APRIL 2014: **PRODUCTION**

MM Media Magazine

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What a film producer *really* does

Seven steps to good production work

Hacking: the story so far

The ultimate how-to guide to making trailers

Researching for production

Vertov: the man with a movie camera

MM

English & Media Centre

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This is the last *MediaMag* of this academic year, so by the time it arrives, you may already be well stuck into revision and exam practice. Don't let that put you off this issue, though – plenty to feed into your preparation, either for the forthcoming exams, or insights into next year's coursework for those moving on into A2.

The theme is Production, so read and learn from the experience of successful students who have already been through it, and teachers and professionals who know from years of experience what works and what doesn't. Amongst our highlights this issue are Pete Fraser's Seven Steps to Successful Production Work – a topic he wrote about in the very first ever *MediaMag*. Twelve years and 47 issues ago, he listed fifty tips, so he's got the guidance down to a fine art by now – as you should know from his fantastic Pete's *MediaMag* Blog, on the *MM* home page (and if you haven't been following it, now is the time to start!)

Another highlight is Michelle Eastwood's fantastic analysis of what a film producer actually does, with a really detailed and insightful case study of her first feature film *In Our Name,* budget and all. Ian Wall gives some hard-hitting advice on film trailer analysis and production, and Caroline Birks talks you through the process of analysing a magazine front cover in preparation for your print production coursework – a timely reminder that media production without critical analysis of the genre you're working in is likely to limit your chances of a high grade.

Production and ideology is a theme linking other articles ideal for students preparing for FS4 – particularly two complementary pieces on the polemical cinema of Dziga Vertov and his *Man with a Movie Camera* and Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* – propaganda, observational documentary or monstrous deification? Plus transmedia storytelling, the role of BAFTA in supporting young producers, and a guide to choosing the right sort of university course for aspiring filmmakers. And as a special bonus, an excellent summary of the production of a national scandal – where we've got to in the phone-hacking debate. Essential revision reading if regulation, media and democracy, the future of the newspaper industry or media ethics are topics on your specification.

Good luck to one and all – and hope to see you again in September!

Jenny Grahame

A taster of MediaMag treats for September:

In print:

TV drama: *Line of Duty,* TV's Greatest Serial Killers, *Girls*

Film Studies: reading openings: *Apocalypse Now*; documentary and *Night Mail*; FM4, Emotional Response and Representations of Reality

Media and Identities for the new AQA exam topic

The evolution of Gaming: *Tomb Raider* and *The Last of Us*

2014 *MediaMag* Production Competition: the winners revealed!

Online:

Highlights of the 2013 *MediaMag* Conference

Shortlisted entries and winners of the 2014 Production competition

And in December:

Special feature: Science Fiction It's Alive …

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The Front Page

Film's Cool: Change One Thing

Film's Cool is a mentoring initiative that brings high-profile film industry professionals into schools and organisations to provide expert guidance and support to young people as part of courses often tailored to exam specifications. Mentor and filmmaker Alek Lewin explains his role in a fantastic production project

As a young filmmaker it is becoming increasingly difficult to set yourself apart from the crowd and assert yourself in an undeniably talented and ever growing cohort. Finding hands-on experience is crucial to any CV and on my hunt for such an opportunity, I found an organisation that really stood out from the crowd and grabbed my attention; Film's Cool is a mentoring initiative, which utilises industry professionals to teach young people valuable filmmaking techniques to tell stories and find a voice.

I successfully applied for the role of peer mentor on their 7th documentary project at Inspire!, a pupil referral unit in Hackney, East London. Upon meeting the students, aged from 15 to 17, it was clear that although they may have lacked practical experience and knowledge in filmmaking, their enthusiasm to learn shone through, and their determination to succeed was evident throughout the production of the documentary.

There was help galore from key industry professionals. Neil Crombie, 2013 BAFTA winner for Factual Programming co-wrote the project; others, including Ross Curran (Director, *Celebrity Masterchef*), Sasha Bennet (Director, *Get Lucky* 2013 UK) and Jesse O'Mahoney (Writer, *EastEnders*) led sessions in different aspects of production. The students gathered practical knowledge rapidly, and were quick to apply it in the following week's session. I was surprised with how quickly they took to the process of documentary production, whether planning for interviews and voiceovers, camera operation or rush edits of the footage from the previous week. They were always keen to learn, and wouldn't hold back when asking for feedback on how they were getting on.

It wasn't all hard work though: Film's Cool projects are run in an a way which engages the students on a personal level, developing interpersonal relationships as well as acquiring skills which will be invaluable should they opt to pursue a career in the film industry, but can also be applied to all career paths, such as organisational skills, following through a project from first brainstorm to final outcome, and the ability to think outside the box to overcome any problems encountered along the way. All of the students on the course were accredited with a leadership award.

The Inspire! students were not the only ones who gained invaluable experience though. I also found myself picking up a wealth of tips and tricks from the various industry professionals at each session over the 10-week process. Upon completion of the documentary, Film's Cool held a screening at Cob Studios and invited industry professionals who all agreed that the production quality was to an exceptional standard, and that clearly a lot of effort had been put in by both the mentors and the students.

Overall, I believe initiatives such as the one set up by Film's Cool is vital to the discovery of talented filmmakers. It gives many students who would otherwise not have the chance to do so, the opportunity to have a deep look inside the craft. Furthermore, on a personal level this project was particularly exciting for me as an aspiring filmmaker, offering me the practical experience of teaching camera and editing skills to students whilst also learning how to improve the quality of my own work from some of the key figures in British television and film.

Alek has just swapped his Geography degree course to a specialised Editing and Post Production BA at Ravensborne University. You can view Inspire!'s film and get involved with Film's Cool by following the links:

- Change One Thing: Inspire! www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0dVNBKzgN4&list=UUd6ziZkMGYz7AhE6-s-C0dQ&feature=share
- Film's Cool Website: http://filmscool.net
- Film's Cool on Facebook: www.facebook.com/FilmsCool

Media Lives

Media Regulator Ofcom has just published a summary of its 'Media Lives' research, updated last year by The Knowledge Agency. This is an in-depth look at the media habits and attitudes of 15 people, most of whom have participated in the study for at least eight years, so the research traces the changes in their habits and opinions over time. Although it is obviously a very small study, the carefully selected participants reflect a broad cross-section of the UK population in terms of age, location, ethnicity and social class.

Key findings include:

• **Smartphones rule!** The 'essential' service or device for most participants was their smartphone, because it fulfils all the main functions of digital media and communications hardware.

• **Anything goes!** People's consumption of video and audio content is increasingly fragmented and personalised. This is partly due to the accessibility of traditional broadcast channels on computers, smartphones and tablets, and partly because of the increased availability and adoption of online-only TV and services such as Spotify and Netflix.

• **Lifestyle is important!** People's media use changes according to their life-stage and changes in their living circumstances. For example, one participant has just qualified as a doctor, working full-time; this has made it harder for her to consume media, and make full use of the different media options available to her. Another has recently moved back into his parents' home, which has restricted the availability of services to him, and his ability to pay for content and services. As a new dad, his attitudes towards social media have changed from personal use to those of a concerned parent.

• **Money matters!** The recession affects people's media use too; recently several participants have had to reduce their Pay TV packages to save money, and others said they had changed to bundled TV and telecommunications services, which were more economical.

• **Narrowing the digital gap:** Early in the study there was a clear distinction between digital media 'haves' and 'have-nots', mostly focused on access to the internet. However, now all the participants are online at home, and the differences are more about access to costlier hardware.

• **Confusion!** The current rate of convergence and technological change – smartphones, TVs and tablets – is confusing to many participants, particularly when buying new hardware, even for confident and proficient digital media users.

Save BBC3?

From Autumn 2015, BBC3 will be online only. Over half of the £50 million saved by this move will be ploughed back into BBC1 drama, while BBC3 will be relaunched on BBC iPlayer. Original BBC3 programming will be shown late-night on BBC1, and the bandwidth on which it currently plays will be used to create an extra BBC channel, BBC1+1. So, the first BBC channel ever to be closed, will be the only UK channel with a remit to cater for the all-important 16-24-year-old audience. Is this a short-sighted disaster for young people, or a storm in a teacup over a form of viewing increasingly seen as out-of-date? You decide – but at the time of writing, over 200,000 have protested via social media, and the Save BBC3 Facebook page has 237,000 likes. A good summary of the debates can be read here: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/09/wrong-to-axe-bbc3-online-only

Into Film's Much Ado

An in-depth, curriculum-linked teaching resource to support the study of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* is among the first film-based teaching resources on offer from new education charity Into Film. This toolkit uses Joss Whedon's 2012 film adaptation to explore the way Shakespeare is interpreted for the screen: http://www.filmclub.org/assets/pdf/Much-Ado-About-Nothing-Ages-16-18.pdf. Worth a look if you're preparing English Literature coursework for AQA B's Unit 2 (Dramatic Genres, Comedy).

Happy 25th Birthday to the World Wide Web!

It's hard to believe that the internet is only 25 years old, and even harder for those of us that are old enough to remember what the world was like before its birth. In celebration of its Silver anniversary, there has been a plethora of press coverage, most of which is probably no more than a mildly interesting backstory for Media A Level students. But of course a major anniversary is the perfect time to reflect on the bigger issues, and there are plenty of them. *MediaMag* has trawled some of the most obvious coverage for you, to pull out some of the debates and challenges you may need to be thinking about for the summer examinations. The links below will be worth checking out if you're preparing for answers on We Media, the Media and Democracy, Media in an Online Age, The Impact of New/Digital Media, but want to catch up on a bit of history too.

http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/mar/09/25-years-web-tim-berners-lee (John Naughton, *The Observer*, 09.03.14) Some things you didn't know, others you did… Some particularly ferocious online responses which indicate just how contentious the web continues to be. Two nuggets: the first 10 seconds of reading a web page is crucial; and it took only four years for the web to reach an audience of 50 million users – the fastest growing medium of all time.

http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/mar/12/online-magna-carta-berners-lee-web?CMP=ema_546 (Jemima Kiss, *The Guardian*, 12.03.14) The overlord of the internet, Tim Berners-Lee, calls for an international online constitution/digital bill of rights, in a Magna Carta-style campaign called the 'web we want', to deal with issues of privacy, surveillance, free speech, anonymity, copyright, neutrality, etc.

The Front Page was compiled by Jenny Grahame.

7 steps to good production work

Pete Fraser, author of Pete's *MediaMag* Blog, examiner and joint co-ordinator of the BFI/NFTS Film Academy, has seen more student production work than most, and is the go-to expert on how to both avoid the pitfalls and pratfalls and produce superb coursework. Here are his essential steps to success – and he's got them down to a mere seven!

Dave Brailsford, the coach of GB cycling at the 2012 Olympics and Principal of Team Sky cycling has a catchphrase that's actually not very catchy, but which sums up his philosophy: 'the aggregation of marginal gains'. It refers to the idea that if you improve lots of little things by a tiny bit each, it all adds up to something significantly bigger, which can give you the edge and win you the race.

It's my philosophy with student production work too. If you get all the little elements of it right, your work will be that much better. So, let's break it down into seven steps…

Aggregating your marginal gains – in seven steps!

1. Before you start a project, do your research. The best student work always comes out of a clear understanding of what a real media text is like – how it is constructed, how stories are told, how editing works, how things are laid out on the page, what goes where in a media text and in what order. For a piece of assessed work, it's important to keep a record of this research, the evidence for your project and its gestation. It's often worth quite a few marks. And it doesn't end when you start your production. Research should be seen as an ongoing element, continuing the process of refinement at every stage. Audience feedback throughout the process is part of your research and can be of immense benefit to your project.

2. Plan everything. Just like research, planning needs to be evidenced. Artists have their sketchbooks. Most professional media creatives do too, always drawing things, noting down ideas, coming back to fragments that may have been noted ages ago but suddenly become useful. Ideas can come from anywhere, but they most often come from observation – both of things in daily life and in elements from media texts which you might be able to steal and re-shape. If it strikes you, note it down; it may come in handy. Once you start a project, you need to plan every detail to minimise the risk of things not working or going wrong. From scripting, storyboarding and flatplanning to costumes, locations and actors, everything should be planned so that nothing is left to chance. Planning involves rehearsal and preparing your performers so that they understand what they are expected to do. Planning involves scouting your location

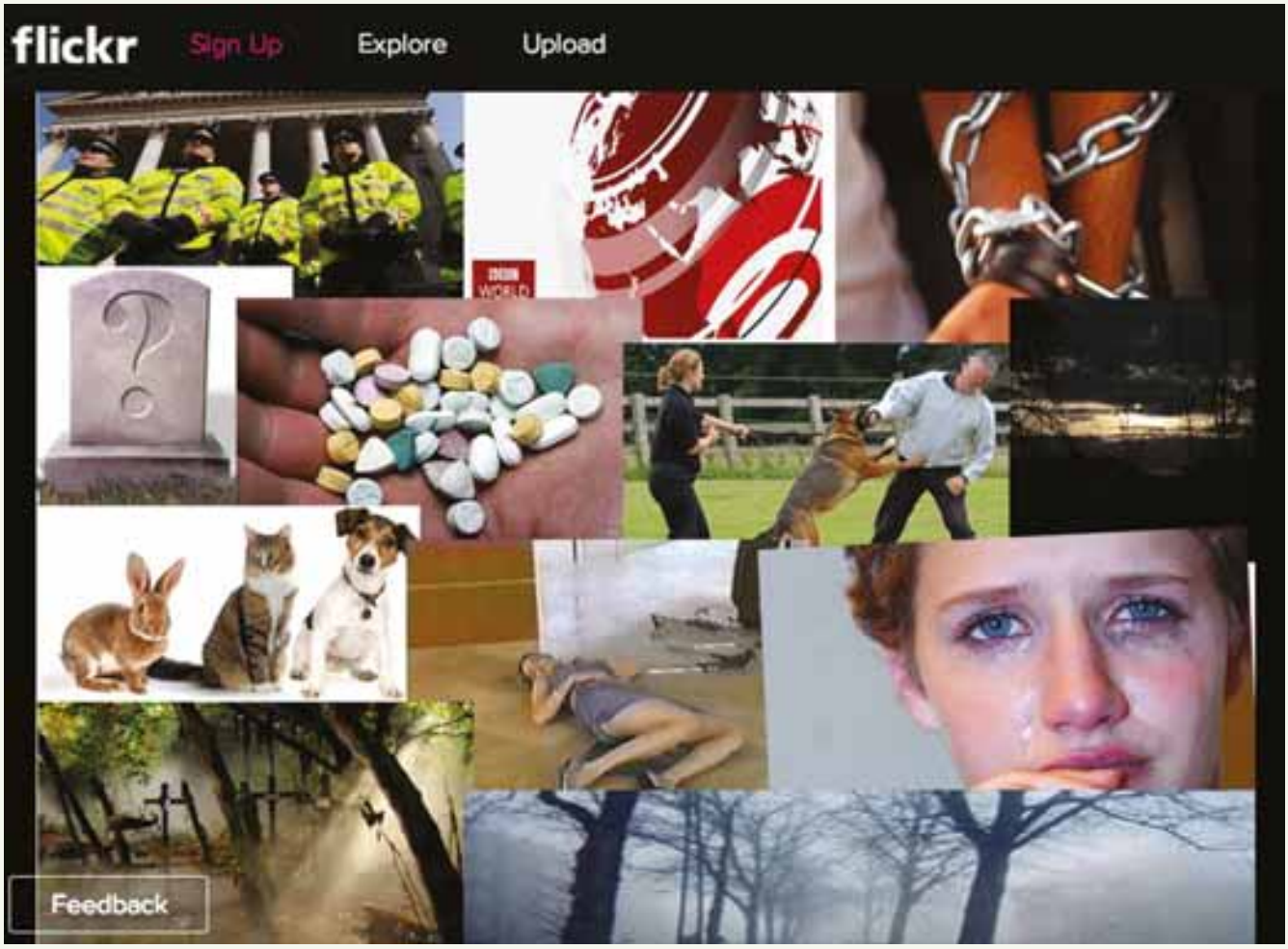
and checking what it is going to look like from every angle, being certain that it will be available at the time you actually need it; planning means remembering every prop that will be needed and working out where you are going to get them and who is going to be responsible for bringing them along. Planning means being as organised as you can possibly be, thinking ahead about every little detail. Remember: on every project, things will go wrong. Planning minimises the number of things to go wrong – and also minimises the impact when they do.

3. Most real world media production involves teamwork and the same is true of most student production. Even if you are doing a solo project, the chances are you are going to need people to appear in it, even if it's just posing for photos. If it's a group project, your teamwork will be vital to its success. Everyone will have a role to play in shooting a video and you'll all need to have input into editing. And at the end of it all, your assessment will depend on how well you have worked together, so you might as well make the most of it. Forget any idea of blaming each other for what might go wrong, and all take responsibility to make it a positive experience. Media is one of the few subjects where

you get marks for anything other than individual work, so pulling together to maximise the project is very important. Even if you divide up roles, like a good sports team, always be there to back each other up. It's not about leaving someone to get on with it and then coming back to moan at them when they don't do the work the way you would have done it; it's about having someone on the line ready to head the ball away if it gets past the defender! Communication is crucial to such a team ethos and you should all be open to consider your work in progress and to take on board constructive criticism from each other in a positive way. Remember, there is no 'I' in 'team'; the project belongs to you all and you all need to contribute. In my recent blogposts, I've looked at some videos which illustrate the importance of teamwork and everyone doing their job.

4. Know your kit. Whatever equipment you are using, you need to practise with it so you are clear what it can and can't do, how it works, and how to make the most of it. Don't be tempted to jump straight to its special features and tricks, which are only there to disguise bad work: learn how to use the basics properly. This goes for cameras, edit programs, image manipulation, tripods, everything! You cannot expect to do your best work the first time you use the equipment – everyone needs time to train, to make mistakes, to build up skills and to get better, to master the art and to master the kit. My recent blogposts highlight some good learning activities or challenges, such as 're-makes' which are very good for helping to prepare for projects.

5. Get the big picture right, then home in on the detail. Often students will spend loads of time perfecting one tiny little detail, like cutting at precisely the right moment in their video, but fail to see that they haven't got the overall structure of the video sorted out at all, so it doesn't make any sense. This is particularly the case in texts like music videos, which need to have all the synched footage in place before starting to deal with cutaways, but it is true of all media



production. You might have a lovely highlight on that font on the contents page of your magazine, but if your columns aren't lined up properly, the page looks rubbish.

6. Learn from your mistakes. It's the best way to learn. Everybody makes mistakes and gets things wrong but the best learning takes those mistakes on board and thinks about them next time. If you keep making the same mistakes – be it technical errors, bad timekeeping, communication or whatever – then you are not learning from them.

