

Pat Murphy
Aeon Films Ltd
9 Lower Kevin Street
Dublin 8

21.8.85

Dear Pat,

Your letter arrived when both Penny and I were not in the office for a week, hence my late reply. First of all let me say that we are all sorry that we have been so remiss in keeping you informed of the progress of Anne Devlin, and to assure you that despite that we are, and have been, totally committed to getting as good an opening for the film as possible and will continue to be so.

At this stage I won't take up all the individual points you raised in your letter as some of the things you mention were not said by me and I don't therefore have first hand knowledge and am the only person in the office this week. What I want to do now is answer your main queries about what is happening in regard to the opening of the film, and how we are operating as a collective in regard to the film.

First of all, with regard to the opening, we have been negotiating with Roger Austin of Mainline for an opening at one of the Screen cinemas. As you know we do not have a cinema ourselves, and in negotiating with the cinema owners/programmers we are in competition with what they consider to be more commercial, or "less difficult" films that the ones we distribute, in terms of choice of cinema and length of run.. With Anne Devlin we have had the basic problem that we are having to convince Mainline that the film is more commercial than they choose to think it is. They know from experience that we have authority in this field and have ensured the success of films they would not have thought as being at all commercial, yet they are needing a lot of convincing, and indeed pushing. We, however feel that the Green or the Hill are by far and away the best venues for the film to open at, and this is why we are persevering with Mainline. But until the date is absolutely finalised, which it has not been even yet, we are not in a position to say definitely when it will open. When we have spoken of dates, it can only be (until the date has been finalised) our proposed dates which have to be agreed with Mainline, and this is where their lack of commitment to the film shows itself.

When Penny and I met with Roger ~~two~~ weeks ago ago (Romaine was unable to come to the meeting at the last minute) the following points emerged :

1. We were unable to negotiate an opening at the Hill as it was felt by Mainline that the film was not 'big' enough. Since we feel that the Green is a good venue for the film we felt quite happy with this as we would not have done with Baker Street or the Electric which were also possibilities.
2. A February date was the earliest we could negotiate at the Green, and this is a good time to open a film in terms of audiences, so again we felt fairly happy with this.
3. Because of the reservations Mainline have about Anne Devlin's commercial potential they only wanted to offer us two weeks. We put before them a strong case for a one-month run. Roger said that was convinced, but didn't think that Romaine would go with it. As I write I still have not been able to get the decision on that, but I didn't want to delay writing to you, although I am expecting a call on it later today or tomorrow. What is likely to happen is that they will offer us a two weeks guaranteed run with an extension if the film does well. If that is what the offer we will try and negotiate for a follow-on run at Baker Street.

We are aware of the difficulties which are caused by the postponement of the opening (although I did not realise that you thought it would be opening definitely in September), and we offset these against the difficulties of factors such as the time of the year (in so far as it affects audience size), the financial and woman-power resources we have at different times, etc.

In relation to the collective, the collective as a whole is responsible for and committed to the film, and has made policy decisions to prioritise the opening of the film. However, there are particular workers who take on the film as their project and to most of the work on the film. Within that there are particular aspects which one worker might take over responsibility for. Myself and Penny are the workers who are specifically responsible for Anne Devlin. Other workers and COW collective members will not be in day-to-day contact with the development of the work, although we report back to the collective on progress at regular intervals. In addition Penny has had particular responsibility for the print, which is why when I have spoken to you I have sometimes not had the latest information on the progress in that area. We have both been involved in the negotiations with Mainline and I have had particular responsibility for organising media screenings. We will be sharing responsibility for publicity, although it is likely that we will subdivide that when the pressure starts to build up.

We would be very happy to meet you as a collective to fill you in on more detail about this, and it might be a good idea for you and Penny and I to get together to talk in more detail about what has happened and what is happening. At our collective meeting on Monday September 1st was suggested as a good date for us. If it was possible for you to come over, the three of us could meet in the afternoon and you could then meet the rest of the collective at our early evening meeting.

Meanwhile, I will contact you as soon as we have finalised the opening deal with Mainline, and I hope this letter has reassured you about

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some of the reservations caused by our not keeping you fully informed.

I look forward to hearing about September 1st,
Best wishes,

Eileen McNulty

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