

2013 NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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NZ CENSORS RESTRICT ELIJAH WOOD FILM TO FESTIVAL-ONLY SCREENINGS

The Office of Film and Literature Classification have classified a New Zealand International Film Festival film to Festival-only screenings, restricting it from further release in New Zealand.

Maniac, a serial killer horror starring Elijah Wood, will not be allowed to screen outside of film festivals in New Zealand. It is the first film to receive the special Festival-only classification since *The Bridge* in 2007 and means that the film cannot be released on DVD at a later date.

The horror remake has been classified as objectionable "except if the availability of the publication is limited for the purpose of study in a tertiary media or film studies courier or screened as part of a film festival". The full restricted classification note is: R18 graphic violence, sex scenes, content that may disturb.

Maniac has been programmed for NZIFF Incredibly Strange section by Ant Timpson, with screenings scheduled for Auckland and Wellington only. The film is shot entirely in first-person point of view, with Elijah Wood playing the role of a serial killer originally made famous to genre cultists by Joe Spinnell in the 1980s.

"The OFLC decision says that the film may be 'injurious to the public good' if it goes out on a wider release. It's saying that the POV nature of the film mixed with the psychopathic behaviour of actor Elijah Wood is more than disturbing, that it's potentially dangerous in the hands of the wrong person (that is, a non-festival goer). It's only my opinion but I simply don't agree with this decision," says Incredibly Strange programmer Ant Timpson.

"I can see the thought process behind it but I think it's rather big leap to make. I think it's interesting to see where the OFLC draws a line on this dangerous POV material because it could also segue into a discussion about the graphically realistic and violent first-person video games," says Timpson.

The film is owned by Australian distributor Monster Pictures, who are now unable to release the film in New Zealand.

"*Maniac* is one the finest horror films in recent years, as its selection into the Cannes Film Festival (Midnight screenings 2012) would suggest. Banning the film beyond festival screenings is an insult to the intelligence of the adult population of New Zealand and does little more than to serve as an open invitation to illegally pirate the film. We are flabbergasted," says Neil Foley, Monster Pictures.

By law, NZIFF must classify all films being screened at the Festival with exemptions only for documentaries that do not contain restricted content. NZIFF is currently screening in Auckland until 4 August, and screens in Wellington from 26 July to 11 August.

In Auckland, *Manic* screens on Saturday 27 July 10.30pm at SKYCITY Theatre and again on Thursday 1 August, 8:45pm at SKYCITY Theatre. In Wellington, *Maniac* screens on Friday 9 August, 4.00pm at Paramount and again on Saturday 10 August, 10.00pm at Embassy Theatre.

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<http://www.nziff.co.nz>

<http://www.nziff.co.nz/auckland/film/maniac> | <http://www.nziff.co.nz/wellington/film/maniac>

For further information about the NZIFF, access to hi-res stills in our online media area or to arrange an interview with programmer Ant Timpson please contact:

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