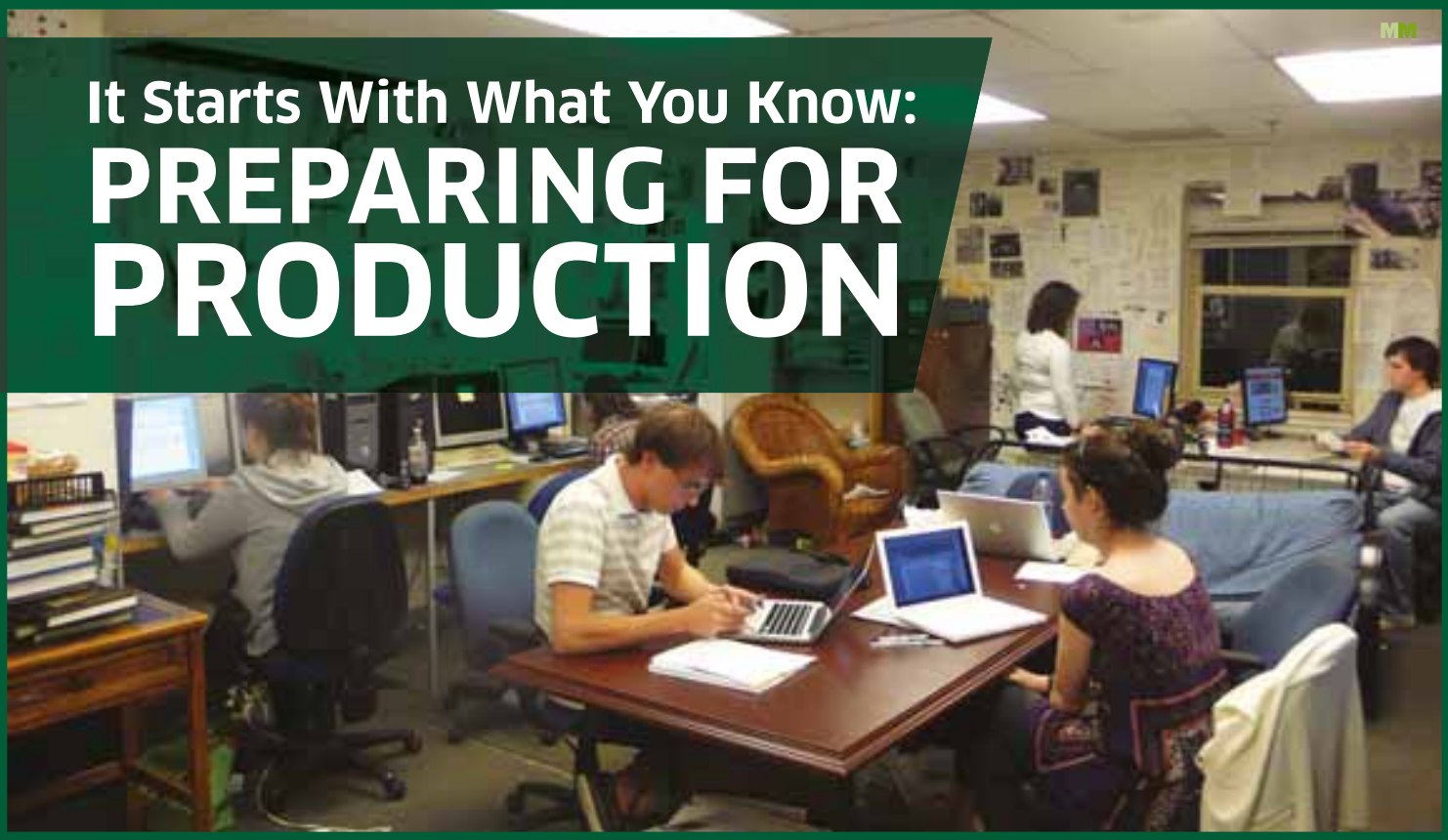
7. And finally, take time over your work. A good media project is much harder to do and much more time consuming than any essay. If you don't care about your mark and don't want a piece of work of which you can be proud, fine – do it quickly. But if you want the satisfaction of a really good piece of work, you have to be prepared to commit to it and put the hours in. Aim for it to be as good as possible – seek feedback from people who will be honest with you – stand back from it and cast a critical eye. Be a bit of a perfectionist but stick to the deadlines – aim to finish early so you have time to tweak it.

And if you follow these steps, your work *will* benefit from that 'aggregation of marginal gains'. Every little bit of improvement will help to make your work good production work.

Pete Fraser taught Media for many years at Long Road College, Cambridge. He is Chair of the Media Education Association, leading the BFI NFTS Film Academy Residential course this Easter and writes Pete's *MediaMag* Blog (http://petesmediablog.blogspot.co.uk/).

Images Long Road Sixth Form and NFTS/BFI Talent Campus, supplied by Pete Fraser

It Starts With What You Know: PREPARING FOR PRODUCTION



All A Level Media students will need to complete a number of practical productions during their studies. This work will make up a significant percentage of the marks that contribute to your final grade. Blogger and lecturer Steph Hendry talks you through a series of preparatory stages with the AQA coursework tasks in mind.

The exam boards all have different requirements for production work so you should check with your teacher and/or the specification to be sure you know precisely what is expected of you.

You will need to ensure that you can show your examiner the extent of your technical skills, of course – whether it's in the use of cameras to take still or moving images, your use of software to create print and e-media products, or in the post-production process when you edit your video work or enhance your photos. The choices you make during production will also show your creativity. This is also an important part of the marks you achieve.

But making the right technical choices and being able to take a creative approach to your production work depends on the knowledge and understanding you bring to the task. Even though most marks will usually be awarded for the quality, accuracy and scope of your production, your pre-production work (research and planning) will also impact on your potential to achieve well.

Getting started

Depending on the structure of your coursework unit, you might be able to choose what you are making or this may have been decided for you. Either way, before you start production work you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What platform is your production to be accessed on?
- What form of media product are you making?
- What genre?
- Who are the target audience?
- What do they find appealing?
- What do they like to do?
- What are their interests/concerns?
- What do they expect from this type of media product?
- What is the product's function? (What is it trying to do or achieve?)

Once you are clear who your audience is, what you are making and why, you can have a look at existing media products to find out how real media products are constructed. You should look for the way real media products try and create audience appeal and how media producers attempt to make sure the products are successful. The knowledge and understanding you gain when researching should then feed into the practical and creative choices you make when completing your practical work. Asking the right kinds of questions can help you make the most out of your research.

- What are the codes and conventions of the platform you are working in?
- What are the codes and conventions of the form you're creating?

- What are the codes and conventions of the genre of your product?
- Who is the target audience and how do media producers attempt to:
  - reach them
  - attract them
  - appeal to them
  - persuade them to act?
- What is the function of your production and what techniques do media producers use to help them achieve this?

After you have looked at real media products, you should be able to answer the question that will allow you to start planning your own work:

- How can all this knowledge be integrated into the practical production? What media language choices will work best?

Codes and conventions: platform, form and genre

Before you start your practical work, you need to consider precisely what it is you will produce. Your decisions will be very different if you are creating a website, a poster or a TV advert. The first important decision (and it may be made for you if you've been told what to make) is to identify which platform your product will be presented on – is it a print product, an e-media product or a broadcast product (moving image or radio)? Or is it a broadcast product that will be hosted on e-media – a promotional video on a website, for example?

Platform

This is an important consideration as each platform has its own codes and conventions – often based on the way an audience would access the product and the technologies available in the presentation of information (see p11).

Print	E-Media	Broadcast
Print products rely on text and visual illustration.	Whilst e-media has the capacity to provide text-based information, it is largely a visual form. Information can be presented in many ways including audio, moving image and animation. Information can be presented in non-linear ways (using hyperlinks, pop-up info, metadata etc.).	Broadcast texts present information using audio and sometimes visual information. Broadcast texts can carry complex information efficiently to the audience and because they are accessed over time there can be a development of an argument or the construction of a narrative within the product.
Layout and design of the pages should be considered to ensure legibility and effective communication of information/ideas.	Visuals in e-media can be varied from still photography, illustrations, animations and moving image. Web page design is intended to increase appeal and legibility. Moving image and audio work should be carefully considered, just as it is in broadcast work.	The framing of images, and the use of sound, lighting, costume, make up, props and location are essential considerations when constructing a moving-image product. Editing and post-production are used to construct narrative and can help enhance the visuals. Audio recordings can use music and sound effects as well as dialogue to communicate information. Post-production effects can also be used to enhance the product.
Audiences will often not have much time to access print so key information should be given as quickly and efficiently as possible. Where space is available detail should follow further down the page/into the document. Some print is designed to consider portability (e.g. 'handbag' sized magazines) and other forms need to allow for the fact that audiences need to access information quickly (e.g. billboard advertising).	Audiences have the ability to contribute and interact with e-media. This can take many forms from online games and activities to chat rooms and social networks. Audiences can be part of the production in the encouragement of citizen journalism, the use of user-generated content and the way that social media activity can impact on text production. E-media is increasingly dominant and these products are often tailored to be accessible via mobile technologies. More and more audience members are using smart phones and tablets to access e-media content	Audiences are often assumed to be more passive recipients of information/entertainment when accessing broadcast texts. TV and film products demand attention although non-traditional methods of accessing these products are growing. More and more people watch TV and/or film online, and mobile devices with ever-improving screens allow audiences to take selected broadcast texts out and about. Podcasts are available online and can be downloaded. Radio is both an analogue and digital form.
Print imagery often has to compete with large volumes of information (e.g. multiple front covers in a newsagents; three or four stories on each page of a tabloid newspaper) and so layout and design is used to draw attention to the print product or show importance on the page.	E-media needs to offer its audience more than simple print media. Contemporary audiences often expect to be part of the product in some way and they also expect some form of enhanced experience. This can be achieved by offering them music to listen to, videos to watch, interactive games, areas where they can comment etc. This is a particularly important part of e-media's success as neither print nor broadcast can offer interactivity and variety in the same way.	Radio can be used as a secondary medium – it is often listened to whilst the audience member is doing something else. Visual broadcasts usually expect that the audience will give their full attention to the text but with changing technologies this may not always be the case. Advertising products have to fight very hard for attention in a media landscape where audiences have the ability to avoid adverts.

Form, genre and audience

Of course, not all print, e-media or broadcast products are the same. Within each platform there are different forms. For example: a print product could be a newspaper, magazine or display advert; TV programmes and films are different forms and as such have different codes and conventions. Within each form there are likely to be different genres – again each with their own codes and conventions. Further, where there is a specific target audience, this too may create a set of specific codes and expectations.

Platform – print	Platform – e-media	Platform – broadcast
Form – newspapers	Form – lifestyle and entertainment sites	Form – TV advertising
Genres – tabloid, 'broadsheet', national, regional, specialist newspapers (sport, finance etc.)	Genres – men's interest, general female interest, 'mum's' interest, sport focused sites, pop music focused sites, film focused sites	Genres – food adverts, Christmas adverts, hair-care adverts, car adverts
Audience – Are they predominantly male, female, young, old, holders of traditional values, 'middle class', holder of left-wing values?	Audience – closely linked to genre (see above)	Audience – some adverts are target-ted to appeal to women, children, teens, drivers, homeowners, the health conscious, lovers of luxury etc.

So, for example: it is a convention that:

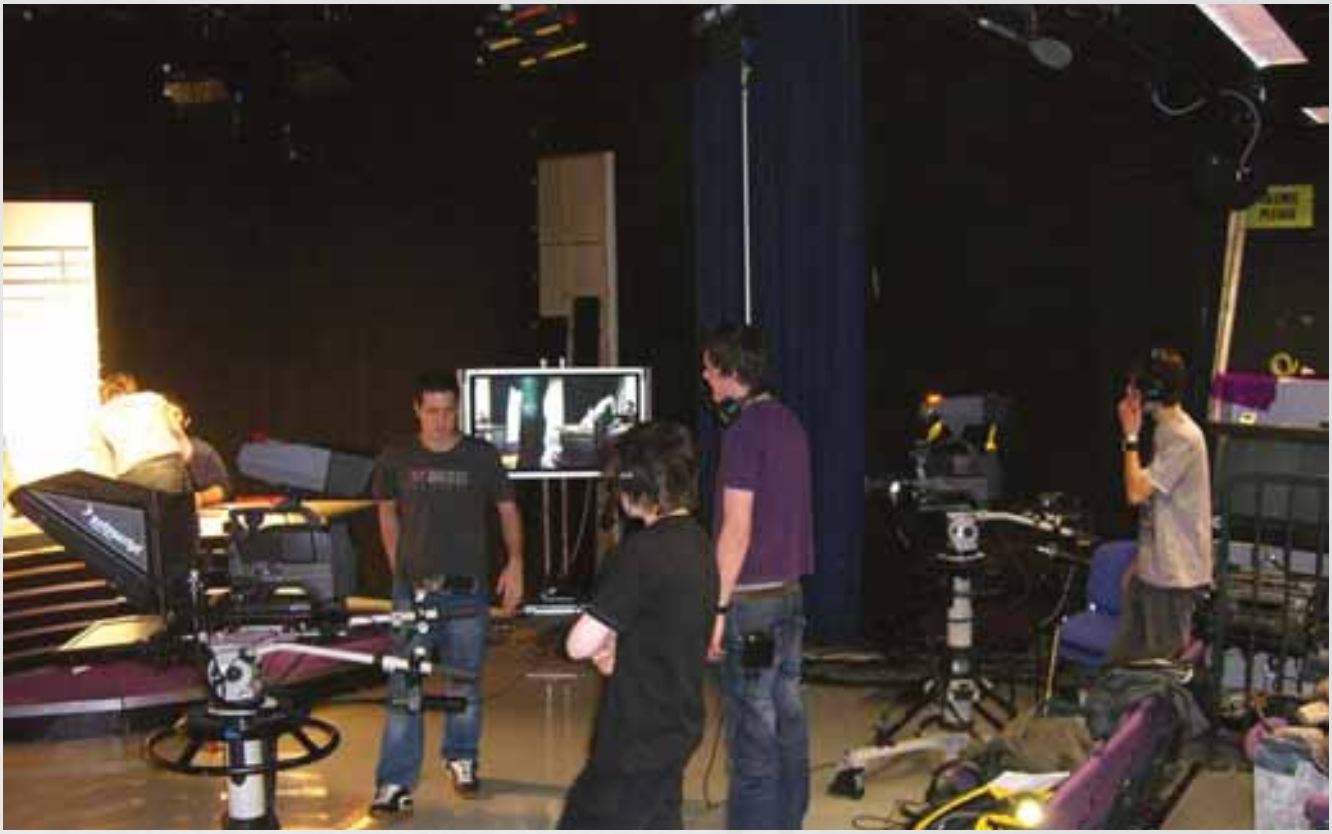
- TV adverts (a form of the broadcast platform) are either 30 or 45 seconds long and use medium to slow editing techniques
- food/supermarket adverts (genre) use close-ups of food… usually showing some form of movement such as steam, condensation or stretchy cheese
- supermarket adverts (genre) use a celebrity as a 'spokesperson'
- the spokesperson will be chosen specifically to appeal to the store's customer base (audience).

Function

Finally – make sure you are sure what you are trying to achieve with your production! Does your product need:

- to create awareness of a brand or an issue?
- to entertain? inform? persuade? offer a lifestyle?
- to identify a location? identify character-types? create enigma?
- to create a reaction such as fear? laughter? shock? guilt? outrage?
- to encourage your audience to do something? go to the cinema? buy something? donate to a charity? get involved? pass information on?

Of course, the answer to these questions may be included in the requirements of your task but once you are clear on your production's form and function, the genre you are working in and the nature of your audience, you can start to consider how you will attempt to replicate the appropriate codes and conventions and make an



appropriate and successful product. Investigating how existing media work should provide you with lots of ideas that you can integrate into the planning of your own work. Of course, you should try to think creatively too and see if you can come up with ideas and approaches of your own.

Common errors to avoid

Some errors in practical productions come up time and time again and they are often caused by paying insufficient attention to the way existing media texts are constructed. Here are some common pitfalls to look out for.

Print

- Pages that are the wrong size. If you are emulating an existing print product, accuracy in the height and width of the page you are creating will have an impact on the success of your work.
- Pages where the design elements are too big or too small. During research, check the font size used in the publication you are emulating, as well as the proportion of image to text. Also check the way columns are used (count the number and measure the width of columns used in real publications).

E-media

- E-media that is dominated by text. In web construction, a common error is to fill the page up with dense paragraphs of text. Even newspaper sites try to ensure that lengthy stories are broken up visually with lots of images, illustrations, videos, pull quotes, etc.
- E-media that is difficult to navigate through. E-media productions should consider the ways audiences will need to navigate around the site. Links should be logical and clearly visible. Try to avoid creating dead-ends where the audience have to use the back button on the browser to move away from a pages.

Broadcast

- Over-reliance on mid-shots in moving-image work. Consider ways of integrating in a range of different camera shots. Think about using long shots, close-ups, as well as shots composed from different heights and angles. Don't vary your shots simply for the sake of it, but be aware that a common error is to over-rely on mid-shots. This can lead to moving-image work that is visually repetitive and dull.
- Inconsistent sound levels. Keep an ear open for sound levels in both video and audio work. Your audience should never need to alter the volume when accessing your work. A common error is to have music very loud and dialogue very quiet in the sound mix. This can ruin the effect you are aiming for.

The production units of your course are essential, and will feed into the overall grade you achieve. Show the examiner you are considering the ideas you are learning in the classroom and that you have a good knowledge of how professional media producers approach the production of commercial media products – and you'll make it easy for them to give you a great grade!

Steph Hendry is a Lecturer in Media Studies at Runshaw College, and a freelance writer and trainer. Follow her on Twitter @albionmill.

Analysis for

How to analyse a Music Magazine for your AS coursework.

Caroline Birks considers the importance of getting to know the product you're about to produce through thorough and critical textual analysis. So if you want to make your own music magazine, get analysing!

So you've been given the brief sheet for your AS Media coursework. You're excited because you've got some creative freedom, but it's also a little bit daunting because it counts for 50% of your AS grade and you really don't want to mess it up. You're doing the music magazine brief, and have to make the cover, contents and a double page spread of a new publication. Sounds simple – but where do you start?

One of the most time-consuming tasks is often the textual analysis. Without really analysing existing magazines there is no way you can create something realistic that's going to get you lots of marks. In *The Media Teacher's Book*, Julian McDougall talks about 'disciplined creativity' which, simply put, suggests that the best work comes from students who have done thorough research and planning. You cannot know what you're making without analysing it, so starting with textual analysis is a good idea.

Your teacher will give you guidance over exactly how many pages you will need to analyse, but everyone doing this brief will need to do at least one cover, one contents page, and one double page spread (DPS) as that is what you'll be making. I suggest you choose pages that interest you in terms of content, or are from a similar musical genre to that which you will make, or have a visually interesting page layout or style that you feel inspired by. It is important to look beyond the pages that you find on the internet. For this type of analysis, it really helps if you have a physical copy of the magazine – it's easier to read the smaller text, and to see if the article continues over the page. You'll also be less tempted to copy from someone else's blog (never a good idea) if you are writing about something from a recent magazine.

Getting started: the front cover

The front cover is often the easiest page to analyse, perhaps because it feels the most familiar. There are also good examples of analysis in books such as *Key Concepts and Skills for Media Studies* (by Clark, Baker and Lewis 2003) and *Exploring the Media* (edited by Barbara Connell 2008) so by reading around, you can get some good tips and advice. Both of these books start their analysis with some information about the institution that publishes it, so that is where I would start too. For example in an analysis of *Q* magazine I would begin by saying:

> **"*Q* is a monthly music magazine published by Bauer Media. It was launched in 1986 and from the beginning it has aimed to create a reputation of quality amongst music fans. It aims to feature the world's biggest artists and has a glossy cover, good quality paper and lavish photographs throughout. This quality is reflected in the cover price which is £3.99 – fairly expensive compared to other magazines in Bauer's portfolio such as *Kerrang!*."**

We could say lots more here about Bauer, and there is lots of information online about the company, and more specifically, about *Q* magazine and its readership. The important thing is to think about why the institution behind the magazine is important. Here we have started to put this into context by mentioning other brands in the company's portfolio.

