

SM/CRM

4th August, 1972

Dear

I am fascinated that, after the film "KES" has been shown for three years on its old 'U' Certificate without any sort of protest, I should receive two complaints within a week: coincidence has very long arms.

It is simply not true to say that 'U' Certificates are now being given to films such as this. In fact the Certificate was given three years ago and was the only one then available to give to this beautiful film. I am frankly astonished that you should think it unfit for young children. However, it may be some compensation to know that we now have an 'A' Certificate available which currently we can award to films like this.

I am interested that a film which was thought suitable for very young children so much as three years ago should now, by some few parents, be regarded as unsuitable. It does rather strengthen my view that, so far from the Board having become more permissive - particularly with junior categories - there is going on a public reaction amongst a minority which is seeking to reimpose cultural standards more strict than those which have been acceptable for the past few years.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Murphy

SM/CRM

24th July 1974

Dear

Thank you for your letter of July 21st. It is an interesting example of how a few people are now demanding of the British Board of Film Censors standards very much more severe than the Board was exercising years ago.

"KES" was certificated in May 1969. It was shown as the only British film at the London Film Festival that year. It failed for some time to get what is termed a 'national release' but after a press campaign in its favour it was shown in the Autumn. To the best of my knowledge and belief no single complaint was received at the time from any individual who saw it. A major church in America awarded it a special prize as the outstanding family film of the year. The film has subsequently played off and on throughout this country and all over the world. It was, of course, an old 'U' - it was certificated and had been widely shown before the change in categories. Some recategorisation was undertaken in 1970, but "KES" was not included. Since I was not here at that time, I can only speculate on the reason. The film had by then been widely acclaimed by teachers, clergymen and others and been shown in many schools. I assume, therefore - and it is an assumption - that it was felt that an upwards reclassification would be ridiculous.

This is the second time in the last few months that a request has been made to me to impose on an old film (the other was also a 'U') a standard of censorship much more severe than was customary in the past. Have British children suddenly, in the last year or so, become much more vulnerable than they were? And why are British children so much more vulnerable than children elsewhere in the free world?

Yours sincerely

SM
Stephen Murphy