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News Release

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BBFC CUTS SEXUALISED VIOLENCE IN JAPANESE FILM

The BBFC has required 11 cuts (approximately three and a quarter minutes of screen time) to the Japanese cinema film **Ichi the Killer**. The cuts have been made to remove extreme sexualised violence. These are the most substantial cuts required by the BBFC to an 18 rated film since 1994.

The Board's main concern is with content which is likely to promote harmful activity. The Board's Guidelines constrain, in particular, depictions which eroticise or appear to endorse sexual violence. Of specific concern are sexual images in a violent context which are designed to titillate. The Guidelines take account of academic research which indicates that violence when mixed with explicit sexual images (women forcibly stripped, shots which linger on naked breasts or genitalia during rape or assault) may produce a harmful response in some viewers.

The scenes cut from **Ichi the Killer** include naked women being sexually mutilated or beaten or killed. They contain images of erotically explicit violence which have never been passed by the BBFC at any classification level.

Ichi the Killer is a live action film based on a popular Japanese manga comic. Ichi, who has unusual powers, is caught in a conflict between two rival yakuza gangs. The film taken as a whole belongs to a genre of vivid fantasy violence which has been part of Japanese cinema for many years. The Board does not consider that the cartoon-like damage perpetrated by male gangsters on one another in the rest of the film is likely, at the adult classification level, to inspire emulation. However, this contrasts sharply with the eroticized scenes of violence against female characters which the Board has cut. These scenes appear to the Board to have no function other than the pleasure of the onlooker.

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