Production

The masthead – same for every issue. Clever title – sounds like 'cue', as in 'cueing up a record', or 'taking a cue' but with more impact as a single letter.

The tagline – same for every issue.

Note informality and outrageous pose – all images show artists in action, rather than studio poses, suggesting energy, rebellion, uniqueness.

'120 Greatest stories' – lists, charts, etc typical of Q's USP! Known for its 'Best ever...' lists.

A 'bleed' – the images deliberately overlap and 'bleed' into each other.

Overall, unusual cover for *Q* – usually features a single artist, but here a montage of old and new artists, mainly edgy, rule-breaking ones

Lots of small coverlines, in punky style. Informal mode of address, gossipy, intentionally shocking, asking rhetorical questions.

Deliberately 'punk' style font and layout of main headline – suggests the magazine's long history and musical heritage. Font suggests anarchy, rebellion, challenge to authority.

Choice of cut-and-paste music icons – Oasis, Chili Peppers, Monkeys, etc. What do the artists suggest about *Q's* style and contents?

Deliberate contrast of style – w.o.b, serif font, formal and restrained, in contrast with the messiness of the rest of the cover.

Bright pink strip, eye-catching and in-yer-face – good contrast with black and silver tones, and clash with red of masthead.

PLUS – lots more varied coverage inside – good value for money too!

Attracting attention: the masthead

An estimated 70% of magazines are bought on impulse and with a crowded marketplace for music and entertainment magazines, competition is fierce. What does my cover of *Q* do to attract attention? Perhaps the first thing to mention is the masthead. For example:

> **'The masthead for *Q* remains the same on each issue and forms part of the brand identity. It is a familiar letter *Q* on a red background. It is placed in the top, left third of the page and this makes it easier for readers to find on the magazine shelf.'**

Again we would say more here about the choice of font and the connotations of the colour red. We could mention what the name *Q* actually means, and how it is featured regularly throughout the magazine. There is also a tagline just above the masthead claiming that *Q* is 'The World's Greatest Music Magazine' and we might comment about what this phrase might mean to the audience and why it might persuade them to buy the magazine.

Overlapping the masthead are two of the four images (this is an example of a bleed). This edition of *Q* is fairly unusual as there is not a single cover image, and the text fills up the space where a medium shot might normally go.

The mise-en-scène

When looking at the images you should consider elements of mise-en-scène – costumes, make-up, lighting, props etc. The images in my chosen magazine are interesting as they feature a range of artists in different styles of dress. We might talk about the formality of the poses and how the artists are both current and from older bands. The type of shot distance or angle should also be mentioned – does this create intimacy? Or formality? A sense of power? Is it a paparazzi shot or a more staged studio shot? You should comment in detail on the image or images as they are often the reason people buy a magazine.

Coverlines and modes of address

Each image on my cover is also accompanied by a small coverline. For these coverlines we might consider the mode of address, which in this case, is occasionally shocking but mostly entertaining. The use of rhetorical questions makes the audience feel like they must open up the magazine to find out the answers to these questions. At the bottom of the page there are more coverlines, mentioning a range of bands from different genres and using the word 'PLUS' which makes us feel that the magazine is full of information and that we are getting good value for money. The layout of these coverlines is different from the others: always consider where they are positioned, their size and importance, and how they speak to the audience. Fonts are important here too!

This edition of *Q* uses classic moments in music history to sell the magazine; we are told this in the large headline that covers approximately 80% of the page. The headline uses a punky cut-out font style that is reminiscent of the Sex Pistols, and this shows that *Q* magazine has a good music knowledge and heritage that it is prepared to share with its readers. We would also consider the use of colour here – in this case using silver, black and clashing pink to catch the audience's attention and hopefully persuade them to buy.

The contents page

This has some similarities with the front cover (you should comment on these – think masthead, colours, fonts) but will give a more detailed overview of what features are inside the magazine. Its layout and design will also give a further sense of brand identity and house style. It could be modern or traditional, cluttered or tidy, organised in neat columns or use text boxes to spread the content around the page. Often a contents page will include an editor's letter which will introduce the magazine in a chatty way and direct readers to certain articles, creating a personal touch. Other contents pages may include an image of the front cover, and direct readers to the cover stories in an intuitive, picture-led way.

For this page from *Q* we could say:

> **"The contents page for *Q* uses a boxier layout than the front cover. Its columns are uneven and this gives it a modern feel. There is enough white space around the edge to make it seem sophisticated but it also has a good range of features to attract the reader. The *Q* review section is highlighted using a thick text box around the edge making it easy to find this popular section of the magazine..."**

Once again we must comment on the number and style of pictures and the mode of address. On this page from *Q* we start to get a good feel for the tone of the magazine which is light hearted, yet critical – for example it says, 'Simon Neil spells out his life lessons. Includes a very good reason to avoid nipple rings'.

Numbers – they all add up

Finally, don't forget to mention the page numbering. Often the numbers will be larger or bolder or in a different font style compared to any of the other fonts on the page. This makes it easier for readers to see on what page the article they are interested is on. The numbers might also be colourful, might make use of a bubble or box or some other graphic – anything that will look interesting and make them stand out. My page from *Q* uses colourful speech-bubble-type graphics which link the contents to the front cover by using red and pink, but also make it very easy to see where the stories are.

Analysing a double page spread

This is a little different from analysing a front cover or contents, partly because there is more text! It may sound obvious but the first thing to do is ... *read* the article so that you get a sense of what it is about.

Consider why the magazine has chosen to interview the band or artist featured – does it reflect the genre? The target audience? Is your DPS part of a regular feature? For example, my chosen page for analysis appears regularly:

> **"Cash for questions is a regular feature in *Q* which encourages readers to send in their questions for particular artists in return for money. In this edition Rick Wakeman, an iconic prog rock figure from the 70s, is interviewed reflecting the readers interest in well known musicians who have a good story to tell. The reader has a sense of ownership as his or her question might be featured."**

The mode of address is hugely important on the DPS, so you need to think critically about how the page talks to the audience. Start with the headline at the top and work through the text.

- Is it formal/informal? Lighthearted? Comical? Cynical? Full of praise for the band?
- Do you need to know a lot about the artist to understand all the references?
- Does it use taboo language? (Quite likely!)
- Does the artist speak directly or is the speech reported?
- Does it use a specific semantic field? Does it use slang? Does it use alliteration? Onomatopoeia?

This is where thinking back to GCSE English is useful! You do not need to analyse every single word here, but you should pick out some sentences which tell us something about the style and tone of the magazine. For example:

> **"Rick Wakeman talks directly to the audience answering their questions in a very informal way. He frequently uses taboo language and some of his more revealing comments are used as enlarged quotes on the page."**

Look at the DPS layout!

Make notes on the use of columns, the ratio of text to pictures, the use of picture frames, text wrap or bleeds. Do we see the questions that are asked or are they implied? Is there a title and sub title? Is there a byline? Are there quotes enlarged in places? Is there a drop cap at the start?

Also look at how long the article is – does it cover more than one dps, and if so, why? My example from *Q* magazine is fairly typical – half the page is filled with a posed studio photograph and the other half divided into a three column layout. There is a drop cap at the start – a capital W which perhaps adds extra emphasis to the wizard theme which is created by the artist's use of a cape and the fact that he is dressed as a magician in the main photograph.

Once again, analyse the photographs – what type of shot is used? Black and white or colour? How important is the location? Is there more than one image? There is also likely to be a caption, which will be used to anchor the image or often, in the case of music magazines, to create humour.

Finally, notice the small details – is there a page number? Is the masthead on the page? Does it include the date? These details will be important when it comes to making your own magazine.

As with all textual analysis, the key is to describe what you see (denotation) and think about the wider message that is communicated (connotation). It may seem daunting at first, but you will find that, if you look carefully, you will have plenty to say about your chosen pages. Finally, good research is crucial to developing a convincing product – but don't be tempted to spend weeks and weeks on it. For the OCR specification, the construction element of the coursework, and the actual doing of it is worth the most marks – so don't spend all your time researching at the expense of drafting your final pages. Good Luck!

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THE ULTIMATE HOW-TO GUIDE TO MAKING TRAILERS

Ian Wall, director of The Film Space, identifies the key processes involved in creating a movie trailer that really works.

Creating a film trailer seems to be one of the most popular production activities at AS and A Level, equalled only by the music video. It seems quite an easy option – a short, 2-minute piece of filming to tell the story of a film. But in order to really succeed, this task requires a lot of thought, research and planning.

Before looking at the process of making your own trailer, it's worth spending a little time looking at the purpose of trailers within the whole film marketing process. This will not only give a context to what you are going to do, but might also offer some pointers for the planning process of your production.

The purpose of trailers

The obvious purpose of a trailer is to make people want to see a film. But how does it go about this? In his book *Visible Fictions* the film theorist John Ellis suggests that what a trailer does is to present a *narrative image* of the film. Basically the trailer is telling us what the film is like, it is giving us an *idea* of the film. He points out that the narrative image of a film is

> **"decidedly less than the whole film – it is the promise (of the film) and the film is the performance and realisation of that promise."**

The trailer, along with posters and other marketing materials offer a promise of what the film will deliver to audiences, of what *pleasures* the film offers. If we are going to find a film pleasurable then it will need to offer something new, but at the same time it will build on our knowledge and experience of other films. It will play on that knowledge that we already have about films. It will use our awareness of genre, of certain stars and what they promise, of particular brands (for example, Batman or an adaptation from Marvel comics). It will use this knowledge but it will promise something more, something new. Even franchise films such as the *Fast and Furious* or *Iron Man* series will promise something new, something which builds on and develops our understanding of previous films in the franchise.

Visit the *Teaching Trailers* site (filmeducation.org/teachingtrailers), and look at the trailer for *Iron Man 3*, for example. How much knowledge of the previous films do you think that you need to have in order to understand the message of the trailer?

Most importantly, the trailer will create a number of enigmas which can only be solved by seeing the film. Who is that character? Why does that event happen? What might happen next?

In constructing a trailer, a film distributor must be aware of two things:

1. the unique selling point of a film. What makes this film different from others in its genre or from with its franchise?
2. the audience for the film.

The unique selling point

In starting to plan a marketing campaign, the film distributor has to decide how it will present a film to a potential audience. They need to decide what sets this film apart from all the other films that are released – they look for a film's 'unique selling point' (USP). If, for example, the distributor is handling an action adventure film, they will need to look for aspects of the film which set it aside from other action adventure films.

In deciding what the USP of a film is, the distributor will first look at the storyline to see how this differs from other films and what the key elements of the story are.

After this they will look at such things as who are the stars in the film? Are there innovative special effects in the film? Who is the director?

Taking all of these into consideration, the distributor will then decide which elements to stress in the marketing campaign (posters, trailers, etc.) – in other words, how to position the film in the market place

The USP of a film will help potential audiences come to an understanding of what they might expect when they go to see a film. The visual campaign – posters, trailers, etc. will stress the USP and give the audience a 'narrative image' (an idea of the story) of the film.

The target audience

When thinking about the unique selling point of a film, the distributor will also be considering who the target audience for that film will be. The target audience is best defined as the specific largest group of people who might want to go and see a film. Defining the target audience will affect the 'where' and 'how' of the marketing campaign:

- where to advertise and promote the film
- how to reach that defined target audience.

The film has to be positioned by considering the USP against an understanding of age, gender, lifestyles and activities of the audiences available – all of which inform all later decisions on how and where a film is promoted.

The target audience can vary from film to film, for example from families with young children to teenagers to older audiences. It is the distributor's job, through research, comparison with previous films and their audiences, commercial experience and professional judgement, to define who the audience for any one film is. Each film has to be treated as an individual product.

While it is important never to lose sight of the target audience, the distributor will always try to attract as wide a range of people as possible. They will often refer to films as 'crossover' or 'break out' films – films which appeal to more than just the target audience itself and thus attract more people to the cinema, particularly infrequent cinemagoers.

The trailer

The film trailer is probably the most cost-effective advertising technique available to the film distributor. Showing in cinemas to a captive audience and on websites and TV spots, through the medium of moving image, a trailer can reflect what people might expect to see at the cinema. By using extracts from the finished film, the trailer can excite an audience, create awareness and also develop a 'want to see' attitude amongst cinema and TV audiences.

The trailer works through a combination of moving images, graphics and voiceover to give audiences a sense of the 'narrative image' of the film. It can give audiences a sense of genre, what the story is about, who is in the film and when it opens.

Shown in a cinema, and before a film which might be attracting a similar target audience, the trailer is a powerful medium which reaches committed cinema goers and persuades them to return to the cinema experience.

Looking at trailers

Before we look at creating your own trailer, let's have a look at some trailers from different genres. An ideal place to start is with the Film Education Teaching Trailers resource at http://www.filmeducation.org/teachingtrailers/secondary/. Have a look at four or five trailers from different genres, and consider the following points:

- How long is each trailer?
- How many shots are contained in each trailer?
- Approximately how long is each shot?
- What are the different devices used

in the trailer? Voiceover? Intertitles? CGI?

- What actual information is given in each trailer? What are you told and what aren't you told?
- Can you predict what will happen in the films which are being trailed?

Although this analysis might seem to involve a lot of counting and timing, it should teach you about how trailers are constructed. Lots of short clips form a film, with additional information and sense of the film offered by music, voice and intertitles.

Research completed, let's move on to creating your own trailer.

Learn from other student trailers!

Having looked at hundreds of trailers made by students over the years, it's possible to identify some of the most common errors made – and here they are!

1. Trailer is too long.
2. Trailer is *far* too long
3. What is included tends to resemble the opening sequence of the film, not a trailer for the whole film.
4. Shots included are too long.
5. Shots included are *far* too long.
6. No variety of shots.
7. Trailers lack pace in editing.
8. Sound quality of dialogue is poor
9. No use of music.
10. No use of captions/intertitles.

11. No use of voiceover to help set the story idea.
12. No clear idea of what the story might be about.

So, let's see how you can avoid these pitfalls.

Creating your trailer: the story

Your starting point should be knowing the complete story of your film. A professional trailer editor will watch the whole film, selecting scenes, moments and pieces of dialogue which will all contribute to creating the narrative image.

You will not have that luxury, as you will only be filming the moments from the story that will make up your trailer. But you must have a sense of what the whole film would be about. So, write down your complete story!

Now you need to consider the narrative image that you wish to convey. What is the idea of the film, the narrative image, that you are trying to get across in your trailer? Write this down so that you can always refer to it when creating your shots to include in the trailer, when choosing music and, if necessary, when writing voiceover and intertitles/captions. This can be as basic as something like this:

> **"It's a thriller with two characters who are locked in a deadly struggle to find the solution of a mysterious death. Set in an urban environment, the keys to solving the mystery are a letter, a phone call and a blood spattered raincoat."**

Yep, pretty basic but it gives you some guidelines as to what to shoot and what you might want to say in a voiceover. Also, having defined it as a thriller helps you choose the right type of music that could go underneath the images.

You are certainly not going to give away the ending! But you'll need to introduce the characters, ensure that the genre of the film is recognisable and also show some key moments from the story. So, write up your story in its totality and then highlight the moments that you think will give a sense of the narrative. You might have to write some dialogue for your characters to say.

Creative choices

Looking at your story outline and your 'narrative image', you now need to think about what you are actually going to shoot. At the same time you need to think about the overall 'feel' of your trailer. So...

- are you going to use a voiceover?
- are you going to use captions?
- background music? If so, how will this match the film itself and give an idea of the genre?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, then you'll need to decide how the words that you're going to use will help develop the idea of the narrative image. How will they tease the viewer into wanting to watch the film? What information will they give?

This might include the stars of the film, the director, a link to other films made by the film makers. Or it may be that you give decide to fill out parts of the story. Most important is how the words or the captions link in with the images that you are going to film.

Filming

The most creative part of making your trailer is going to be the edit. You will need to ensure that you have lots of choices of shots in order to make the editing process easier. So you need to think about creating these editing options when you are filming. If you have someone walking through a door, how many ways can you film that? How many different options can you give yourself? You may have storyboarded your trailer to the last detail, but always give yourself other options as well – choice in editing is everything.

Ensure that you have a variety of shots. A trailer consisting only of long and medium shots can be uninteresting. Get in those close-ups. Think about how you can vary the visual appearance of the story. Film *through* things (windows, doors) – you might not use these shots but they give you an option. Film reflections, film mirrors, if appropriate to your story. Always give yourself choices!

Music

You have chosen the music that you think will be perfect for your trailer. You have considered the genre of your film and the music hopefully reflects the mood and feel of your film. It will give the audience a real feel for the film.

The edit

Avoid the temptation to plonk the music track on at the very end of the process. Lay down the music *before* you start editing the images as the beat will help you construct your trailer. Cut on the beat!

Next, at what point will you be using any intertitles or voiceover? How will the voice link into the music? Where will there be any dialogue? Make sure that your music level is dipped so that the dialogue can be heard. The same with the voiceover. Lower the music track ever so slightly so that spoken words can be heard.

As you edit your shots, pay careful attention to their length. Don't forget, lots of short shots are more impactful than a few very long shots. Don't get hung up on trying to show a whole scene. Your job is to show a narrative image.

And when you think that you have finished...

A couple of tips for when you think you have finished your trailer:

1. Look at the timeline on your edit suite. Can you see a particular shot which is far longer than the others? Have a look at this shot. Why is it so long? What is happening in it? Can you cut it down?
2. Close your eyes and just listen to your trailer. Can you make sense of what is being suggested by your trailer? Can you identify the genre of the film by the music you have chosen? By the words that are said, either by the characters or by the voiceover?
3. Time your trailer. If it is longer than two minutes, go back and re-edit. It is too long.
4. Compare your trailer with your short synopsis. Does it deliver all of the key points you promised? Does each shot contribute to giving the narrative image you set out at the beginning of the process? Tick each shot if it does. If it doesn't help, then get rid of it!

Good luck! As you will find out, it's not as easy as you think – but a well-crafted trailer will, we hope, give you a lot of satisfaction for a job well done!

Ian Wall is director of The Film Space (http://www.thefilmspace.org/), offering online and CD Rom resources, advice, training and consultancy on film.

Follow it up

http://www.npr.org/blogs/monkeysee/2012/01/15/145227280/the-art-of-the-modern-movie-trailer

And this one at the end of the article – gives a chronological history: http://www.wired.com/underwire/2013/06/art-of-movie-trailer/

Images show trailers for the following films: The Artist, The Great Gatsby, Spiderman, Ironman, Warm Bodies

INDIE PRODUCERS, INDIE MARKETING – HOW CULT VIDEO GAMES SELL BIG

The video games market is estimated to be worth over $80 billion per year – bigger than Hollywood and Bollywood put together. In such a lucrative industry, is there any room for small-scale Indie producers? Sara Mills investigates Introversion, a really small-scale game producer with a big vision – an ideal games industry case study.

