

## Anant Singh

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**From:** Anant Singh  
**Sent:** Tuesday 26 April 2016 05:36 PM  
**To:** 'dawson.sarah01@gmail.com'  
**Cc:** 'DVCHumanities@ukzn.ac.za'; 'gobardank@ukzn.ac.za'; Sanjeev Singh; Nilesch Singh  
**Subject:** SHEPHERDS AND BUTCHERS

Dear Sarah

Sanjeev shared your email regarding SHEPHERDS AND BUTCHERS not being appropriate as the Opening Night film this year. I am surprised and disappointed. As a black African filmmaker, I find the reasoning difficult to grasp, especially as the Durban International Film Festival has a track record of selecting films that are thought provoking while providing a platform for filmmakers to be socially relevant.

SHEPHERDS AND BUTCHERS focuses on our past, our Country and the death penalty. It is an issue that is hotly debated around the world. It gives a face to the effects and consequences of administering the death penalty. Additionally, it is a South African film helmed by an internationally renowned and award-winning South African director, and produced by ourselves – a proudly South African / Durban based company. As you know, SHEPHERDS AND BUTCHERS was selected for Berlin and won the Audience Award. It salutes the over 4000 people hanged by the apartheid government.

It is extremely disconcerting and insulting for me and for my fellow filmmakers, that our country's premier film festival finds the film inappropriate and that you believe the material may be 'difficult' for your Opening Night guests, even though it has received a 16V rating. It feels like the issues I had to deal with during the apartheid years when all viewing material were regulated. Please shed some light on the decision making process, including the names of members who participated.

Additionally, have you now established whether you will have a place for Sarafina in your programme this year, to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 'Soweto 1976'. This seminal moment in South Africa's struggle for freedom highlights the role of the youth in our country's history and, as the festival opens on the exact day, 40 years later, programming the film would have given the festival the opportunity to mark this historic occasion, and leverage on Youth Month, especially as the youth continue to be at the forefront of a struggle, albeit a different one. The recent events once again brings to the fore the power of our youth as change agents in our society.

I also wish to point out that Videovision Entertainment has been associated with the Durban International Film Festival for over 30 years with the supply of films for the festival. Over the last 4 years, we have made available 18 films to the festival. Last year, Videovision brought the renowned Academy Award winning director, Jean Jacques Annaud to the festival to present his film WOLF TOTEM. We are committed stakeholders of the festival.

Regards,

Anant Singh

**From:** Sarah Dawson [<mailto:dawson.sarah01@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** 25 April 2016 10:59 AM  
**To:** Sanjeev Singh <[sanjeev@videovision.co.za](mailto:sanjeev@videovision.co.za)>  
**Subject:** Re: DIFF - Shepherds and Butchers

Hi Sanjeev,

Thanks so much for this. My concern was not really related to the rating, but rather regarding the qualitative experience of our guests, some of whom are compelled to be there, and who might find the material difficult. It is a brilliant film, but there are some troubling moments, and I don't think that it would be an appropriate choice. As I mentioned before, I would be happy to give it a very good slot on the opening weekend that does the merit of the film justice.

Let me know whether this affects your decision to participate in the festival, as well as whether or not Oliver will be available to attend.

Thanks very much.

All the best,  
Sarah

On 2016/04/21 12:58 PM, Sanjeev Singh wrote:

Dear Sarah,

As expected, Shepherds and Butchers received a classification of **16V** from the FBP this week.

Trust that in view of this rating, the film will be suitable for opening night.

Look forward to receiving your response whether you now would like to consider the film for opening night.

Best Regards,  
Sanjeev Singh

**From:** Sarah Dawson [<mailto:dawson.sarah01@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** 29 March 2016 04:07 PM

**To:** Sanjeev Singh <[sanjeev@videovision.co.za](mailto:sanjeev@videovision.co.za)>

**Subject:** Re: DIFF - Shepherds and Butchers

Hi Sanjeev,

Thanks so much for your mail. We will wait to hear from you.

Have a great evening.

All the best,

Sarah Dawson



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On 29/03/2016 15:04, Sanjeev Singh wrote:

Dear Sarah,

Had a great Easter weekend. Hope you had an enjoyable one.

Received your invitation for the film and we will be submitting it for FPB classification during the week of 11<sup>th</sup> April and we expect to receive a rating of not higher than a 16, and if so, it may be suitable for opening night.

Will advise once we receive the FPB rating.

Best regards,  
Sanjeev Singh

On 16/03/2016 16:37, Sarah Dawson wrote:  
Hi Sanjeev,

I hope you are well.

Thanks for meeting with me the other day. I just wanted to update you on my thoughts at this point in time. We would very much like to have the film in the programme, and can certainly commit to flying and accommodating Oliver during the festival. I am in discussion with regard to the finance to bring over Steve Coogan, which is a significantly greater financial commitment, as I'm sure you will understand. We would - of course - love to have him at the festival for a number of reasons, so it is purely a matter of affordability. Can you confirm that he would be flying from London?

I cannot yet confirm anything regarding opening night, but in the event that we choose not to screen the film for the opening, I would certainly offer the film a prime slot - the 7:00/7:30 slot in the main venue on either the Friday or Saturday night of the first weekend. I really like the film, but the primary reservations I have regarding screening the film for opening night is that some of the content could be quite upsetting/triggering for some viewers. We would have to provide warning for this, which may exclude certain guest/dignitaries/members of the public from the opening, which is not ideal. Opening films with graphic content have in the past generated negative publicity not only for the festival, but for the film. On the other hand, as a standalone screening in a prime slot, it could attract the right attention and be framed appropriately. Particularly if we do find the funds to bring Steve Coogan. We could perhaps also talk about VideoVision hosting a cocktail function to celebrate and publicise the film.

I will keep you updated with our progress with regard to these decisions, but I wanted to touch base with you so that you know where we are at in our thinking.

With regard to Sarafina, I am not certain that we will have a place for it in our programme this year, but thank you very much for the offer. I will keep it in mind.

I hope you have a wonderful evening.

All the best,  
Sarah



**Sarah Dawson**

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