

Title: Sex. Violence. Family Values
Director: Ken Kwek
Cast: Adrian Pang, Pam Oei, Vadi PVSS and Lez Ann Chong,
Language: English

'Sex. Violence. Family Values' is a compendium of three short stories set in contemporary Singapore. The first short film, 'Cartoons' is about a kindergarten teacher who finds a series of disparaging cartoons drawn by one of her young pupils. The second short 'Porn Masala' sees an eccentric filmmaker trying to direct a porno film with the assistance of his wife, with a script that involves a sexual tryst between a student and her professor. The third short 'The Bouncer' revolves around a middle-aged man who has to come to terms with his daughter taking part in a pole dancing competition at a bar where he works as the bouncer.

The short films 'Cartoons' and 'Porn Masala' were submitted in December 2011 and classified PG13, and M18 respectively. The film 'Sex.Violence.Family Values' which included the short film 'The Bouncer' was subsequently submitted for classification in August 2012. 'The Bouncer' was classified NC16 while 'Sex.Violence.Family' reflected the highest classification of the three films, that was, M18. In classifying 'Porn Masala', the Board recognised that the film was a satire on racial ignorance and stereotyping. The M18 rating was accompanied by a consumer advice for coarse language and racial stereotyping for the viewing public to make an informed choice.

In September 2012, the MDA received public complaints concerning the racist language used by one character, and another in a local school uniform. The complaints appeared to be triggered by an online trailer released ahead of the film's intended premiere in October 2012. In view of the strong feedback against the film, the MDA sought views from the Films Consultative Panel (FCP), a community advisory panel made up of a cross section of Singapore society. Having viewed the film, the FCP felt that the content of the short film "Porn Masala" may be deeply offensive to some viewers. Out of 24 advisory panel members, an overwhelming 20 members felt that while the film may be a satire, the specific comments and slurs were distasteful, and demeaning to Indians to the extent that it should not be given a rating. These included comments which referred to Indians having a body odour and having a penchant for drinking and beating up their wives. Members also noted that the film included derogatory comments such as "Abu Neh Neh" and that the overall impact was strong and could be interpreted to denigrate a race. The remaining four members felt that the film can be allowed under a R21 rating. They opined that while the language used in the film was deliberately repugnant and likely to offend viewers, the film was not intended to be racist but rather, uses the bigoted film director as a mirror to depict ignorant individuals who perpetuate racism within a society.

The FCP observed that the use of a recognisable school uniform while regrettable was not in breach of the Film Classification Guidelines. It, hence did not take exception to the depiction of a character in a school uniform. Having carefully considered the concerns expressed by the FCP and the prevailing community standards, the Board repealed the M18 classification that was earlier issued for the films 'Porn Masala' and 'Sex.Violence.Family Values.' Both films were not allowed for all ratings (NAR).

The film director Ken Kwek and his producer The Butter Factory lodged an appeal against the BFC's decision in November 2012. The Films Appeal Committee (FAC) met in December 2012 to hear the appeal. After hearing representations on the film, the FAC decided to reverse the BFC's "Not Allowed for All Ratings" decision, and allow the film under an R21 rating with edits to the racial references that are offensive to the Indian community. In arriving at the decision, the FAC took into consideration the feedback received as well as the film classification guidelines. They were of the

view that the film did not condone or promote racism but some of the racial references were offensive.

Ken Kwek submitted the edited version of the film in February 2013. The racially-sensitive references, identified by the FAC to be removed before the film could be allowed, were muted and replaced with music. The BFC has classified the edited version R21 with the consumer advice "Sexual and Racial References".