Introversion would argue that there is indeed a place for small-scale independent games producer – and they might be right. Sometimes known as 'the last of the bedroom programmers' because their company started in, and was run from, the bedroom of their student flat, Introversion has grown to be a highly-respected games development and production company. But they are still small with a core team of four directors: Chris Delay does the game design and is the lead programmer; Mark Morris is the production manager and in charge of marketing; Johnny Knottenbelt is the technical director, ironing out all the glitches and making sure everything works; and Tom Arundel is the money man, preparing financial reports and dealing with cash flow and so on. They have one employee, Mark's dad, who is 78, packs up the physical units and prepares them for posting, and some freelance workers.

What are indie games?

From this team have come some of the most influential games in recent times. Introversion are proud to call themselves an indie company, and they embody the indie spirit. Although hard to define, 'indie games' usually means games that are made by a small group of people, games that are quirky and unusual, games that may not look polished or have high production values, and, most importantly of all, games that are driven by a creative vision rather than a financial one.

Indie games are made by people who are passionate about what they do – they make the games because they love them, not because a committee of researchers has pulled together an idea that they think will make money. For this reason, indie games tend to be the genre-changers. Big companies often play it safe: they invest so much time and money in new games, and they are under so much pressure to get good returns, that they can't afford to risk it all on something new – it's safer to just push out the next version of *Halo*, or another First Person Shooter that is almost – but not exactly – like the last FPS game they made.

Introversion focus on strongly-themed PC strategy games, and each game tends to be totally different from what they have made before – and different from what anyone else has made before too. First came *Uplink* (tagline – 'Trust is a weakness') a computer hacking simulation. Then *Darwinia*, which was set in a 'digital dreamscape' where it is the art and design of the 'world', inspired by the original *Tron* film, that appeals as much as the god-like capacity to try and save the inhabitants of the world. After this came *Defcon* (tagline – 'Everybody dies') which is a nuclear war simulation strategy game.

But taking this indie approach is a risk: because each game is unique, you can't use the sales of a previous game to predict the sales of the next one. And risks don't always pay off. Their next game was *Multiwinia* (tagline – 'the survival of the flattest') – which flopped. The four directors went from splashing money on cars and speedboats to selling all their possessions just for money for food, and were back on benefits. In the world of the big Triple A games companies like Ubisoft and Activision, the four directors would probably have been sacked for producing such a failure. Instead, they kept going and they are now making what looks set to be their most successful game so far: *Prison Architect*.

Prison Architect

In *PA* players start off with an empty plot of land and a bus of maximum security prisoners. What happens next is up to the player. Like a lot of sandbox games, it has a huge number of variables that can each be adjusted for a different outcome. The game is populated by the prisoners and guards, each of whom acts independently and reacts to the environment. To appeal to a range of gamers, there is the sandbox mode (see http://www.techopedia.com/definition/3952/sandbox-gaming) for creative types, which is a blank canvas where you can build whatever you like; and there is also a mode with a linear narrative to appeal to story-driven gamers. In addition, there are a lot of collectables throughout the game, which appeals to collectors, who are driven by the urge to accumulate.

Marketing through the alpha version

The marketing of *Prison Architect* is as innovative and niche as everything else about it. Rather than having a big launch of a finished product – with all the expensive gimmicks and press frenzy you might see around the launch of the latest *Halo* or *Assassin's Creed* game, Introversion is doing things very differently. For a start, they haven't announced the release date of *Prison Architect*. Instead they have been releasing alpha versions (early prototypes usually tested only within the developing company) for months now. See the video on YouTube for Alpha 1 which explains the process and what to expect: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDDzSOS0vzc.

Buying the alpha means that you are buying a game which is still being developed, which is unfinished and full of glitches and which changes and updates regularly. Because people are buying it already, Introversion doesn't have to struggle without an income for months or even years, waiting until the launch day to get any money coming in. It also allows the audience to see the game being built from the ground up – and to have some input into what direction the game should take, what needs coding next, features to keep in or leave out, and to suggest new ideas.

The Alpha 12 version (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NjMa5WUxeE) introduced the idea of prison contraband:

> **"Drugs. Booze. Weapons. This alpha is all about contraband. Steal weapons and tools from the workshop, drugs from sick bay or Whisky and Smokes from the Warden's office."**

The appeal to the audience is obvious in the comments they leave:

> **"I love these updates. They are the main reason I got psyched about the game and pre-ordered it"**
>
> Andrew James

They also tell the developers about glitches:

> **"the laundry machines keep short circuiting and killing whoever tries to fix it"**
>
> David Pereira

And make suggestions:

> **"maybe add that prisoners can 'plant' contraband in other prisoners' cells"**
>
> Pixied121

This blurs the conventional divides between audiences and producers, and between production and marketing.

Because a new update is delivered to fans and to reviewers each month, gaming sites and magazines are reviewing the game regularly, keeping it in the press. Marketing and development run hand-in-hand, with each supporting the other. This is very different to the mainstream model, where marketing is something that only happens once a game has been developed – often in great secrecy with a huge build-up to the one big launch day.

Building a community

The use of the alpha version itself is a successful marketing initiative. In addition, Mark and Chris also release regular videos of the gameplay to alert the target market to the new versions and what they do. These videos or trailers use timelapse techniques to show the gameplay, with Chris and Mark giving a voiceover commentary. They had to build their own programme to be able to record and show the game-play in timelapse in a way that could be uploaded to YouTube, but after this initial investment of time and money, it means they can update fans regularly – and very cheaply!


TechnologyGuardian Inside IT

Interview Chris Delay

Independent's day for creative game development

'I wanted to make the whole game in one day – a massive, 24-hour coding session' – Chris Delay

More than that, Mark and Chris realised that the audience might want to share their own unique prisons. They released the technology for free so fans can make and upload their own videos, and share them with their friends and the fan community. Of course each time a fan shares or promotes their own video, it creates more of a buzz for *PA* itself. The more fans who get involved in making, viewing and sharing their own and others' prisons, the bigger and stronger the community gets. This kind of synergy from the fans and its viral effect means that for a minimal cost *PA* is being 'advertised' to exactly the right target audience, and in a way that they will listen and respond to. Marketing doesn't get any more effective than that.

Do it yourself!

PA is Introversion's most successful game so far – selling a quarter of a million units just in the alpha version – and they look set to make a lot more money from it. Just look at the success of *Minecraft*, another indie sandbox game, which is now reputed to bring in $300 000 a day for its creators. Do you want a slice of the action?

Mark says the best way for anyone who wants to get into the creative, chaotic, and potentially very lucrative world of game design is to just do it! Teach yourself some basic programming and start making games in your bedroom. Indie designers don't wait to be asked: they have an idea, or an artistic vision, and they just get on with it. Despite the big Triple A games dominating the market there is always room for dedicated people who love what they do: people who just want to create something unique and individual. So, Introversion might not be the last of the bedroom programmers after all… it could be you!

Sara Mills is a Media Studies teacher and writer who is currently travelling in New Zealand.

Images show screenshots from videogames produced by Introversion.

A SHEPHERD IN SEARCH OF SHEEP: WHAT A FILM PRODUCER REALLY DOES...

Michelle Eastwood and colleagues

It's one of the least understood roles in the film industry – but it's also one of the most creative, challenging, and rewarding, says BAFTA-nominated producer Michelle Eastwood in this unmissable case study.

When people ask me what I 'do' and I tell them I'm a producer, there's usually a look of excitement and then the new acquaintance asks politely… and what exactly does that mean?

So, I thought I'd write about what it means, thereby dispelling the myths and legends that would have most people who don't know me assume I'm a 50-year-old man with a large belly and a fat cigar kicking back behind my huge mahogany desk.

I am, in fact, a 31-year-old woman with an average sized belly who doesn't smoke and I'm currently working out of a creative agency, so my desk is a sort of a built-in black table-top thing. So, what does a film producer do? As far as I can understand it, we're all quite different and enjoy different elements of the job, but the best description I've ever heard is that we are the shepherd of each and every project we work on.

A shepherd seeking sheep

The first thing to be done is to find the sheep. Sometimes the sheep come to us and sometimes we go looking for the sheep. By the way, don't worry, I'm not referring to writers as sheep – the sheep, in this case, are *ideas*. We're in the business of ideas and their creative development. So, as I said, sometimes they come to us – I produced a feature film called *In Our Name* which was released by Artificial Eye at the end of 2010. The writer of that film came to me with not only a fully formed idea, but also a first draft of the script. We developed it together over a few months and then we shot it.

Another project I currently have in development was what we call a 'one-liner'. When the writer pitched it to me, he then sent over a one-page outline, which I really liked. We discussed it, he sent me a five-page outline. We then about six spent months batting a 10-pager back and forth until we managed to use it to raise development money from the British Film Institute (BFI) to get a script written. The writer, Andy Yerlett, then wrote the script. We discussed it, I fed into it, the BFI fed into it, and several drafts and about two years later, we're now attaching a director.

Sometimes I have the idea and then write a treatment myself, as I did when I wanted to adapt Alasdair Gray's novel, *Something Leather;* other times I'll have an idea and then find a writer to write a treatment, and raise development money that way.

Finding projects happens in many different ways and I really rely on my colleagues – writers and directors – to come up with great ideas as well as trying to find the time to develop my own ideas.


Gutpunch


Joanne Froggatt in Downton Abbey

Finding a director

What happens next? Well, if the writer isn't also a director, I find a director. Knowing who is interesting and who, importantly, is nice to work with, comes from watching lots of short films and first features, and being in contact with some lovely agents. These are relationships that develop over time, and it's always a good thing to make contacts at talent agencies such as Independent Talent, Curtis Brown, United Agents and Casarotto.

Once you've found the director you want to work with, you have to persuade them to do it. This can be an organic process, or it can be more financially oriented! I haven't yet dealt with directors who are more interested in the money than the project – probably because my films have all been so low budget to date! Again, this is a conversation – you have to see if you have the same vision for a project, the same references and ideas about shooting style. You really have to make sure this person is the right person to direct this film, because you're going to go on a big, stressful, emotional journey together.

In Our Name

Casting

Once you've got your director, you need to get your cast. Sometimes your choice of cast will be greatly influenced by the people financing your film. Usually if people are investing a lot of money or selling the film for you, they will have a list of cast who can get bums on cinema seats and bring in the box office – the kinds of familiar faces that make people say 'oh, he's in it, I like him' and go and see the film.

If you're working with a lower budget you will hopefully have more freedom. On *In Our Name* we cast Joanne Froggatt – a terrific actress who hadn't been the lead in a film before. Most of our financiers were happy to trust us, as the director, Brian Welsh, auditioned using workshops and her talent was clear from the sessions as well as her other work. Strangely enough, the only thing in question was the length of her hair… one person involved just couldn't buy the idea of having a female soldier with long hair. After being shown a few pictures of real female soldiers with long hair, he retracted his comment.

We had a casting director who came on-board after we had already cast the lead parts. She was terrific, but our first casting director didn't do much for us so Brian had a long list of people he wanted to see, and I got in touch with agents directly. Luckily I had been nominated for a BAFTA a couple of years earlier for a short film I produced, and I'd just graduated from the NFTS – all of which was very useful when trying to get agents to trust me with their actors. I also negotiated all the deals with the agents, as our budget was too small for lawyers to be involved.

On another film I made recently, *Gutpunch*, we cast the film a slightly different way. We had a brilliant and hard-working casting director who brought in a lot of actors for auditions for the lead role, which was a 15-year

old boy; we made straight offers (not based on audition) to more established actors in the adult roles. Sometimes actors of a certain level of experience won't audition for a role in a short film, and it's the done thing to look at their other work, have the director meet the actor, and then just offer them the part. So *Gutpunch* was a pleasure casting-wise; it really made me realise how much easier a producer's life can be if you employ good people who work hard in their roles.

Raising the cash

On to the money. It's a producer's job to raise the money to make a film. You don't 'get given' a budget, you have to work out how much you need (with the help of a line producer) and then try to raise that money. This is the only way you and your crew will get paid!

A producer can get paid small amounts if you have a feature script in development with a fund (such as the BFI) as well. Different projects require different types of money and from different sources. *Gutpunch*, my short, was fully financed by the BFI as part of their shorts scheme and we had £50,000 to make it. *In Our Name*, my feature, was put together by me and the executive producers using their contacts. We pre-sold it to the BBC; Artificial Eye, the distributor, also invested; the NFTS lent us equipment for free, and we used the UK producer's Tax Credit to make up the rest. It cost around £100,000 to make.

For all of the films I've worked on as the lead producer (seven short films and two features), I've never been paid more than expenses. And I do the budget myself, so I only have myself to blame. I've always made sure the film comes first, and I've seen all these productions as important experiences that will lead to bigger and better things, so I've been willing to sacrifice fees. Now, the projects I have in development will all be produced at reasonable budget levels because they are more commercially viable; and if I succeed in raising those budgets, I will be paid properly for my work.

How to survive – an industry secret!

I think now's the time to reveal something, a little industry secret: most producers do something else other than produce films in order to make a living.

Unless you are very established and making a film every year, or a TV series every two years, it's extremely difficult to survive just producing in these areas, unless you're working with large budgets or you're a 'producer for hire', boarding TV projects once they are greenlit. On top of my film and TV work, I also produce in the commercial/corporate sector, making large-scale content for brands like Samsung and Sony to show in their exhibitions.

I do a lot of training – I do some teaching and also run training schemes on behalf of other companies. I do get some money from funders when I raise development money as well. Many producers won't tell you about the extra things they do to make ends meet but I think it's important to admit that making a living out of being a creative producer in film and TV alone can be tough when you're starting out. You need to use those skills to find other ways to support yourself financially when you're working on the projects which might be amazing for your career but not your bank balance.

The shoot, the edit, and finding the audience

On to the shoot. I sometimes used to manage these by myself, but now I make sure I have a line producer or production manager working with me. I will usually do a draft of the budget and schedule before they come on board, and I'm often still quite hands-on during production if we're


Gutpunch

under-staffed – which we usually are! However, I like to be by the monitor, looking at what we're getting, and offering up ideas when it's appropriate. As far as I'm concerned, everything that happens in front of the camera is the director's domain, but if I can add something to it, or a second opinion is needed, all the better.

Then it's on to the edit. I give feedback in the edit, and at this stage also present the film to the financiers and try to create a plan of action to implement that feedback. As a producer, you're always hovering somewhere between the financiers and the director, between the money/practicalities and the creative. This is sometimes a good place to be, when all is going well; but it can be an incredibly difficult place to be if there is a difference in opinion between the film's funders and the director. Usually in these situations, the producer somehow has to respect both sides, help them to see the other's position, and hope that there is a compromise to be had. It can be difficult to manage relationships in this kind of situation – but it's a big part of the job.

After the film is finished, it's the producer's job to make sure it is exploited in the best possible way – this can mean festivals, and can also mean that you secure a sales agent or distributor if it's a feature film. Once a distributor is involved, they effectively take over the promotion and distribution of the film to cinemas, on TV, online and so on, but you can still


Gutpunch

work with them to oversee the project until its release.

Why be a producer?

To summarise: as a producer you are shepherding the film through this process. You are trying to make sure that the script grows into the best film it can be, without being savaged by wolves along the way. Directors are the people usually associated with the 'vision' of the film, but as a producer you also have to have a vision, and it's your job to make sure that everyone you involve in the process along the way shares and enhances that vision, from the director to the financiers to the crew. Sometimes I wish I did a job where my creative impact on a project is big, clear and easily defined – like a Director of Photography, or Production


In Our Name

Designer. But there is something amazing about taking a project from the ideas stage through to completion, and seeing that film have an impact on its audience.

Sometimes you really have to force a film into existence – it's not easy to bring together everything I've described above– but it's amazing to be a big part of the reason a film exists in the world. Whether it's there to entertain, confound or inform, it's there because you worked to get it there, and that feels good.

Michelle Eastwood is a graduate of the NFTS, A Screen International Star of Tomorrow and a BAFTA-nominated producer. Michelle has won several short film awards, co-produced *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll* (2010) and produced *In our Name* (2010). See www.escapefilms.co.uk

Web subscribers look out for video highlights from Michelle's presentation at the 2013 *MediaMagazine* Conference, on the website in the autumn.

Three Kings

ART VS COMMERCE:

The independent's battle

Nick Lacey considers the troubled relationship between artistic integrity and profit.

In the Gothic issue of *MediaMagazine*, I wrote about how the producer of the classic 1920 film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* changed the downbeat ending to make it more commercial ('Into the Mind of a Madman', *MediaMagazine* 46). This tension between artistic integrity, the *Caligari* writers' original intentions, and the commercial prerogative to make money, is common to all art forms; however, because films are so costly to produce, this conflict is often more pronounced.

It is often argued that Hollywood is only interested in making money. Even the Oscars that are meant to celebrate artistic merit were originally created as a marketing device for middlebrow films. They are still used as such: most films with Academy Award aspirations are released toward the end of the calendar year in the hope that they will still be in cinemas when the nominations are announced in January. To facilitate this, most are given a platform release in North America; that is, they open on a small number of screens, and slowly roll out across the country, lengthening the film's 'shelf life' in the cinema.

Occasionally, even in Hollywood artistic intention can override the desire for profit, but this is rare. For example, Brad Pitt insisted that he would only make the film *Se7en* (1995) if its original ending was retained; he'd been sent the original draft of the script by mistake (see Lacey 2012).


Three Kings

Filmmakers who want to maintain control of their 'artistic vision' are best served by the independent sector where there is more likelihood that commercial considerations won't overpower the film's concept. For example the independent production company Artisan:

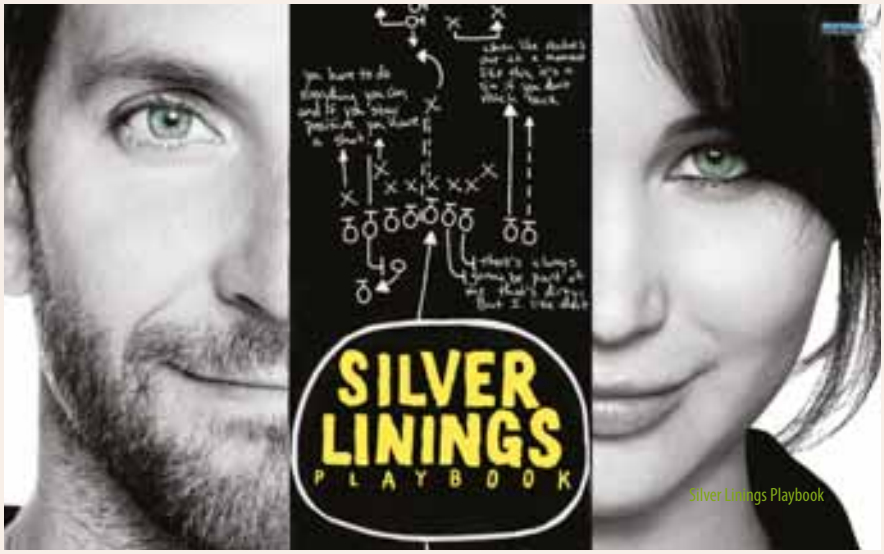
> **…released Aronfsky's second feature, *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), un-rated to prevent cuts it said would have compromised the director's vision, a move designed to increase the company's appeal to filmmakers on the basis of its respect for artistic integrity.**
>
> King 48-9: 2005

'Artistic integrity' is a term usually associated with non-mainstream films, films that set out to communicate a message rather than just entertain. Even if these films are low budget, they still face considerable barriers in recouping their cost, never mind actually making a profit. Even independent film companies need to make profits from films to cover their overheads.

