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Russian Version of Elton John Biopic Censors Gay Sex Scenes

May 31, 2019



Rocketman / Central Partnership

Russia has deleted gay sex and drug scenes from the Russian-language version of a newly released Elton John biopic, the Dozhd TV news channel reported Friday.

"Rocketman" premiers throughout Russia on June 6, but viewers in Moscow were treated to a prescreening on Thursday. A racy 40-second scene featuring two nude actors playing John and his manager was at risk of being cut from the original film before the singer himself intervened, British media reported in March.

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Russia's version of the musical biopic has deleted "all" gay sex and male kissing scenes, Dozhd TV anchor Mikhail Kozyryov was reported as telling moviegoers after the screening.

A number of scenes depicting drug use had also been removed, Kozyryov said.

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“Several scenes had indeed disappeared from the Russian version,” said film critic Yegor Moskvitin, who had seen the original “Rocketman” at the Cannes Film Festival.

These scenes include a photograph of John and his husband in the closing credits, with a caption saying that he ended up meeting his real love, Moskvitin was quoted as saying.

Update: Russia's Culture Ministry on Friday told Interfax that it didn't order the scenes to be removed and that it was solely the film distributor's decision to cut the scenes.

“Indeed, changes were made to the film to comply with the legislation of the Russian Federation,” a representative from the Central Partnership film distributor later confirmed.

In a statement Friday, John condemned the move, calling it “a sad reflection of the divided world we still live in.”

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> pic.twitter.com/WT05TvCHT7
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> — Elton John (@eltonofficial) May 31, 2019

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