

## A Clockwork Orange



### Film information

- *A Clockwork Orange*
- Director: Stanley Kubrick
- Status: 18 uncut
- Year: 1971

Genre: Drama

An interesting history accompanies Stanley Kubrick's grim view of the future. The BBFC was initially shown a screenplay based on Anthony Burgess's novel in 1967 and advised the distributors that a film showing 'an unrelieved diet of vicious violence and hooliganism' would be unlikely to be acceptable.

However, when the finished film was submitted to the BBFC in 1971 (by which time the age bar for seeing an X film had been raised from 16 to 18), it was passed at X with no cuts. At the time, the BBFC's Secretary, Stephen Murphy, defended the film by stating that:

"Disturbed though we were by the first half of the film, which is basically a statement of some of the problems of violence, we were, nonetheless, satisfied by the end of the film that it could not be accused of exploitation: quite the contrary, it is a valuable contribution to the whole debate about violence".

There was nonetheless a strong body of press and public opinion that the criminal and anti-social actions of the film's main character, Alex, would be copied by young people, inspired by his charismatic example to break the law. Indeed, reports in the papers suggested that some attacks now occurring were inspired by the film. In fact, however, no such behaviour by anyone over the age of 18 was ever reliably established as being related to the film.

In 1973, allegedly concerned about reports of copycat violence, and threats made to the safety of himself and his family, Kubrick withdrew the film from circulation in the UK. This was in spite of the fact that the film had been judged by the BBFC to be acceptable for public viewing for adults over the age of 18. At no time did the BBFC reject the film - although this is a common misconception - and it continued to be available throughout much of the rest of the world.

It was not until after Kubrick's death that his family agreed to permit the release of the film again. It was submitted to the BBFC in 1999 for a modern classification certificate and received an 18, without cuts, to replace its old X certificate. There was a muted response from the public, and the video version of 2000 was also rated 18 uncut.

<https://bbfc.co.uk/case-studies/clockwork-orange>