However, not all indies are so 'pure'. The Weinstein Company, for instance, has no problem in interfering with the 'artistic vision' of its movies for commercial reasons. Harvey Weinstein, who runs the company with his brother Bob, has been dubbed Harvey 'Scissorhands' for his enthusiasm for cutting with the editor's 'blade'. He regularly re-cuts a film against a director's wishes – his most recent 'victim' is arthouse favourite Wong Kar-wai and his film *The Grandmaster* (Hong Kong-China, 2013) – see Longworth 2013.

It is arguable that, in its emphasis on profit over integrity, The Weinstein Company acts more like a major Hollywood studio than a true indie. Miramax, the brothers' previous company, refined the art of making films that would appeal to Academy voters, winning four 'best picture' Oscars. These 'middlebrow' films, neither too arty nor too 'mass' in their appeal, effectively capture the niche audience that seek more than entertainment (Hollywood blockbusters) but don't want to be too intellectually challenged (arthouse).

The Weinstein's *Silver Linings Playbook* is a good example of this. It received eight Oscar nominations, including one for winner Jennifer Lawrence. The film grossed $132m in North America and $227m worldwide on a budget of $21m (source: www.the-numbers.com). This obviously represents a massive success, no doubt facilitated by the casting of Bradley Cooper, popular from *The Hangover* films, and Jennifer Lawrence, becoming a star after the first *The Hunger Games* film. In addition, although it's a romantic comedy, it does have quirky, 'indie' elements that would appeal to the middlebrow audience. Both of the protagonists have mental health issues, something that mainstream Hollywood tends to avoid



Silver Linings Playbook


Silver Linings Playbook

Winter's Bone


Winter's Bone

and, at the same time, often appeals greatly to Academy voters.

David O. Russell, the film's director, who's been reunited with Cooper and Lawrence in the recent *American Hustle*, made his name with two independent films, *Spanking the Monkey* (1994) and *Flirting with Disaster* (1996), before going to work for a major studio in the big budget, and brilliant, *Three Kings* (1999), which was a box office disappointment. Many directors use the independent sector as a 'calling card': creating a well-made, and on-budget, film that has been critically lauded, is a good way of getting the attention of the major studios, who are always on the look out for new – and cheaper – talent. Since his experience with Warners on *Three Kings*, Russell has made his films independently again.

Winter's Bone: a case study

Not all filmmakers are interested in working with the major studios, or the Weinsteins, because they know that their artistic vision will inevitably be compromised by the need to ensure that their film makes money. Director Debra Granik falls into this category of a true independent. Her first feature, *Down to the Bone* (2004), was produced by Susie Q Productions, and her follow up, *Winter's Bone* (2010), was made by Anonymous Content.

An excellent article on *Indiewire* (2010) explains how Alix Madigan, one of *Winter's Bone*'s two producers,


Winter's Bone

tried to raise the $4 million budget; this was miniscule given that the cost of Hollywood movies regularly exceeds $100 million. Originally the producers sought to attach a 'name' actor to the lead role. Some Hollywood stars, George Clooney and Brad Pitt among them, are happy to appear in independent films for far less than they usually get paid, for artistic reasons. Obviously if there's a 'name' attached to a property then it's going to be easier to sell to both the financiers and audiences. Although Jennifer Lawrence was eventually cast in the role of Ree, she was, at the time, an unknown.

While Madigan sought financial backing, the other producer, Anne Rosellini with Granik, 'meticulously researched' the Ozark Mountain setting of the film, emphasising the filmmaker's commitment to make an authentic artistic statement.

Daniel Woodrell's source novel of the same name tells the grim tale of 18-year-old Ree, main carer for her younger siblings and emotionally damaged mother, living in brutal rural poverty in the snowy Ozarks. She has a week to find her father, who's skipped bail, or she will lose her family and her home. Given the subject matter it wasn't surprising that Madigan struggled to raise the money:

> **"After getting passes from more than 25 potential financiers, the filmmakers finally were left with one interested backer [who] ended up pulling out."**
>
> *Indiewire*, 2010

Despite this, a financier 'contact' of Rosellini and Granik's agreed to put up $2m, and they decided to slash the budget by half, giving them total control over the film. It was agreed that the financier would receive the first $2m, plus an agreed premium, of monies that reached the producers. After that, there would be a 50:50 split.

For producers, however, raising finance to make the film is only half the battle; they also need a distributor, otherwise no one will see the film and no revenue will be forthcoming. They caught the attention of distributors when showing the film at the Sundance Film Festival, the premiere showcase for independent films in America.

The *Indiewire* article again demonstrates how important it was to the producers to keep control of their film rather than take a better financial offer. They eventually agreed that Roadside Attractions should distribute the film, despite receiving an offer that was double the one they accepted. The bigger offer:

> **was from a distributor that had showed mild interest before Sundance, but whose representatives had proved elusive and unable to meet during the festival.**
>
> *Indiewire*, 2010

In the end *Winter's Bone* took $6.5m at the North American box office and a further $9.6m internationally, with DVD sales (in North America) of $3.8m. This represents an excellent return on a small $2 million movie. Obviously it wasn't as successful proportionately as *Silver Linings Playbook*, but *Winter's Bone* was a 'true' indie in the sense that the subject matter was not designed primarily for entertainment, and the producers didn't compromise their artistic vision for money.

Although the film's trailer emphasises the thriller aspects of the film, the over-riding impression from it is the grim reality of life in the Ozark community. The film also features indie-movie stalwart, the brilliant John Hawkes (see Cadwalladr 2013). It's unlikely that Granik, or either of the producers, made much money from the film, but they would have taken satisfaction at making such a good movie.

Jennifer Lawrence was Oscar nominated, two years before winning, and the film helped launch her as a star. Debra Granik hasn't made a film since *Winter's Bone*; it was reported that she was slated to shoot the pilot of a HBO TV series in 2012 but that doesn't appear to have happened (Thompson 2012). Not everyone is interested in making millions or being a star. The true independent filmmaker is someone who maintains their artistic integrity.

Nick Lacey teaches Film Studies at Benton Park Technology College, and is the author of a range of Film and Media textbooks.

Follow it up

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VERTOV: THE MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA

One day, three cities, 68 minutes, 1775 shots... Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* is an iconic film which demonstrates both the subversive potential of film production, and the possibility of a cinema driven by politics rather than profit. Mark Ramey explores the debates.

Why bother to produce a film? Money? Perhaps. That is certainly the dominant model underpinning most national film industries, and the model most famously and rapaciously adopted by Hollywood. What about prestige? Perhaps. Many Hollywood stars and directors for example, now switch between mainstream crowd-pleasers and more alternative works in order to keep their images both bankable and credible. What about for art – art for art's sake? If this is the motive, then we're talking about a style of filmmaking that largely bypasses the mainstream model, with the reasons for engaging in the art form being more complex and personal. Then again, maybe most films produced these days are a mixture of the above: made by artists with passion, for some financial return, in the hope that audiences and even critics will appreciate the work. Perhaps.

But back in the 1920s, in post-revolutionary Russia, there was a simpler (possibly unique) approach to film production that eschewed Hollywood's business model, downplayed the cult of director and star, and made politically radical art films for a mass audience. As Amos Vogel in his book *Film as a Subversive Art* neatly explains:

> **"Never before had there existed a state financed, nationalised cinema entirely devoted to subversion as was built in Russia after the October revolution [...] From 1917 into the early twenties, the congruence of avant-garde art and radical ideology, the fusion of form and content, existed in action. For a brief, glowing second of historical time, the commitments of the vanguard artist and the society around him almost coincided"**

At the heart of this new state cinema was Dziga Vertov, one of the few filmmakers in the history of film to represent both a mouthpiece for a government and an artistic avant-garde. This article will explore the contexts of Vertov's career and then briefly focus on his most highly-regarded film, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

Contexts

Vertov was born in Poland in 1896 to a lower middle-class Jewish family.

His birth name was Denis Kaufmann, but around the time his family moved to Moscow in 1915, he adopted his ideologically-inspired pseudonym, which roughly translates as 'the action of spinning and zigzagging' but which is often defined as 'spinning-top'. In 1918 he entered the newly nationalised Soviet film industry as editor of *Cinema Weekly*, a pro-revolutionary, but otherwise artistically conventional, newsreel.

Prior to the revolution, Russian cinema was booming, thanks to imports collapsing from war-torn France and Germany, and a rise in cultural nationalism, which resulted in an appetite for Russian film. So Vertov was well placed to prosper in his new role. According to Denise Youngblood in *European Cinema*:

"... more than 100 studios in the empire produced about 500 films annually to fill the country's 4,000 theatres [and] movie attendance was estimated at 2 million spectators daily."

In 1922 Vertov became editor of *Cinema Truth* (*Kino Pravda* – a nod to Lenin's party newspaper – *Pravda*) a more artistically conceived series of newsreels. It was also at this time that his early radical ideas on film coalesced, leading to the publication of *We: A Version of a Manifesto*. This attack on the old form of cinema dealt with ideas and proclamations Vertov had initially made back in 1919 when he had formed the Kinoki Group (Cine-eyes – the 'WE' of his manifesto) with his brother Mikhail, the eponymous cameraman in *Man with a Movie Camera*, and his wife Elizaveta Svilova, who also edited the film.

"WE proclaim the old films, based on the romance, theatrical films and the like, to be leprous. Keep away from them! ... WE affirm the future of cinema art by denying its present. [...] The machine makes us ashamed of man's inability to control himself [...] Saws dancing at a sawmill convey to us a joy more intimate and intelligible than that on human dance floors."

Vertov: 1922

The ideas expressed here aimed to reject the old structures of theatrical, bourgeois art, and lionise the new mechanical wonders of the modern age – in particular the all-seeing camera, with even the process of montage conceived in mechanical terms. WE heralded a new cinematic objectivity, favouring documentary as a genre, and real life as its subject. The intention was to forge a revolutionary new consciousness by showing the Russian workers themselves and their place in the great, mechanised adventure of communism. Youngblood further explains Vertov's aesthetic credo:

"The emphasis was to be on the 'unplayed' over the plotted film, on the substitution of documentation for narrative and mise-en-scène, on the destruction of the theatrical proscenium (invisibly present in so many Hollywood films) in favour of the 'proscenium of life itself' [...] Hence the elimination of actors, lighting, make-up, studio, costumes and décor."

On such an interpretation it is easy to see why Vertov is now widely regarded as a forerunner of Cinema Verite.

Cinema as a tool for revolutionary politics

Such radical views of cinema and art were however very much part of the left wing intelligentsia at the time. They were typified by the avant-garde journal *LEF* to which Vertov contributed. Constructivism was all the rage: an artistic philosophy originating in Russia in 1919, which rejected the idea of autonomous art and favoured art as a practice for social purposes. In the same year Vertov had proclaimed:

"Down with bourgeois fairytale plots and scenarios – long live life as it is."

Vertov's views were then radical – but he was not alone. Indeed he was but one of many young artists and ideologues liberated by the energies of the revolution and the flight of the old cinema industry, firstly to White Russia during the civil war (1918-21), and then overseas when the Bolsheviks won. But critically what wedded the avant-garde to the political elite was Lenin's belief that cinema was the most important of art forms, and the most effective in transmitting the revolutionary message to Europe's largest illiterate populace. Equally Lenin's post-civil war economic policy – ideologically less radical than initially conceived by the hardliners in the Bolshevik party, but one needed to raise the Russian economy out of recession – encouraged artistic expression and lead to a rich flowering of Russian filmmaking talent.

Youngblood comments on some of the economic and artistic tensions which helped define this complex period of film production:

"By the mid-20s [...] there were still ideological tensions between those more populist directors who saw their work as realist in character and narrative-driven, and those more avant-garde directors who felt socialist cinema needed to be revolutionary in form as well as content. There was also an economic as well as aesthetic tension. The nationalised industry was not subsidised, and so was expected to pay for itself via the box office. Sovkino (the state body for film since 1924 and part of the Department of Education) imported many foreign films and it was their success which would fund the avant-garde production. This policy backfired though as the bourgeois films were more important than the experimental socialist films."

By the late 1920s, Russia had re-established a stable film industry making 150 films a year, even though popular titles and Hollywood imports were still doing better box office than avant-garde work. However, by 1933 only 33 films were in production; the personal expression typical of Lenin's policies was curtailed by the new, Stalinised Party, and censorship and ideological purges became the norm. This reduction in production and artistic freedom was in part due to the economic problems of moving towards 'talking pictures' which had been developed in the US in the late 1920s; but also a result of the rise of a new

Stalinist cinematic intelligentsia who favoured a more conservative style of filmmaking known as Socialist Realism*. They accused Vertov, among others, of the 'crime' of Formalism – in other words allowing the form of a film to dominate its content, and thus to neglect the socialist message. As a consequence, Vertov drifted into obscurity – tolerated but reviled, and dying un-lauded in 1956. Even as late as 1989, in the era of liberal perestroika, he was, as David Thomson notes,

> **[...] labelled as an exponent of totalitarian cinema [...] as someone who did not stand up sufficiently against the cruel and inhuman [Stalinist] system.**

Man with a Movie Camera

It is no surprise that *Man with a Movie Camera* remains a staple text of many Film Studies courses. Indeed critics polled by *Sight and Sound* in 2012 voted it the 8th best film ever made. Clearly Vertov's influence, and by extension those of his contemporaries such as Eisenstein and Kuelshov, remains potent. As Youngblood argues:

> **The style of the radical Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s has become part of the cinematic vernacular.**

US critic Roger Ebert indicates why *Man with a Movie Camera* in particular is still so highly regarded:

> **In 1929 [...] films had an average shot length (ASL) of 11.2 seconds. 'Man With a Movie Camera' had an ASL of 2.3 seconds. The ASL of Michael Bay's 'Armageddon' was also 2.3 seconds.**

In terms of this technical feature alone it is easy to see why Vertov still communicates to a 21st-century sensibility: he was just so far ahead of his time.

Another reason though is the cinematic exuberance of his film, something Vertov alludes to in the title sequence through onscreen text:

> **This experimental work aims at creating a truly international absolute language of Cinema based on its total separation from the language of theatre and literature.**

A statement of pure cinema if ever there were one.

Deconstructing the documentary form

The general idea behind *Man with a Movie Camera* is the 68-minute documentation of a single day in a non-specific Russian city. It actually took Vertov and his Kinoki four years to film this single day working in three cities (Moscow, Kiev and Odessa) and delivering to the editor 1,775 separate shots.

However, this is no ordinary film of a city. It is now widely regarded as one of the most famous examples of the reflexive documentary – a style of documentary that challenges our concept of realism by foregrounding the very process of documentary construction. This manifests itself through many images of the eponymous cameraman preparing for shots which we then witness, and most shockingly, images of the editing process followed by both still and moving images of the shots selected. As for representation, Thompson notes that the eponymous cameraman, the star of this otherwise star-free film, is depicted as:

> **a proletarian hero, a worker like any other, simultaneously recording and activating the Revolution.**

And then we have the stylistic bravura of the film most famously employed through the use of multiple superimpositions (the camera-eye close-up of the final frame and the cameraman himself towering in long-shot over the city); stop-frame animation (the camera taking a bow towards the end of the film); split screens (the Bolshoi theatre – a symbol of the old arts – literally folding in on itself) and the numerous sequences of staccato editing (a visual manifestation of the interconnectedness and mechanised dynamism of modern Russian life).

To return to the question I began this article with: why produce a film? I think we can now see that Vertov and his fellow Constructivists would regard the ideas of money, prestige and artistic expression as insufficient reasons for film production. Vogel suggests why:

> **... early Soviet cinema can be summarised as a fundamental subversion of filmic content and form. In content, it constituted rejection of the individualism, sentimentality, and aestheticism of ruling-class art, a passion for grasping and taming reality, and the creation of archetypes and revolutionary consciousness. In form, early Soviet cinema manifested an aggressive rejection of conventional methods and systems and a profound concern with the theory and language of film ...**

Nearly a hundred years since the 1917 revolution in Russia, it seems to me that the artistic and political process of contemporary film production still needs Vertov's passion and vision to show producers and spectators that there are other, less money-driven cinematic paths to tread.

Mark Ramey teaches Film and Media at Collyers College.

Follow it up

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RogerEbert.com (http://www.rogerebert.com/)

Gillespie, D. 2000. *Early Soviet Cinema*.

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Glossary

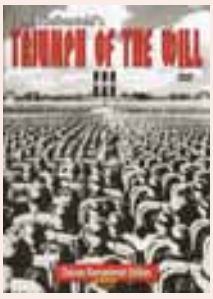
*Socialist Realism is a style of realist art whose purpose is the furtherance of the goals of socialism and communism and which, unlike the much broader and less ideological concept of social realism, glorified the roles of the working class and idealised their triumphant struggle for freedom.

Making Hitler: Producing Triumph of the Will

Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* introduced the world to Hitler in 1935, and has remained a source of contention ever since. Propaganda in its most blatant form, or observational documentary of the reality of emergent Fascism? Outstanding art, or obscene manipulation of truth? Jonathan Nunns steers you through the debates.

Everyone thinks they understand the Nazis. They were the most demonic of black hats, history's most remorseless villains. People may not know the details, but they know that the Nazis had a genocidal ideology, which they used to justify murder on a colossal scale. This can be summed up by their awful 'final solution', the mass murder of Europe's Jews. Only Hitler's brutal contemporary, Russia's Joseph Stalin, rivals him in the scale of the deaths he ordered and, historically speaking, we seem far less interested in him. The Nazis always had the most compelling mise-en-scène: torchlit processions, book burnings, massed ranks of invading tanks and a messianic demagogue for a leader. Not to mention the jet-black uniforms, death's head badges and goose-stepping. They created a stereotype of totalitarianism.

The media has been obsessed with the Nazis since World War 2. It sometimes seems that hardly a night goes by without a documentary focussing on their war. The British film industry spent decades replaying the era, from *The Dambusters* (Anderson UK 1954) to *The Guns of Navarone* (Thompson UK/USA 1961). Hollywood has shown equal interest, from gung-ho shoot em' ups like *Where Eagles Dare* (Hutton USA 1968) and *The Dirty Dozen* (Aldrich USA 1967) to Jewish-American directors like Steven Spielberg reflecting with seriousness on their own heritage. This auteur has provided two modern classics, the D-Day drama, *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg USA 1998) and the Holocaust film, *Schindler's list* (Spielberg USA 1993). Even Quentin Tarantino has got involved, with the postmodern genre splicing (and misspelling) of his *Inglourious Basterds* (Tarantino USA 2009).



So everyone understands the Nazis. Hollywood's 'go to' bad guys. Everywhere from *Indiana Jones* to George Lucas' Darth Vader-led Empire, the space Nazis of his *Star Wars* franchise. Strange, then, when the topic seems so clear, that ambiguity is the dominant theme that swirls around the Nazis first major screen appearance.

Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl Germany 1935) introduced Hitler to the world and has remained a source of contention ever since. The film appears to be clear-cut propaganda. It was after all a documentary of sorts, cataloguing the massed ranks of Nazis who appeared in Nuremburg in September 1934 to march and strut. However that's not how Riefenstahl had it. She argued right up to her death in 2003 that she had never been a Nazi and had made a pure documentary, truthfully recording the unvarnished reality of the Nazis when they had freshly assumed the mantle of power. Many people disagreed and Riefenstahl's film remains banned in Germany,

condemned as a clarion call for extremists. Riefenstahl was never forgiven for what she had created. Complex indeed. To understand more, we need to focus on Riefenstahl herself and the context of *Triumph of the Will*, probably the most controversial film ever made.

Mountaineer and pioneer

Riefenstahl was originally a dancer, spotted by the director Arnold Fanck. She was cast in 'the mountain movies'. A popular genre in 1920's Germany, these dramas explored the elemental struggle of brave mountaineers in the mountain ranges of the Austrian Tyrol. Riefenstahl proved more than a great natural beauty. She became an expert climber, often ascending freestyle, barefoot and un-roped. She was a pioneer at a time when mountaineering was utterly male dominated. Riefenstahl quickly learned to make her own films, confidently directing herself onscreen. Hitler adored 'the mountain movies'. They encapsulated the Nazi veneration of the body over the mind and the fantasy of the Aryan race triumphing over the odds by innate superiority and determination. Hitler spotted Riefenstahl and she became his favourite filmmaker. Soon she was invited to make films directly for the government, the Nazi Reich.

Of whose will was this a triumph?

Interviewed decades later, Riefenstahl argued she had been an outsider who never understood politics. Instead, she was simply an artist making a living during the rule of a police state. What is a person to do, except to make the best of the circumstances in which they find themselves? However, according to the diaries of Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels, things were a lot cosier. Riefenstahl was frequently photographed with the elite, attending functions and going to the opera. The making of *Triumph of the Will* serves as a case in point.

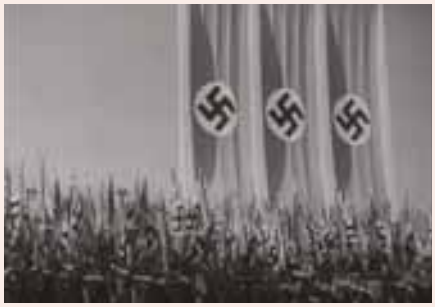
Riefenstahl had an unhappy experience making *Victory of Faith* (Riefenstahl Germany 1933), a smaller-scale film of the previous year's 1933 Nuremburg rally. Infighting by factions within the Nazi party, all straining to gain the leader's ear and favour, had hampered the production. The result had become an embarrassment. A prominent Nazi in the film, Ernst Rohm, was subsequently seen as a potential rival to Hitler and so murdered. Hitler was no longer keen to appear on screen with the vilified Rohm and ordered the prints of the film to be burnt.

Subsequently, Riefenstahl claimed she was understandably reluctant to work for the Nazis again. However, they promised that the production of the new film would be different. Riefenstahl would be given a free hand to create the film she wanted without interference from jealous and self-interested factions within the party (a factor which antagonised Joseph Goebbels). Riefenstahl later argued otherwise, but, in effect, the conference would be organised around her cameras with the propaganda ministry picking up the bills, giving her unlimited resources to make her film. As a result, she was able to muster a crew of over one hundred, including more than thirty cameras and operators to make her film. Riefenstahl was given artistic freedom to make the film she wanted – as long as she made the Nazis look good.

This would make her the most powerful female director in the world and arguably, the most powerful female director of all time. She achieved this against the backdrop of Nazism, an ideology so reactionary, that its vision of women limited them to the role of domestic brood mares, producing the next generations of Nazi patriots.

Filming the Führer

Having accepted the job, Riefenstahl took full advantage of the opportunity. Breaking the rules of conventional film, she invented a raft of techniques to tackle what she saw as her main obstacles. The conference consisted of the Nazi leadership giving long speeches and the rank and file marching in neat formation. This was a difficult subject to make into visually arresting cinema. Naturally inventive, Riefenstahl threw everything at creating a compelling experience. By her ground-breaking use of close ups, she focussed attention on Hitler as the key to the drama. She filmed him by digging ditches in which to place her cameras, enabling her to film Hitler in looming, extreme low-angle close-ups, providing him with complete visual dominance. Hitler was revealed to the German public for the first time in these striking shots, overwhelming in size and dominating all below him. Realising that a static Hitler, talking at length, would be visually boring, she erected tracks so that the camera could rotate around him, a metaphor for the endless motion and change that the Nazis saw themselves as bringing to the nation.



Whilst Riefenstahl picked out Hitler as the ultimate individual, she used the close-up to show the ranks of his supporters as anonymous acolytes. The journalist William Shirer, covering the rally for the American press, commented that he had seen similar fervour on the faces of religious zealots in the American South. Riefenstahl's cameras captured the zeal and transcendence of belief, with scenes of intense adoration for the leader.

Riefenstahl's inventiveness continued. The Zeppelin Field, the massive amphitheatre the Nazis had constructed, featured three huge flagpoles, showcasing enormous Nazi flags. Understanding that scale was essential to make the event epic, Riefenstahl insisted on the installation of a camera lift into one of the poles. This took the camera operator high above the auditorium, showing to spectacular effect the regimented mass of supporters. Later, Riefenstahl argued that it was ridiculous to think the Nazis would allow her to orchestrate their event. The images of Hitler and a dehumanised rank and file were, she said, simply a documenting of what took place, and true to the spirit of observational film.

She also claimed the film was not anti-Semitic. The acclaimed critic Roger Ebert, commenting on the absence of anti-Semitic invective, said he considered it intentional, a laundering of Nazi intentions to make them acceptable to moderate audiences within Germany and the wider world. If true, that would be propaganda indeed.

Making an entrance

Riefenstahl created an extraordinarily effective set piece with which to open her film. Fading from a title card on the new dawn, the Nazis offered to Germany after defeat in World War 1, the screen fades into the view from the cockpit of a plane in the clouds. The mists part to show the city of Nuremburg from above, the spiritual and symbolic birth-place of Nazism. The use of aerial photography was itself innovative. The scene cuts to an exterior shot of Hitler's aircraft. Filmed from the sky the plane casts a cruciform shadow on the city, symbolic perhaps, of a messianic leader flying down from the heavens to 'save' his people? Air travel was in its infancy, so audiences missing the religious overtones, could appreciate an up-to-the-minute leader, fully embracing the modern world. When the plane lands, there is a pause, the cameras focussed on the gaping door of Hitler's plane, before he appears to the ear-splitting applause and acclaim of his supporters.

With the film in the can, Riefenstahl retreated to her edit suite to personally undertake post-production. The finished film would become a massive success in Germany and garner a number of awards for her most famous work.

The long shadow of Triumph of the Will

Riefenstahl was never forgiven for creating a film that showed Nazism in such uncompromisingly positive terms. She was briefly imprisoned at the end of the war as a 'mitlaufer' or Nazi sympathiser. Her back catalogue included 'the mountain movies' and *Olympia* (Riefenstahl Germany 1936) her extraordinary film of the Berlin Olympics, but her post war reputation was in ruins. Even before the war began, when the worst of the Nazi crimes remained in the future, her wider reputation was poor. On a visit to Hollywood, a town with many Jewish studio heads and producers, only Walt Disney would meet with her.

What was in Riefenstahl's mind as she viewed the adoring masses through her lens in 1934? She claimed only to record the event, an artist of the documentary form delivering the truth to her audience. However, from the standpoint of the post-war years, what else was she to say? Could she admit to deifying Hitler, even if she had been a Nazi and a propagandist? What is certain is that *Triumph of the Will* is a film of hypnotic power. Is that the power of malign manipulation or is it the impact of an exceptionally well-made documentary? Did Riefenstahl, intentionally or otherwise, help Hitler gain the power to commit his crimes? Can an outstanding piece of art capture an obscene truth? Was Riefenstahl a great technical artist and virtuoso and yet utterly politically naïve to what she was recording? Or was she a believer enabling and promoting a maniac? See her film. Judge for yourself.

Jonathan Nunns is Head of Media Studies at Collyers College and moderates for a well-known awarding body.

Follow it up:

Ebert, R. *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl* (Review) http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-wonderful-horrible-life-of-leni-riefenstahl-1994 8/2/14

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Muller, R. 1993. *The Wonderful, Horrible life of Leni Riefenstahl* (film)

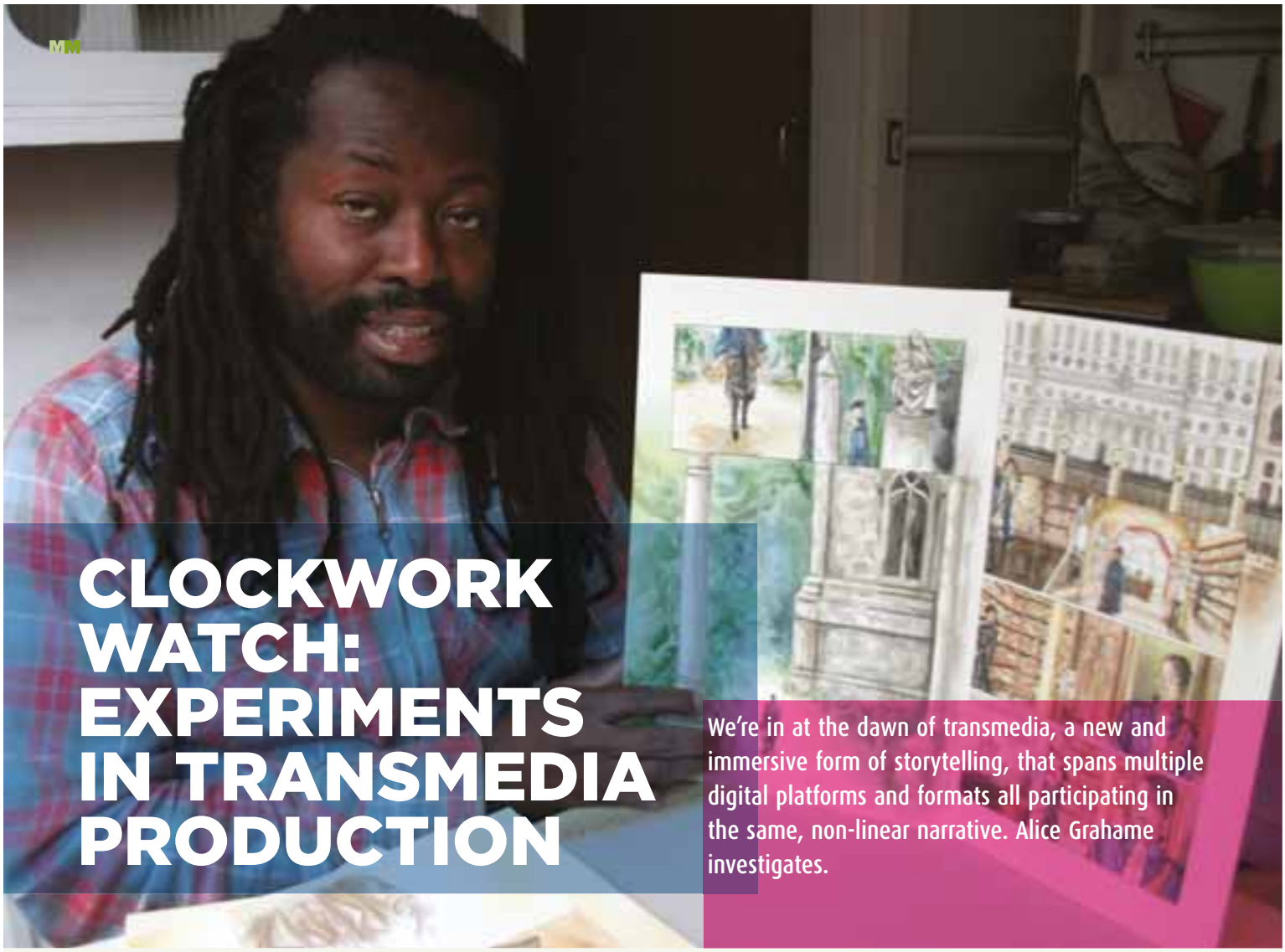
Nelmes, J. 1996. *An Introduction To Film Studies*

Riefenstahl, R. 1935. *Triumph Of The Will*

Riefenstahl, R. 1936. *Olympia*


HOW TO MAKE A COMIC STRIP!
the time mach
THAT WAS FUN!
WHAT WAS?
GOING TO THE FUTURE, TO FIND OUT HOW THIS COMIC STRIP WAS MADE!
I DON'T REMEMBER THAT!
FUTURE
WE MADE IT! WE'RE IN THE FUTURE, NOW!
WOAH! I THINK I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE..
HEY!
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, ALL THIS USED TO BE JUST BLANK PAPER!
I SUPPOSE A BASIC IDEA IS NEEDED, BUT THEN DOES THE SCRIPT COME FIRST, OR THE DRAWING?
USUALLY, THE SCRIPT IS DONE FIRST, THEN THUMBNAIL SKETCHES. THESE SMALL PENCIL DRAWINGS ARE A QUICK WAY OF DEVELOPING A LAYOUT THAT WILL BRING THE SCRIPT TO LIFE.
THEN THERE'S THE OPTION OF NEAT PENCIL OR INK WORK, OR DRAWING STRAIGHT ONTO THE COMPUTER. MOST COMIC STRIP ARTISTS INK THEIR WORK BY HAND, THEN SCAN THIS INTO A COMPUTER FOR CORRECTIONS AND COLOURING.
WHEN YOU SCAN A STRIP, SET THE SOFTWARE TO AT LEAST 300 DOTS PER INCH, AND 'BLACK AND WHITE' RATHER THAN GREYSCALE, TO KEEP THE LINEWORK SHARP.
YOU CAN THEN USE A GRAPHICS PROGRAM LIKE 'GIMP' TO REMOVE THE WHITE BACKGROUND


WHY WOULD I REMOVE THE BACKGROUND? I'M NOT GOING TO BE PRINTING IT ON A WINDOW!
A TRANSPARENT BACKGROUND MEANS YOU CAN ADD A LAYER BEHIND THE INKS, FOR YOUR COLOURS.
THERE ARE LOADS OF PROGRAMS TO CHOOSE FROM FOR THIS, BUT FOR COMICS IN PARTICULAR, 'MANGA STUDIO' IS WORTH CONSIDERING.
SWIPE!!
IDEALLY, A GRAPHICS TABLET - IT'S WAY EASIER THAN TRYING TO USE A TRACKPAD OR TOUCHSCREEN!
HOW COULD I ADD COLOUR ON A COMPUTER? WHAT WILL I NEED?
OH NO! RONG SPELINGS!!
ONCE THE COLOUR HAS BEEN ADDED, THE TEXT AND SPEECH BUBBLES CAN BE PLACED
NICE JUKEBOX!
HOW DO YOU GET THE WRITING SO NEAT?
WELL, THIS IS A FONT, BUT MANY CARTOONISTS DO ALL THEIR LETTERING BY HAND
WWW.GOODCARTOONS.CO.UK
SO HOW DOES THIS FINISHED STRIP COMPARE TO THE ROUGH VERSION?
YEAH! DID IT CHANGE MUCH?
SCAN THIS QR CODE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE INITIAL SKETCHES!
GOOGLE 'QR CODE GENERATOR' TO FIND SITES WHERE YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN CODES, TO MAKE INTERACTIVE COMICS OR ADD TO PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS
SWEET! HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
IT ALL SOUNDS SO COMPLICATED! I'M GOING TO STICK TO TIME TRAVEL!
YEAH, COS THAT'S SOOOO SIMPLE!
OKAY! SEE YOU AGAIN, A FEW PANELS AGO!
YAY! WE'VE GOT SKILLS! NOW WE JUST NEED AN IDEA FOR A NEW COMIC STRIP!
GO TO PANEL ONE, OR TURN PAGE TO ESCAPE 'TIME LOOP' EFFECT :)



CLOCKWORK WATCH: EXPERIMENTS IN TRANSMEDIA PRODUCTION

We're in at the dawn of transmedia, a new and immersive form of storytelling, that spans multiple digital platforms and formats all participating in the same, non-linear narrative. Alice Grahame investigates.

Is it a film, book, TV show or even an interactive game? In the past, media producers could happily work in a single medium – choosing one that works best for the story they want to tell. But today producers are often working across different media to give the audience an enriched multimedia experience so they can engage more fully with the story.

Transmedia storytelling (often also called transmedia narrative or multiplatform storytelling) is the technique of telling a single story or story experience across multiple platforms and formats using current digital technologies. A transmedia producer will create content to engage an audience using various techniques to permeate their daily lives, developing linked and synchronised stories across multiple forms of media in order to deliver unique pieces of content in each channel. Importantly, these pieces of content are not only linked together (overtly or subtly), but are in narrative synchronisation with each other.

Wikipedia

Yomi Ayeni's Clockwork Watch

Yomi Ayeni is working on a transmedia project called *Clockwork Watch*. It includes a steam punk graphic novel, live events, an online newspaper and there are hopes for a film. The story, which has been running for five years, tells the story of an Indian scientist who is invited to the UK by Queen Victoria to create clockwork servants. The story then passes to his eight-year-old son who sees the clockwork staff develop personalities and rebel. Ayeni was inspired to tell the story after attending a large steam punk party.

"Everyone was dressed up and looked really cool and I decided I liked the steam punk aesthetic but I was the only black person there. I realised the Victorian era wasn't an aesthetic that was nice to people from my ethnic background. I decided to re-imagine it in a totally different way and subsequently I started writing. That is how I decided to add a different slant."

Clockwork Watch was originally a screenplay. Ayeni explains:

"I knew it would take a lot of finance to recreate pivotal scenes and no-one was going to give me several million pounds to shoot a film. I didn't have that sort of experience and no-one would trust me. I needed to get the project off the ground and felt that a graphic novel would work."

Working with an illustrator, he wrote three graphic novels, each telling a different part of the story. He crowdfunded the project using Indiegogo, self-published the work and put it on Amazon.

After the first graphic novel Ayeni added another element – live events and role play where the public can dress up and interact with the characters and plot. He explains:

"The event lasted 9 hours and we had 250 people there."

The events are complemented by an online fictional newspaper called *The London Gazette*, which is published every fortnight. The public can contribute to the newspaper, helping to drive the plot and creating a world that will become the background to a film.

"The narrative is being co-created by the public. It's a chance for people to get involved in a film, not just be giving money or being an extra but by actually helping structure the narrative."

Learning about transmedia storytelling

Dr Tom Abba teaches filmmaking and creative media at the University of the West of England. He is also an author and an illustrator who works in both traditional and digital media. He believes that transmedia storytelling is just beginning to establish itself.

"We are we at the stage Jane Austen was before she wrote *Pride and Prejudice*. Before that novels were mostly collections of documents with very little narrative. We are feeling our and appropriating forms and merging them and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work. Every medium is made up of the medium that preceded it. At first TV was seen as film on a small screen or

radio with pictures but then developed its own storytelling techniques and we are trying to find the ground rules for digital platforms today."

Dr Abba defines transmedia as where a story is told across multiple platforms in which all those platforms become essential in understanding the whole story. Producers have a choice of media: video, audio and written word, and have an array of digital platforms: desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone, social media. All are available for storytellers. A few years ago the Royal Shakespeare Company broadcast *Romeo and Juliet* on Twitter. Even GPS and QR codes have been used to tell stories. A good mainstream example was *The Matrix*, where the film was complemented by video games which enhanced the viewers understanding of the plot. Dr Abba explains:

"At the heart of transmedia is story telling and the audiences' identification with characters. New technology allows audiences to engage with characters in a way that was not previously possible. Also making content for the web is comparatively cheap so it gives a voice to people who wouldn't have had access before."

