



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 7, 2020

Netflix Indicted by Texas Grand Jury over “Cuties”

Netflix has not only faced massive public backlash over its decision to release the [controversial](#) French film *Cuties*, but now the streaming platform has been formally indicted by a Texas grand jury for distributing material that many say amounts to child pornography in connection to the release of the film.

According to the indictment, by releasing the film on its platform, Netflix “did then and there knowingly promote visual material which depicts the lewd exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of a clothed or partially clothed child who was younger than 18 years of age at the time the visual material was created, which appeals to the prudent interest in sex, and has no serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.”

Though the indictment was filed on September 23, it was not made public until Texas Republican State Representative Matt Schaefer announced it Tuesday via [Twitter](#).

Cuties follows 11-year-old “Amy,” a Senegalese Muslim living in France who finds herself caught between her family’s traditional values and a group of rebellious young girls in a dance troupe. The film, which has a TV-MA rating, won a jury award for directing at the Sundance Film Festival this year and is described as a “coming of age” story, but critics panned the film’s sexually inappropriate portrayal of minors.

Netflix and the film’s creator, writer, and director Maimouna Doucoure have defended the film as a “social commentary against the sexualization of young children,” even as the film is equally guilty of that very sexualization.

“It’s an award-winning film and a powerful story about the pressure young girls face on social media and from society more generally growing up — and we’d encourage anyone who cares about these important issues to watch the movie,” a Netflix spokesperson [said](#) on September 10.

But despite these claims, Netflix was compelled to issue an apology before the film had even been released on the platform for the pedophilic promotional artwork and raunchy trailer that first propelled the film into the public spotlight ahead of its September 9 release.

“We’re deeply sorry for the inappropriate artwork that we used for ... *Cuties*,” a Netflix spokesperson told FOX Business in a statement. “It was not OK, nor was it representative of this French film which premiered at Sundance. We’ve now updated the pictures and description.”

The indictment even cites the platform’s marketing of the film, asserting it was “authorized or recklessly tolerated” by upper management at the company.





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Though the political opposition to *Cuties* has been largely bipartisan, Republicans have led the charge against the film.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas labeled the film “child porn” and called for a Department of Justice investigation into its potential legal violations.

In a letter sent to the Justice Department on September 11, Cruz wrote, “The film routinely fetishizes and sexualizes these pre-adolescent girls as they perform dances simulating sexual conduct in revealing clothing, including at least one scene with partial child nudity.”

“These scenes in and of themselves are harmful,” the letter adds, “And it is likely that the filming of this movie created even more explicit and abusive scenes, and that pedophiles across the world in the future will manipulate and imitate this film in abusive ways.”

The Daily Wire reports Representative Jim Banks of Indiana also called for Netflix to be held accountable for the film. A letter written by Banks and [signed](#) by 33 of his colleagues asked Attorney General William Barr to prosecute Netflix for distribution of “child pornography.”

Public backlash against *Cuties* prompted [multiple online petitions](#) — one of which amassed more than 700,000 signatures before disappearing from Change.org — calling for its removal. Just one day after the film was released, the hashtag #CancelNetflix was at the [top](#) of Twitter’s trending lists in the United States and the U.K. Global research firm YipitData revealed in an interview with *Variety* magazine that by September 12, Netflix’s [cancellation](#) rate in the United States jumped to nearly eight times higher than the average daily levels recorded just one month earlier. YipitData also told Fox Business that Netflix shares dropped by 3.34 percent.

Still, Netflix has staunchly defended the film and continues to do so in spite of the indictment. In a statement sent to the *New York Post* on Tuesday, the platform reiterated its stance that the film is a “social commentary” meant to draw attention to the sexualization of young children.

“This charge [of child pornography] is without merit and we stand by the film,” a Netflix spokesperson told the *Post*.



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