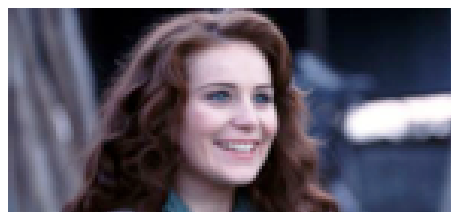


New York opening for Dublin film that waited five years to be rescued

An Irish film that seemed dead in the water after running out of cash will finally hit the big screen

Jan Battles

Its journey to the big screen has been almost as epic as its second world war storyline.



Waiting for Dublin star Jade Yourell

But six years after it collapsed mid-way through filming in Ireland, *Waiting for Dublin* is to get a happy ending after all.

The movie, an Irish-Belgian co-production about an American fighter pilot who crashes in the west, will finally get a cinema release this year. The €6m production was called off in 2003 after it ran out of money.

The romantic comedy was rescued by foreign producers three years later and has now been picked up by an American distributor. Cinema Libre Studio, a California-based company specialising in independent movies, and Corsan, a Belgian firm, will release it in New York on March 13. This will be followed by a wider roll-out, according to reports in Los Angeles.

Described as "an absurd and exciting adventure", the period drama stars Andrew Keegan as a fighter pilot who gets involved with the mob following a bet. The cast also includes Jade Yourell, who played Jasmine in *Fair City*, Pat Laffan and David Wilmot. The director is Roger Tucker, whose credits include *The Professionals*.

Shooting in Galway stopped in March 2003 when the finances ran out, leaving dozens of cast and crew out of pocket to the tune of almost €500,000. Among those owed money were the gardai, local authorities and a film studio in Connemara due about €100,000.

In October 2006 shooting resumed after foreign crews were drafted in. Many of those who worked on the project in 2003 were furious it was re-starting without them being paid in full and several went on RTE's *Liveline* show to complain.

The Film Technicians Association in Ireland mounted a picket on the set at the Man O'War pub in north Dublin.

John Murphy, one of the organisers, said: "We [felt] they shouldn't continue shooting with a new crew when they left technicians in the lurch." Murphy believes everyone who later made an application to be reimbursed was paid before shooting continued.

With a three-year lapse between some of the scenes being filmed, producers were left with continuity difficulties.

Frank Kelly, best known as Father Jack in *Father Ted*, couldn't go back when filming resumed as he was working on another project. He said: "I was working on a film in Kerry and had a large beard. I couldn't cut that off and put it back overnight. I hadn't shot all my scenes, but you can do anything in an editing room."

Kelly was among those who got his money eventually. "It was a very happy production until it ran out of money," he said. "It was all fun until they stopped paying."

The project was granted a Section 481 certificate by the Department of Arts. Anyone who invests in a film under the scheme will not get back their tax relief until it is delivered to a distributor and gets a completion certificate.

"You can only draw down the tax relief for the investors after it's had a showing so [films] have to be shown," Murphy said. "Even if it's only shown once and never makes a penny profit, it is part of the small print that it must have a commercial release."