He believes it is essential that media students are comfortable with the idea of transmedia production.

"Most will not have one job but will do a combination of freelance and contract work. They will need a broad set of skills and will need to know how to use digital in an interesting way."

Ten years ago digital platforms were seen as an add-on to help market a product. So for example the website for a film would be a trailer, a synopsis and an interview with a director.

"Now we are getting quite media-rich web experiences running alongside films. For example the trailer for the 2014 *Planet of the Apes* movie allows you to really explore the world in which the film is set. It gives the audience a sense that they have uncovered something."

Dr Abba believes that digital platforms are going to get more and more important. One of the things tomorrow's producers will need to work out is how to engage an audience using a smartphone.

"You and I probably carry around in our pockets more computing power than was used to put a man on the moon. Making content for that is an industry. Ambitious bright people want to figure out what can be done in exactly the same way as the Russian filmmakers in the 20s wanted to figure out how film worked and early pioneers in television wanted to know what you could do in TV that you couldn't do before."

Alice Grahame is a former BBC news editor and freelance journalist.

Follow it up

http://www.run-riot.com/articles/blogs/interview-yomi-ayeni-guides-us-through-clockwork-underworld

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clockwork_watch

Hacking: The story so far

As the trial of former *News of the World* editors Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson nears its conclusion, Harry Cunningham investigates how the press reported on their very own scandal and asks why the media's representation of the phone hacking saga changed dramatically in July 2011.

It was a cold and generally non-descript autumnal day. The skies were grey and, certainly not unusually for the Old Bailey, there were was a ferocious media scrum waiting outside like a pack of wolves, hungry for even the faintest glimpse of their prey. But as Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson walked to court for the first day of their trial to face allegations of phone hacking, misconduct in a public office and perverting the course of justice, it was hard not to wonder what they made of their own media coverage that day.

The Independent led with the headline 'British Justice on Trial', quoting the opening remarks of the judge, whilst *Private Eye* satirised Brooks' first appearance at the dock by filling their front page with her picture surrounded by pumpkins and suggesting it was a 'Halloween Special' . But what would

Brooks and Coulson have done had they still been at the helm of *The News of the World*? Would they have covered their appearances differently? Would they have opted for an even more sensationalist headline? It's an interesting thought to consider, and one which, in 2006, must have seemed far-fetched. For when one examines the early coverage of the scandal, when the first allegations of phone hacking first came to light, one could be forgiven for concluding it was not a big deal. So what caused such a sea change? And how did we get from a few small references in the back pages of the broadsheets to the biggest public scandal in 30 years?

Hacking: the story so far

First, a recap of what happened and a brief timeline. Phone hacking by journalists was first alleged to have taken place in the late 1990s, and the first police investigation was in 1999. Ex-tabloid journalist Paul McMullan has described how analogue phones used to emit radio waves that could be legally intercepted by sitting outside in a car and using a walkie-talkie to tune into the correct wave band. The digitalisation of mobile telephones and the introduction of the The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 was supposed to outlaw this behaviour but

it is alleged that journalists continued to hack into voicemails and emails and that the conspiracy got more complex when senior members of staff in *The News of the World* paid private investigators such as Glen Mulcaire and Steve Whittamore not just to intercept the voicemails and emails of celebrities and politicians, but to blag a whole manor of personal information from medical records to bank details.

Mulcaire came unstuck in 2005 when, on the instructions of Clive Goodman, he intercepted messages left on Prince William's answerphone about a knee operation and a meeting with ITV news' political editor Tom Bradbury. The subsequent publication of stories about that operation, and the meeting between Bradbury and the Prince, made the royal household suspicious. They alerted the police and Mulcaire and Goodman were found guilty of hacking and sentenced to six months in prison. Coulson resigned, stating he took responsibility for what happened under his editorship but did not admit being involved in the conspiracy. It is alleged that when police officers raided Mulcaire's home, as part of their operation to bring charges against him for hacking Prince William, they found a treasure-trove of material, known as Mulcaire's diary, but did not act on what they found. Furthermore a raid had also been carried out on Whittamore's premises in 2003, revealing similar evidence of industrial criminality, but this information was left largely untouched as well.

In 2008 Nick Davies published his book *Flat Earth News*, which included a chapter on the 'dark arts'. From 2009-11 through *The Guardian*, he slowly lifted the lid on the 'one rogue reporter' defence. But though the allegations kept on coming, and known victims of hacking used civil proceedings against News International in order to gain access to pages of Mulcaire's diary for a future criminal prosecution, largely nothing was done. *The Guardian* appeared to be the only paper truly exposing the scandal, and the police did not re-open their investigations until January 2011. It is alleged that during this time senior News International editors and lawyers conspired together in a lengthy and complex cover-up which involved giving false evidence to parliamentary inquiries and police investigations to rubbish *The Guardian*'s claims.

In July 2011, *The Guardian* published evidence that Milly Dowler's phone had been hacked by a *News of the World* journalist and, days later, that victims of the 7/7 London bombings had also been hacked. As a result, *The News of the World* was closed down, the Prime Minster announced The Leveson Inquiry, Sir Paul Stephenson resigned and 101 individuals, including Brooks, Coulson and Tina Weaver, have all since been arrested.

2006: Prosecuting a 'Rottweiler that has lost its teeth'?

The trial and subsequent conviction of Mulcaire was not a big story for much of the press. His name appears only 79 times between 2005 and 2006 and in one of those articles, he was not being reported on, but being interviewed as an expert on personal security in an article about football. There is even a reference to his consultancy firm 'Nine Consultancy' which was regularly used by *News International* for undisclosed services. Compare this to the same time-period in 2011-12 when the number of hits on Mulcaire's name exceeds 3,000, and you begin to realise the staggering disconnect between pre- and post-Milly Dowler coverage.

But it's not as if the papers weren't reporting all the facts – more that what they printed was so small and insignificant it simply had no impact. Tucked away on page 23 of *The Independent* in August 2006 was a small five hundred-word article reporting that Hugh Grant, Jemima Khan, Keira Knightley and John Leslie had all been named as victims of hacking at the trial. This is a staggering admission – yet it was nowhere near front page news.

There were also only a handful of comment pieces on the conviction and arrest of Mulcaire and Goodman during 2005-6; and this is another indication that the story was not 'big enough' to merit discussion. In fact, only two pieces wholly berated the methods used by Mulcaire and Goodman and supported their conviction. One was

NewStatesman
Online comment site of the year

Home The Staggers Politics Business & Economics Culture Blogs Energ

Return to: Media | Newspapers

The bugger, bugged

After a chance meeting with a former News of the World executive who told him his phone had been hacked, Hugh Grant couldn't resist going back to him – with a hidden tape recorder – to find out if there was more to the story...

BY HUGH GRANT | PUBLISHED 12 APRIL 2011

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inevitably published by *The Guardian*, and quoted from an anonymous insider source who admitted the process of phone hacking was endemic; the other was from Matthew Norman, who picked up on the 'nauseating conspiracy of silence' in his Media diary for *The Independent*.

The other comment articles on Mulcaire were largely sympathetic towards him. One was a satirical piece imagining the intercepted phone conversations of Prince Charles and the then Camilla Parker-Bowles, and the other two were defences of Mulcaire. In *The Independent*'s Media Diary Stephen Glover bemoaned the cruelty of prosecuting a 'Rottweiler that has lost its teeth'. And in a staggering rebuttal of Goodman's conviction in *The London Evening Standard*, entitled 'To dish the dirt, reporters must take their chance with the law', Peter Wilby admitted that

> **"In this media-conscious age, few people tell journalists the unvarnished truth. That is why I have sympathy for Clive Goodman, royal editor of the *News of the World*."**

It seems the Goodman/Mulcaire case left a lot of unanswered questions; yet major news organisations did little to probe the case any further. They just either ignored what was happening or kept their reports on hacking very low key.

2007-11 The Guardian

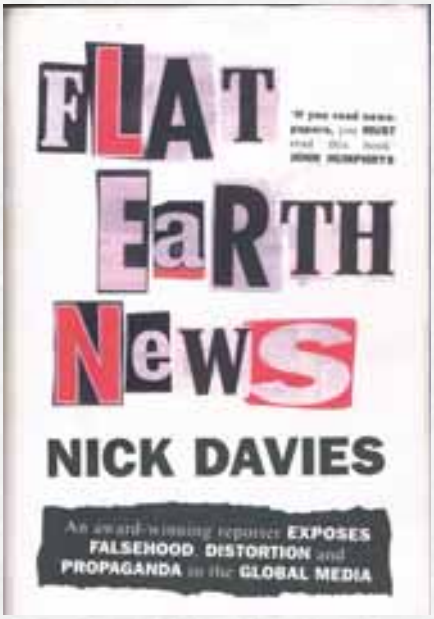
But one UK newspaper alone kept on digging. As early as 2009, *The Guardian* published an online editorial asking 'Did Coulson know about the hacking after all? And if not, why not?'. This was based on evidence from a story by Nick Davies, questioning why News International had paid out £1 million to settle civil cases about hacking. In the immediate aftermath of Goodman and Mulcaire's prosecution, non-*Guardian* stories about phone hacking were virtually non-existent – or tucked away. A staggering story in *The Express* claiming police knew that John Prescott's phone had been hacked but did not act – essentially claims of police corruption at the highest level – was given only 500 words and placed on page 8, while *The Guardian* tirelessly published story after story about the scandal.

In total, between 1st January 2007 and 30th June 2011, the phrase 'phone hacking' is mentioned 488 times in *The Guardian* in print and 393 times in *Guardian* online stories, but only 139 times by *The Times* and 51 by *The Sunday Mirror* and *The Daily Mirror*. Amusingly, the phrase does not appear at all in *The News of the World* between the whole period between 1st January 2006 and 30th June 2011.

Conclusions

On 5th July 2011, as we know, the tides changed dramatically when Nick Davies and Amelia Hill of *The Guardian* published their now infamous story about the hacking of Milly Dowler; and dramatic action was finally taken largely in response to public revulsion. But that still does not explain why large sections of the press were not interested in probing or reporting the 'one rogue reporter' defence.

Many have argued that it was a collective conspiracy because reporters from papers other than *The News of the World* were allegedly also involved in illegal practices. Perhaps this is partially true; but I'm also inclined to believe that the true extent of the scandal was ignored by most of the press was because they felt *The Guardian*'s reporting was just too far-fetched to be accurate. We mustn't forget how hugely complicated this



story is. It is alleged that Coulson and Brooks conspired to pervert the course of justice in an extensive cover up, and that there were acknowledged faults in the way the police handled their initial investigations; under these circumstances, it was hard for journalists definitively to establish the truth about what had happened.

In short, it seems the scandal was left largely unchallenged for a variety of reasons that all seemed to come together at the wrong time. Yes, perhaps there was an implicit 'conspiracy of silence' in the interests of self-defence; but exposing corruption and truth in the face of an alleged cover-up and severe police failings is no mean feat, especially when one of the accused works at 10 Downing Street. Though it took longer than it should have done, it was eventually the work of intelligent and hardworking investigative journalists that finally lifted the lid on phone hacking.

Harry Cunningham has written for *The Guardian, The Leicester Mercury* and *Writers' Forum Magazine*. He is currently studying English at Loughborough University. Follow him on Twitter: @harrycunningham

Key terms

Blagging: The impersonation of celebrities, politicians or other targets over the telephone in order to gain access to otherwise confidential information such as medical records or bank details.

The Leveson Inquiry: A two-part public inquiry into the culture, practice and ethics of the press. The first part of the inquiry concluded in July 2012. The subsequent report in November 2012 recommended a series of reforms including new, tougher regulation of the press, backed by parliament. The second part of the inquiry will finish once all pending court cases and police investigations are concluded.

Mulcaire's diary: The diary or notes of Glenn Mulcaire which allegedly reveal the hacking of 4,744 separate individuals and span thousands of pages.

'One Rogue Reporter' Defence: The suggestion that Goodman acted alone in hiring Mulcaire to engage in phone hacking and other illegal activity and that the practice was not endemic either at *The News of the World* or other newspapers.

Phone hacking: Misleadingly not the live interception of phone conversations, but the illegal interception of voicemail messages. It is generally made possible because of a simple flaw in the voicemail security, which lets users enter a pin code to access their voicemails externally. Also known as 'The Dark Arts' – or just hacking.

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: An Act of Parliament which sets out the parameters by which security agencies must abide when lawfully intercepting communications and conducting surveillance on potential criminals. The only organisations licensed to intercept voicemails and phone conversations are the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), HM Revenue and Customs, MI5, MI6 and certain police forces. In all cases a warrant is required from the Home Secretary and there must be a clear public interest.

Key People

Rebekah Brooks: The editor of *The News of the World* from 2000 to 2003 and then editor of *The Sun* between 2003 and 2009. She was promoted to Chief Executive Officer of News International in 2009 before resigning in July 2011. She is currently on trial, charged with phone hacking, illegally paying police officers and conspiring to pervert the course of justice.

Andy Coulson: The Editor of *The News of the World* between 2003 and 2007. After his resignation over the Goodman/Mulcaire prosecution in 2007, he became Director of Communications for the Conservative Party and then Director of Communications for Downing Street following the general election of May 2010. He is currently on trial, charged with phone hacking, illegally paying police officers and conspiring to pervert the course of justice, as well as the further charge of perjury.

Nick Davies: A freelance journalist who works frequently for *The Guardian*. He authored many of the articles that revealed the true extent of hacking at *The News of the World*.

Milly Dowler: A schoolgirl who went missing and was subsequently found murdered. Her voicemail messages are alleged to have been intercepted by *News of the World* journalists.

Clive Goodman: Royal correspondent at *The News of the World* until 2006. He served six months in prison for phone hacking in 2007. He is currently on trial for further phone hacking offences alongside his former editors Brooks and Coulson.

Paul McMullan: The deputy features editor of *The News of the World* between 2000 and 2001. He worked at the paper from 1994 and has spoken openly and defensibly on numerous occasions

about the ubiquity of phone hacking and payments to police officers in the newspaper industry.

Glenn Mulcaire: A private investigator employed by News International and *The News of the World*. He was convicted of illegally intercepting the voicemail messages of the Royal Family in 2006 and served six months in prison. In 2013 he pleaded guilty to further phone hacking during his trial alongside Brooks, Coulson and Goodman.

Sir Paul Stephenson: Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 2009-2011. He resigned following allegations that he had become too close with journalists at *News of the World*.

Tina Weaver: The editor of *The Sunday Mirror* between 2001 and 2012. In 2013 she was arrested over allegations of phone hacking.

Steve Whittamore: A private investigator who sold private information obtained illegally through corrupt police officers and public officials, to journalists at several different newspapers. When his house was raided in 2003, police found a huge cache of documents similar in nature to the Mulcaire diaries. He was convicted and given a suspended sentence.

Follow it up

Davies, N. 2008. *Flat Earth News*

Dodd, M. & Hanna, M. 2012. *McNae's Essential Law for Journalists*

Hickman, M. & Watson, T. 2012. *Dial M for Murdoch*

Rusbridger, A. 2011. *Phone Hacking: How the Guardian Broke the Story*

Rusbridger, A. 2013. *Play it Again* (

From the MM archive

Rona Murray, 'Hacked to Death', *MediaMagazine* 38. We covered this story in December 2011, with a very useful timeline of the way the story broke in summer 2011.

On the set of Far From the Madding Crowd

Young filmmaker Alfie Barker was lucky enough to blag a work experience placement on location with one of the greatest and most convention-breaking directors shooting one of the greatest and most convention-defying stories of the 19th century: *Far From the Madding Crowd*. So what did he make of it?

Through a series of coincidences, I found myself on the set of my first feature film experience, *Far from the Madding Crowd,* a period drama adaptation of Thomas Hardy's acclaimed novel. Directed by Thomas Vinterberg from Denmark, whose recent films include *The Hunt* (*Jagten*), a nail-biting drama that explores the theme of child sex abuse, grabbed attention in Cannes and around the globe.

Vinterberg is also known for founding 'Dogma 95', an experimental film movement in Copenhagen, 1995. The idea was to focus on the traditional idea of 'pure' storytelling, conforming to a 10-rule pact that included: shooting on location rather than in studio-built sets; sound to be diegetic only – that is, not to be dubbed on separately from the images; a ban on special effects; and no credit for the director. Vinterberg believes this approach

"may better engage the audience, as they are not alienated or distracted by overproduction."

Judging from his previous films, it seems that this adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd* is going to be told like no other. Aimed at Vinterberg's niche audiences, I feel the film will be very different from previous adaptations of Hardy's novel.

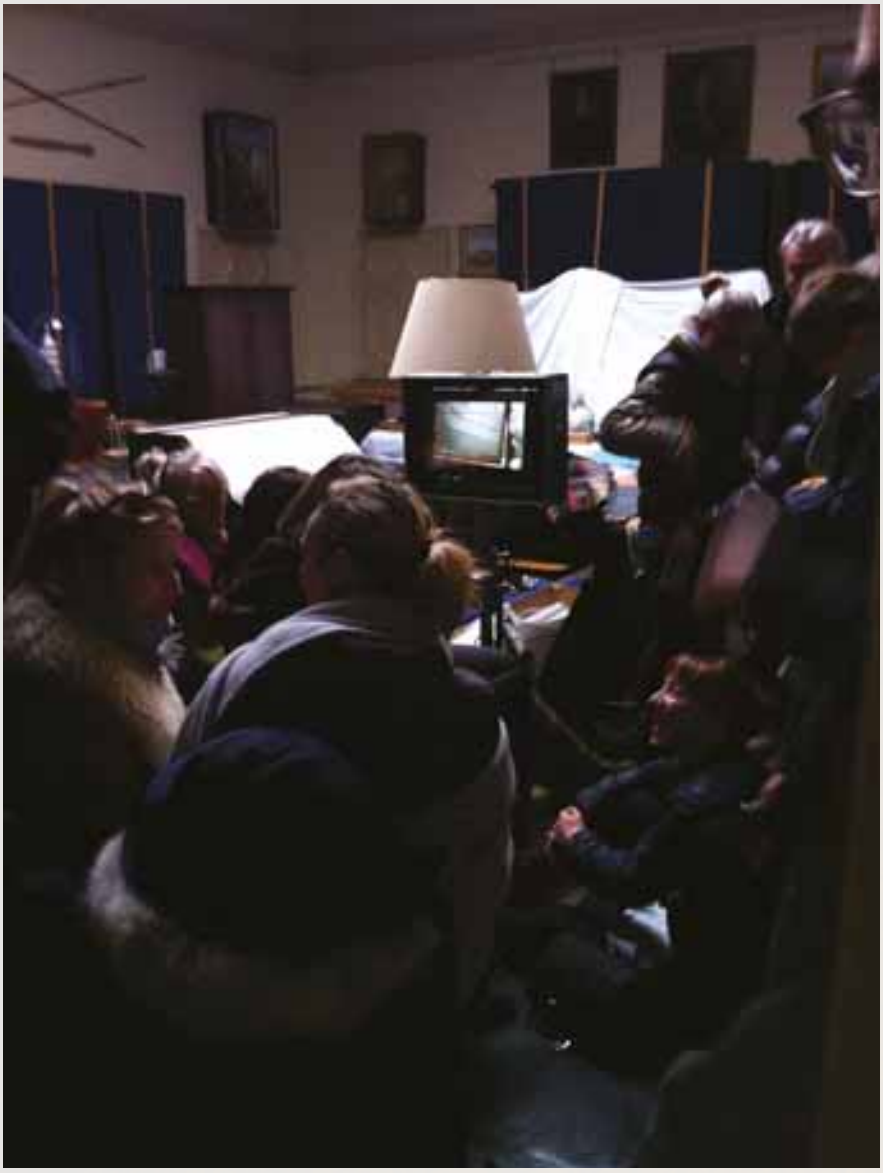
"In times of austerity, doubt, darkness and fear, films can allow us to escape from the burdens and hardship of life, and they can shine a light on injustice. Film can reduce us to quivering wrecks with laughter to help us forget and it can stun us with truth"

Stephen Fry

I visited the nine-week shoot during the final week when everyone was exhausted after working 12-hour days, six days a week. This gave me a perspective of how tough this job is in comparison to a music video that could be wrapped in two days.

