

## WRITTEN REASON FOR DECISION SECTION 12

TITLE OF PUBLICATION: Savage Honeymoon

OFLC REF:9902216

### HEADNOTE

**Type of Publication:** 35mm Film

**Title of Publication:** Savage Honeymoon

**Other known title:** Not Stated

**OFLC Publication Reference No:** 9902216

**Decision:** Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

**Display Conditions:** Nil.

**Descriptive Note:** Contains offensive language and anti-social behaviour.

The 35mm film entitled *Savage Honeymoon* is classified as objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years. This classification is due to the publication's treatment of nudity, offensive language, violence, crime and anti-social behaviour including conspicuous and substantial consumption of alcohol.

The publication contains a single feature film which is a New Zealand production that is set in West Auckland. It concerns three generations of the Savage family who have a very close bond and all live together. The narrative covers three days in their lives and begins with Mickey Savage going to find his stolen motorbike which is easily recovered from a naïve young man. The bike is symbolic of the family's ethos and daughter, Leesa, is determined to gain possession of the bike before the weekend is over. A number of incidents occur, gatecrashing a wedding, receiving stolen goods, raided by the police, before the family decide to go on a second honeymoon. They go to a camping ground north of Auckland where they spend a considerable time drinking and socialising with others in the camp. A strain develops between Mickey and Lou sufficient for her to leave the camping ground. Their children,

Leesa and Dean, disappear on the motorbike and eventually find a party with a number of young people. Both Mickey and Dean get into fights, with Dean receiving numerous injuries. The conclusion of the weekend finds the family happy and relaxed in their temporary home.

Consideration of the publication under s3(1) of the FVPC Act finds that the publication deals with matters of nudity, offensive language, violence, crime and anti-social behaviour. The stronger depictions of violence are discussed further under s3(3)(a)(i). There is an indication of criminal activity in the feature with Mickey handling stolen goods and later selling the goods. More directly there are depictions of several people drinking alcohol and driving including Leesa and Dean on the motorbike. A very small amount of nudity is depicted. Most nudity concerns Leesa's pierced nipple which has her grandmother's wedding ring attached. The brief depictions are intended to have a comic effect on the audience rather than be titillatory. Offensive language is wide-spread in the publication with all members of the family and their friends commonly using words such as "fuck". On one occasion Leesa calls her father a "bullshitting old cunt" which causes them both some distress. Added to the use of offensive language is the strong use of the New Zealand vernacular which may offend some members of the public.

The publication does not raise issues which require further consideration under s3(2) of the FVPC Act while it does raise issues under s3(3)(a)(i) of the FVPC Act. The depiction of the infliction of serious physical harm is of a moderate extent and degree and in a realistic manner. Dean is assaulted while at a party by a number of men. He initially is able to maintain some control of the fight but eventually there are too many men and he falls to the ground. Dean is depicted lying in a foetal position by a fire while several men kick his body. He is rescued from this by Leesa who drives the motorbike through the group of men. Later Dean's face is shown with considerable blood on it. His family offer him alcohol as a restorative and possible pain-killer.

The most concerning and sustained activity in the publication is the consumption of alcohol by the Savage family. This is of some concern because of the behaviour demonstrated by the family under the influence of alcohol. Grandmother Maisie is never without a glass of spirits in her hand and has a bar set up in the boot of her car. Lou and Mickey appear to drink much of the time alternating between beer and spirits. In an attempt to give their son, Dean, a good time they mix a cocktail of white spirits in a crash helmet, set fire to it and present it to him to drink. He is required to blow out the flames and drink the entire amount while a room full of people cheer him on. Lou makes another cocktail for their neighbours at the camping ground. This involves tequila and sweet chilli sauce and is mixed in a blender. The recipient is a conservative middle class male. When he drinks this cocktail he is prepared to do anything including making a bonfire of the fence around his caravan and placing a gas cylinder on the bonfire. The gas cylinder explodes like a sky rocket just above their caravan. Recipes for both cocktails appear in the closing credits of the film. Leesa is shown drinking a quarter of a 750ml bottle of bourbon in one swallow, going off to smoke marijuana, and then riding a motorbike in a reckless manner including jumping over a fire. While the Classification Office recognises the comic elements in these depictions, it has concern over the anti-social behaviour shown, especially as it is without consequences and the characters lack regard for themselves and others.

This film is due to be exhibited in New Zealand during the 1999/2000 summer. This summer will be the first where alcohol can be sold and served to 18 year olds. Also celebrations at New Year are likely to be protracted and involve high numbers of young people using

alcohol. The behaviour of the characters in the film while under the influence of alcohol is commonly presented as comic. However, actions such as placing a gas cylinder on a bonfire where it could explode in an uncontrolled fashion is extremely foolhardy. Yet it is likely to have appeal to audiences as a stunt to try. The comic use of alcohol and its lack of effect on the characters in this film may well be injurious to young people who have limited experience of alcohol and its effects.

The dominant effect of the publication as a whole is the excessive use of alcohol and the anti-social behaviour which is demonstrated by the Savage family. It is a well made film and it demonstrates considerable affection for the characters and the New Zealand setting. The film is considered to have considerable merit and value of a cultural, literary, and artistic nature and is likely to be well received in the country.

Due to the publication's treatment of matters of crime, nudity, offensive language, violence, and most particularly anti-social behaviour, it is considered that the availability of the publication is likely to be injurious to the public good unless the availability is restricted to an adult audience.

***Written reason for decision is not required for section 12 submissions. It is the policy of the Classification Office to provide written reasons for section 12 submissions.***