



Australian Government
Classification Review Board

23 January 2006

23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW

- MEMBERS:** The Hon Trevor Griffin (Deputy Convenor)
Mrs Gillian Groom
Mr Anthony Hetrih
- APPLICANT:** Twentieth Century Fox Film Distributors Pty Ltd (Fox),
original applicant for classification, represented by Mr Marcos
Oliveira (Managing Director, Fox); Mr Chris Smith (National
Print Controller, Fox) and Mr John Dickie (Consultant, Fox).
- BUSINESS:** To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the
film *Big Momma's House 2* 'M' (Mature) with the consumer
advice 'Moderate sexual references'.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) in a unanimous decision, classified the film *Big Momma's House 2* (the film) PG (Parental Guidance), with the consumer advice 'Mild sexual references, Mild violence'.

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.

Relevantly, the Code in paragraph 6 of the Table under the heading 'Films' provides that:

Films (except RC films, X 18+ films, R 18+ films, MA 15+ films and M films) that cannot be recommended for viewing by persons who are under 15 without the guidance of their parents or guardians

are to be classified 'PG'. The Code also sets out various principles to which classification decisions should give effect, as far as possible. Section 11 of the Act requires that the matters to be taken into account in making a decision on the classification of a film include:

- (a) the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults; and
- (b) the literary, artistic or educational merit (if any) of the film; and
- (c) the general character of the film, including whether it is of a medical, legal or scientific character; and
- (d) the persons or class of persons to or amongst whom it is published or is intended or likely to be published.

Three essential principles underlie the use of the *2005 Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games* (the Guidelines), determined under s.12 of the Act:

- The importance of context;
- The assessment of impact; and
- The six classifiable elements – themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

3. Procedure

The Review Board convened on 23 January 2006 to determine the validity of the application for review from Fox, received on 12 January 2006, view the film, and consider the substance of the application. Three members of the Review Board viewed the film *Big Momma's House 2* at the Board's meeting on 23 January 2006.

The Review Board then received an oral submission from Mr John Dickie on behalf of the applicant, in addition to the written submission provided. The Review Board then considered the matter.

4. Evidence and other material taken into account

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

- (i) Fox's application for review;
- (ii) Fox's written and oral submissions;
- (iii) The film;
- (iv) The relevant provisions in the Act;
- (v) The relevant provisions in the Code;
- (vi) The Classification Board's report; and
- (vii) The *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005*.

5 Synopsis

Martin Lawrence returns as FBI agent Malcolm Turner, a master of disguise who again goes undercover as the corpulent "Big Momma". To avert a national security disaster, Big Momma becomes a nanny housekeeper in the suspect's household - only to find him/herself becoming attached to the three children of the dysfunctional clan.

6 Findings on material questions of fact

The Review Board found that the film contains aspects or scenes of importance, under the classifiable elements of violence and sex.

(a) Violence –

Most of the violence comes in the last few minutes of the film. At approximately 81 minutes, Big Momma and Molly are tied up in the back of a van being driven at speed and being thrown around as the vehicle corners.

At approximately 86 minutes, there is a scene involving a chase and search by the gangsters for Big Momma. Big Momma stands on two piles of timber pallets, legs astride an aisle waiting for a searcher to walk below "her". A gang member sneaks along the walkway, gun drawn, and at the last minute looks up as Big Momma brings a piece of "2x4" timber down on his head, knocking him out. The context is more comical than threatening.

In both these scenes there are no wounds or blood visible, and no musical build up to assist in developing a threatening mood. In some respects, the violence could be described as "slapstick". The acts of violence are infrequent.

(b) Sex –

At approximately 14 minutes, at a job interview, one of the young women applicants is the object of the Big Momma's comments – "You can only get a full-over tan like that if you are butt-naked".

At approximately 29 minutes, as Big Momma is being searched, a wand beeps as it passes over Big Momma's breasts. She observes: "That's my support wire – it keeps these funbags off the floor".

At approximately 57 minutes, in a women's dressing-room, female models are changing clothes. One model asks Big Momma to undo her bra from the front as she squeezes her breasts together. Big Momma acts coyly and looks away and leaves without touching the bra.

At approximately 65 minutes, Big Momma is riding a motorised scooter (a Segway) which appears to be out of control. Big Momma slips between two young women wearing bikinis. As Big Momma passes rapidly between them, the handlebars of the scooter catch the bikini tops of the two women, pulling them off. The women cover their bare breasts with their hands quickly. The scene is fleeting and bare breasts are not visually depicted at any stage.

At approximately 79 minutes, Big Momma is in a dance-hall after being called by Molly for help and tells a dancing woman: "That's my leg you're humping".

None of these examples is prolonged or repetitious and there is no explicit sexual activity. There are no special effects to accentuate any sexual references.

The Review Board does not think that the cumulative effect of these scenes is to take the impact into the moderate category. In the Review Board's view, the sexual activity is infrequent and mild.

7 Reasons for the decision

While the film contains sexual references, they occur in a comedic context and, both separately and together, are no higher than mild in impact. There is also some violence depicted in the film but, again, these instances are mild in impact, relatively infrequent in occurrence, are justified by context and do not carry any threat or menace.

8 Summary

The Review Board determined that *Big Momma's House 2* should be classified PG, with the consumer advice "Mild sexual references, Mild violence".

The Review Board's decision was unanimous.