



Australian Government
Classification Review Board

23 February 2005

23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW

MEMBERS: The Hon Trevor Griffin (Deputy Convenor)
Ms Kathryn Smith
Ms Jan Taylor

APPLICANT: Roadshow Film Distributors Pty Ltd (Roadshow), represented
by Mr Brett Rosengarten, National Sales Manager.

BUSINESS: To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the
film *Constantine* (the film) MA15+ with the consumer advice
'Horror themes'.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) classified the film M with the consumer advice 'Horror and supernatural themes'.

2. Legislative provisions

The *Classification (Publications, Film and Computer Games) Act 1995* (the Act) governs the classification of films and the review of classification decisions. Section 9 of the Act provides that films are to be classified in accordance with the National Classification Code (the Code) and the classification guidelines.

Three essential principles underlie the use of the *2003 Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games* (the Guidelines), determined under s.12 of the Act:

- The importance of context
- Assessing impact
- Six classifiable elements – themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

3. Procedure

The Review Board viewed the film, received a written submission from the applicant, heard an oral presentation by Mr Brett Rosengarten, National Sales Manager of the applicant and then considered those matters, and the material in paragraph 4 below, in private.

4. Evidence and other material taken into account

In reaching its decision the Review Board had regard to the following:

- (i) Roadshow's application for review;
- (ii) Roadshow's written and oral submissions;
- (iii) The film;
- (iv) The Classification Board's report;
- (v) the relevant provisions in the Act;
- (vi) the relevant provisions in the Code, as amended in accordance with s.6 of the Act; and
- (vii) the *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2003*.

5 Synopsis

John Constantine has a special gift that he uses to keep the denizens of Hell at bay. When the twin sister of Los Angeles detective Angela Dodson kills herself by jumping from a multi-storey mental hospital building, Constantine finds himself in a race to prevent Satan's son taking over the earth.

6 Findings on material questions of fact

The Review Board found that the classifiable elements of the film are Themes and Violence.

The Review Board applied the Guidelines in determining the impact of these elements and concluded that there is no overwhelming threat presented in the film, that there is little repetition of particular horror scenes and the "horror" scenes, generally, did not look real. In fact, there was a lack of realism throughout the film and no part of the film was likely to encourage interactivity. Apart from the bath scene (at 67 minutes) where Constantine holds Angela under the water in her visit to Hell, the scenes of horror are not prolonged – even this scene is not unduly prolonged and it lacks realism.

Special effects are used extensively but do not create a sense of realism. Examples of this occur at 28 minutes when a demon comprising bugs attacks Constantine and at 43 minutes when Constantine visits Hell and is confronted by emaciated demons with the

tops of their heads cut off. There are numerous other scenes where special effects are used, accompanied by sound effects, where a fantasy context is reiterated.

7 Reasons for the decision

While the film contains horror and supernatural scenes, they are more stylised than realistic and are presented in a fantasy context. These themes are of moderate impact rather than strong.

8 Summary

Because the impact of the classifiable elements is moderate, the Review Board determined that the classification of the film *Constantine* is M with the consumer advice being 'Horror and supernatural themes'.