms Smith,

Thank you for your very well written letter about "**Texas Chainsaw Massacre**". It is gratifying to receive a letter where the writer has taken the time to research the material to extent you did. I will try to respond to your concerns.

1. The movie was first given a classification of "R", by a Panel of 3 Board Members. They also attached several Information Pieces: Brutal Violence, Frightening Scenes, Coarse Language and Substance Abuse.
2. The Distributor appealed the Panel decision.
3. On the Appeal (5 new Board Members), it was again given an "R" classification., with the following Information Pieces: Brutal Violence, Gory Scenes.
4. The Distributor then requested information about what he could cut from the movie and receive an 18A rating.
5. The Panel Chair of the Appeal Panel consulted with members of the Panel and identified the places where they felt cuts could be made to enable them to give an 18A rating. (They viewed the movie again to identify these cuts,) location and duration they were recommending.) They felt with the cuts recommended, the movie fell within the guidelines for an 18A movie. The Distributor also agreed to use a larger type for Information Pieces in his advertisements.
6. The Distributor made the cuts as requested by the Panel.

7. The designation 18A means that if a person under the age of 18 was in the theatre, an adult must have made the decision to take and to accompany that child into the theatre. We do have some parents who wish to make the decision of whether to take their 16 or 17 year old to a movie.
8. Our Board continues to struggle with the Horror Movie genre and we encourage them to post as many Information Pieces as they feel are necessary to assist the Parent in making wise decisions.
9. I am enclosing our Classification Chart that illustrates the various factors involved in reaching a Classification decision. The Notes at the bottom of the page are also important, especially #3 "the degree, frequency and intensity of the acts of violence will be factors in the classification decision.
10. Classification in Other Provinces:
 - BC 18A no cuts
 - AB 18A no cuts
 - SK 18A no cuts
 - MB R
 - ON 18A with cuts
 - MARITIMES 18 (R rating)
 - PQ 16+

I appreciate receiving letters such as yours; it is my intention to share it with the Members of the Board. It is important the Board Members hear all sides of a story and you have very clearly expressed your opinion. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call or write at any time.

Yours truly,


Bill Moody, Chair

P.O. Box 90598
Markham Eglinton Post Office
Toronto, Ontario M 1 J 3N7

Email: valsmith@fradical.com
Web site www.fradical.com

Sent by email

Chair
Ontario Film Review Board
1075 Millwood Road
Toronto, ON M4G 1X6

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: 18A rating for Texas Chainsaw Massacre

I would like to know why the Texas Chainsaw Massacre (TCM) is classified as 18A, meaning that children of any age can see it if accompanied by an adult. I would also like to know if this movie was originally given a Restricted rating, and if the distributor, Alliance Atlantis, appealed that rating and had it reduced to 18A.

Following are quotes regarding this movie that clearly indicate it warrants a Restricted rating:

*A contemptible film: Vile, ugly and brutal. There is not a shred of a reason to see it. / doubt that anybody involved in it will be surprised or disappointed if audience members vomit or flee.*¹

*What I don't understand is the R rating for the movie itself. This film is so gruesome, sick and explicitly violent that if it doesn't deserve an adults-only rating, you have to wonder what does.*²

*... "Massacre" means what it says. When limbs get sawed off here, it's done with realism - victims scream in genuine agony and die with terror on their faces.*³

*The blood and other body parts are plentiful, and some special-effects shots (like a pull-back through a woman's freshly cored skull) are beyond gratuitous.*⁴

In describing the "gore porn" that distinguishes movies like Kill Bill and TCM, Globe and Mail columnist Johanna Schneller described the following scene from Texas Chainsaw Massacre:

a scene must take something that's already disgusting -- let's say, Leatherface, the villain in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, slicing layers of flesh out of a young man's back -- and then amp it up for maximum nausea-inducement. The young man must be

¹ *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, National Post, October 24, 2003

² *Is Pacino in Scarface an Italian in Cuban clothing?*, Roger Ebert, National Post, October 24, 2003

³ *New 'Chainsaw' delivers big grosses*, New York Daily News, October 17, 2003

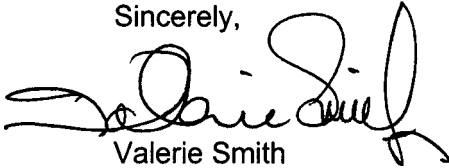
⁴ *Movie Review in Brief The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Salt Lake Tribune, October 17, 2003

*naked, and sitting in four inches of filthy water in a grime-streaked bathtub in a vermin-infested basement, while the genetically deficient relatives of the villain stroll happily around the floor above; he must be surrounded by buzzing flies and the severed parts of other corpses in varying stages of decay; he must be shivering and moaning, but quietly, and blank-eyed, to suggest that this torture has been going on for quite a long time; and the whole thing must be accompanied by repetitive thrash music.*⁵

At a preview screening of TCM in New York, 7-year-olds were in attendance, something the producer, Michael Bay, said was "completely wrong", and he asked "How did they even get into the screening?"⁶ Good question and one I would like the OFRB to answer as it relates to Ontario.

I look forward to a response at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Valerie Smith

⁵ *Hungry for blood? Gore pom's for you*, Globe and Mail, October 31, 2003

⁶ *Baying for blood (but it's all in fun)*, CanWest News Service, October 13, 2003