The day began on a cold morning where I was taken from unit base to set, which was Claydon House, once home to Florence Nightingale. Fake snow, made from a weird cotton and wool substance, covered the surrounding trees, bushes and open space where you became submerged into the 'world' of Hardy's 1874 novel. The National Trust were in charge of the property and were very protective about brushing past walls or touching objects in the rooms, covering everything that was off-screen with foam and plastic sheets.

Thomas Vinterberg is very good at balancing the chemistry between the crew and actors. He makes everyone feel that they are on the same level of the 'hierarchy'. I wasn't allowed on-set during rehearsals so that the actors and director could have an intimate



discussion about how the scene would come to life. Sound, camera, art, makeup and costume departments would then each slowly filter in to see the camera positioning and how the director had blocked the scene, which would ultimately affect each person's job. This aspect of communication with the crew is vitally important. Alan Parker once said:

> **"A great movie evolves when everybody has the same vision in their heads."**

Before shooting, the 1st Assistant Director orders everyone to finish their final checks; at this point the costume and make-up departments run on, looking intently for any faults. They then leave the set and go into a small room joined by the producers, art department, and journalists where they gather around one monitor. Everyone looks at the same picture but they are all dissecting different things. Make-up would look closely at Matthias Schoenaerts' character for a few stands of hair that kept sticking up in every shot trying to find the solution. The costume department would be looking at whether the movements have tampered with the style of an outfit. The script supervisor, working like a machine, logs every action for continuity, which has to be typed up and sent to the editor with the rushes everyday. The producer will be overseeing the whole project, adding creative input on challenging decisions. The crew congregate around the screen as soon as 'action' is called, watching the masterpiece unfold, which makes it really rewarding for everyone that is a part of it.

I was particularly gripped by a scene where William Boldwood (Michael Sheen) proposes to Bathsheba (Carey Mulligan) with whom he is in love – sadly unrequited. During this scene, each shot lasted a few minutes where everyone was silent and all you could hear were their voices coming through the walls. This was a very emotional scene that pushes the narrative forward, so it was important to get it as close to perfection as possible. One of my observations was that when you're hidden away in a room watching their live performance on a monitor, it seems natural and fluid, but when it's happening in front of you it seems superficial.

The multiple takes of each scene really allow you to focus on things you didn't see before, and each performance can seem very different depending on where you're positioned. For example, Carey may have a background of white light behind her on a close-up, conveying a more innocent message as compared to when she is framed against a darker background during a wider shot. After post-production, these details will be made completely invisible to the audience by editing the shots seamlessly together and overlaying diegetic audio.

Thomas Vinterberg has a one-year-old daughter who was brought on-set after every take by a chaperone so she could watch her dad work. The Director of Production, Charlotte Bruus Christensen (*The Hunt*), also has one-year-old baby boy who was brought on as well, so it was a really strange experience to see these babies rush on after 'cut' was called. Whenever the shoot was getting cold or the lighting set-ups became very time-consuming,

these children changed the mood, releasing the tension from the whole process. The crew smiled as the baby pointed at individuals, blurting random noises. I believe that this was one of the most important factors that helped fuel performance; for instance Carey Mulligan would wave to them across set, smiling and making funny actions. I'm not sure whether this was an accident or Thomas knew it helped lighten the mood but it's small things like this which makes him different.

Far from the Madding Crowd was shot on film. For older generations of filmmakers moving from film to digital has sparked controversy of how these technologies communicate with the audience. As a young filmmaker I feel envious of the choice to shoot on film, having never shot or seen it being shot before. The picture looks incredible; the difference is that the actual process needs more attention as the film has to be re-loaded every few takes. It sounds stupid, but actually shooting on film changes the whole filmmaking experience; you almost hear the 'money going round' in the camera when you press record. Because of the expense of film you give more thought and rehearsal time for each shot. That's the whole magic of film. I recently watched an interview with Quentin Tarantino where he describes his love for shooting on film:

"There's no movement in movies at all, they are still pictures but when shown at 24 frames per second through a lightbulb, it creates the illusion of movement."

When I was onset I had to give myself a job; I watched the instructions the director gave to the actors after every take and how the process changed their performance. Having finished a scene in the bedroom, the camera department needed help bringing kit down seven flights of stairs. I volunteered to help which is where I made contacts.

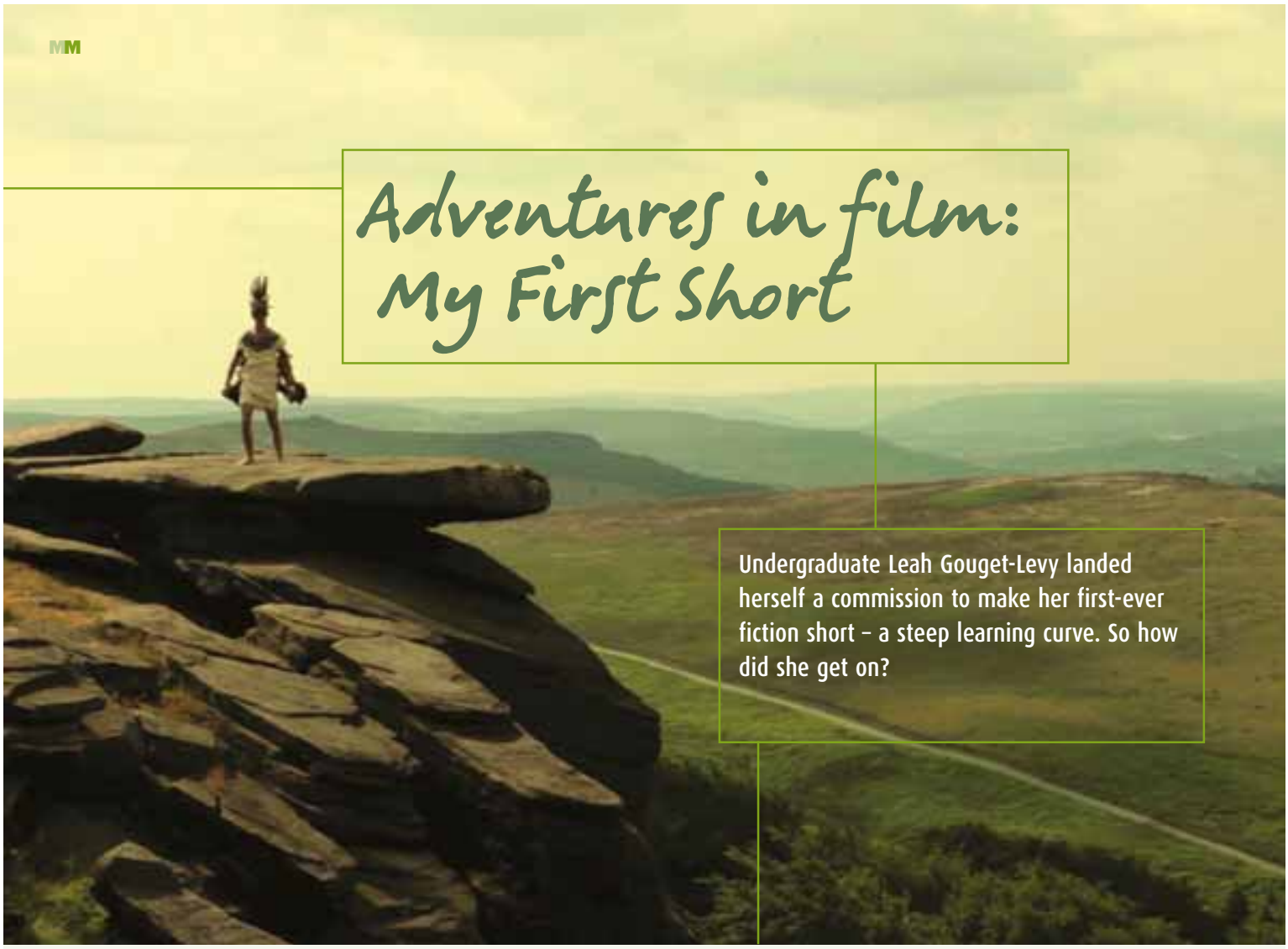
Near the end of my visit, I wanted to get a few pictures behind the scenes but without anyone knowing as producers can be funny about 'leaking' scenes before they are released. So I slipped my phone in my coat and then looked around to see if anyone was looking. Little did I know, there was a window behind me and two lighting operators from outside were pointing at me pretending not to take pictures. It's moments like this that show how relaxed the set is.

Only a few minutes of footage is shot on this feature film every day. Depending on the scenes, that can be as little as three minutes a day. When you consider the length of an average feature film of around 110 minutes this is very very little. You have to love it.

Just like every set, it's about the people that are working around you, as the job relies on strong communication from others. This is where I feel I learnt the most: from listening to their conversations. I feel that this experience has reassured me that a career in film is something I definitely want to pursue.

Alfie Barker attended the NFTS/BFI Talent Campus in 2013. Alfie has made several short films, had over 70 screenings in 8 countries, and won 25 awards for his work. You can see more of his work at http://alfiebarker.com/

Adventures in film: My First Short



Undergraduate Leah Gouget-Levy landed herself a commission to make her first-ever fiction short – a steep learning curve. So how did she get on?

I have just completed my first short fiction film. The process was enriching, eye-opening and rather scary at times. There was some making it up as I went along, plenty of trial and error, and a few successes along the way. Currently reading History of Art at university, I discovered my interest in film-making just over a year and a half ago, when I won a scholarship to study documentary filmmaking over the summer at Rio Film School. From there, I directed my own short documentary on fashion photography, became secretary of my university's film society, worked on a paid corporate commission and gained a place on the first BFI Academy Talent Campus. Top of my list for what I wanted to do next was direct a fiction short. This is an account of how I did it.

I'm not a professional, nor a prodigy, nor have I had any sustained training in filmmaking. It would be presumptuous, therefore, to make this article a guide on how to make a first film; others can do that much better than I can. Rather, what follows is a truthful description of my own experiences, from conception to festival.

The commission

The story starts in March 2013 when I saw that Exeter Digital Phoenix (a Devon-based arts organisation) was advertising for applications for their national short film commission. They were offering the winning filmmaker £500 for a five-minute film, along with mentoring help and a premiere screening at their short film festival. Although I didn't seriously think anything would come of it, I decided to apply. In any case, I reasoned, it would force me to start the ball rolling with ideas for that film I had promised myself I would make.

A few weeks later I had submitted my 400-word treatment. The story, conceived in magical realist spirit (think Behn Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild* and Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom*), was about a young boy who befriends a Bird-God. Deliberately ambiguous as to whether the God is real or simply a figment of the boy's imagination, the film follows their attempt to remedy the God's inability to fly.

A few weeks later, much to my surprise, I received an email inviting me to interview. Over Skype, I tried my best to convince a panel of six interviewers of my idea and my ability to pull the project off. Then, after a couple of days, I was told I had won the commission. I was astounded and delighted in equal measure – and I would be lying if I said that this didn't also terrify me. It's one thing having an idea, and something else altogether to put it into practice.

Pre-production

This is when the real work started. The first thing I did was set the shoot dates for a weekend in the middle of July, giving myself a deadline to work towards. Then I turned to thinking about finding all the important things that would actually get the film from imagination to screen – crew, cast, costume, props...

I sent a lot of emails: to drama schools, am-dram groups and agencies for my cast; art schools for a costume designer; and local filmmaking groups. Then, slowly, and by no means in huge volumes, I began to get replies. A design student was interested in making the costume, and we met over coffee to exchange ideas. A few actors auditioned for us. We were lucky finding the young boy – he was the first actor we met and was perfect for the role. The Bird-God took a bit longer to cast. In the end, the actor heard about the film through a mutual friend.

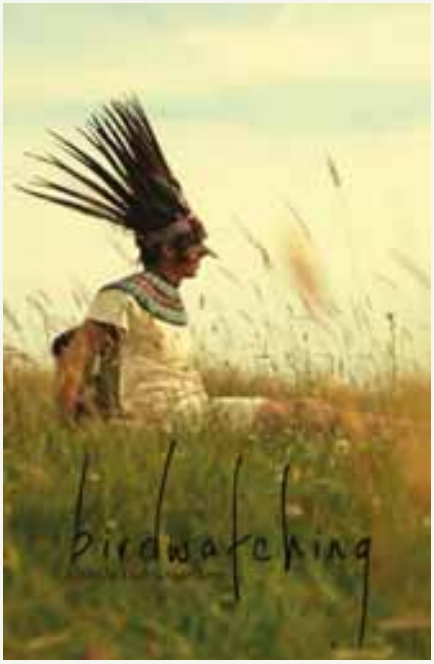
In terms of crew I already had some ideas about whom I could contact for certain roles – friends I had met while on the BFI Talent Campus earlier that year and who kindly agreed to help me out. That was my producer/assistant director, sound recordist and composer sorted. For practical reasons, I tried to keep the crew as small as possible, so all that was left to find was a cinematographer.

This turned out to be the most difficult position to fill. First off, we posted an advert on Shooting People through Exeter Phoenix Digital. Much to my delight we had quite a few replies early on and I was able to offer the role to a candidate whose showreel closely matched my own aesthetic ideas. Just a couple of weeks before the shoot, however, I received an email saying that she had to pull out because she'd been offered a paid job.

This left us in a difficult position. With only a week to go, we still hadn't found a replacement cinematographer. At one point I thought we might have to postpone the shoot. We were saved at the eleventh hour, however, when my producer found a recently graduated film student who was interested in the project. Even better, she had her own equipment and a camera assistant (who later became the editor too). After a short Skype, it was sorted. Relief!

The week before the shoot was taken up with a weekend of rehearsals (partly held in a music practice space – complete with heavy metal band playing downstairs), finalising costumes, locations and props. Because we were shooting on Peak District National Park property we had to get permission from the Authority, which unfortunately also meant that we had to pay a fee. Thankfully, because we were students, we were able to whittle down the sum of £250 to something more affordable (£50). Although it would have been tempting to try and wing it without getting permission, it was fortunate that we did because, as it turned out, the warden made his rounds at various points around the locations where we were shooting.

Although we were, of course, very lucky to get £500 from the commission, we soon found that this did not stretch very far! Everyone who worked on the project did so for free, but we provided travel expenses (the most costly expenditure) and food on the day. The rest was spent on the costumes and a few props, location permission and the hire of a boom for the sound recordist.



Production: the shoot

Soon enough, it was the shoot. Through a mixture of luck and adrenaline it all went pretty smoothly. We shot scenes out of order, spending the first day shooting the active scenes to get the actors into the swing of it, saving the dialogue scenes for the second and final day. Although initially nervous about how it would be to work with a child actor, especially after hearing so many people say that it can be challenging, I found it really enjoyable... perhaps helped by my previous childminding experience. Taking into account that he needed more frequent breaks, and perhaps a little more encouragement than the adult actor, we developed a relaxed working relationship. Providentially, with the entire shoot taking place outside, we were blessed by the weather, and it turned out to be the hottest weekend of the year; the only slight drawback being that, underestimating the strength of the sun, we all got pretty sunburnt!

Post-production

Post-production was the most testing period of the entire process. We started cutting a while after the shoot, by which time the momentum of filming had been lost. It was further complicated by the fact that the editor and I were based in different cities. The result was a long stream of emails and file transfers. Unsurprisingly, it was rather lengthy and difficult for both of us. This was quite different from my documentary projects in the past when I've enjoyed sitting with the editor as changes are being made, making it much easier to exchange ideas and collaborate.

We worked through a number of different versions, getting some really useful advice from Exeter Phoenix and others, but it always felt like there was something missing and even now I'm not sure if we ever completely sorted the problem. Ultimately, I think we could have done with a few more shots for the opening scenes, as what we originally planned wasn't working in practice. Adding the music, however, was somewhat of a turning point and after a few final tweaks we made the deadline in time for the film festival.

The festival

For quite a while after, I was intensely relieved that it was all over! Then came the time for me to visit Exeter and see the film on the big screen. This was something that I was dreading. Unsure of what I thought about the film, I was terrified of what other people would make of it. But, when the time came, people clapped and no one booed – something I regard as a success.

What next?

So, what happens next? Well, onwards I suppose. If I'm honest, I'm still unsure what I think of the film, none of which is a reflection on my wonderful crew or cast, but rather personal reservations in terms of my own ambitions for what the film would be. However, what I learned from the experience made it worthwhile – no, invaluable. When I began I didn't really know anything about how to set out to make a fiction film, and now, well, I think I have slightly more of an idea! More than anything though, I had a lot of fun doing the project. In fact, I feel quite lost now that it's over.

With this in mind, I've drawn up a list of six things I learned and aim to do better next time:

1. Apply for things even if you think you have no chance of getting them – if you don't, then you don't allow yourself the opportunities.
2. Find a producer as soon as possible. I did this far too late, which meant that I had significantly less time to spend on the more artistic aspects, which ultimately would have benefited my film massively. Finding other crew members earlier, such as the cinematographer and editors, would also have been helpful. If we'd edited while we were shooting, for example, we might have avoided the issues that we experienced in post-production.
3. Take your time with every stage, and avoid rushing any decisions, if you possibly can. Next time I would take more time for pre-production. Adding an extra day to the shoot would have been helpful too.
4. Don't be afraid to ask people for help and advice – they're generally very willing to help and it can be invaluable.
5. Never underestimate the importance of post-production.
6. Be confident in yourself and your ideas. Stay true to your vision and don't be afraid of self-promotion.

Recently, I read that in order to attain 'genius' status in something you have to spend, on average, 10,000 hours practicing. I find this rather encouraging. Every hour, mistake and success is time logged on the way to excellence. So, when people say that the key to becoming a filmmaker is to get out there and make films, they're absolutely right. Nothing can compare to experience – and surely that's the best part of filmmaking anyway!

In the meantime, only 8,992 hours to go...

Leah Gouget-Levy attended the NFTS/BFI Talent Campus in 2013. She is in her 3rd Year studying History of Art at UCL, where she is studying Film Theory and writing a dissertation on Tarkovsky.

THISISDA – 'GRIDLOCK' MUSIC VIDEO

Media students often make music videos for their production coursework – but usually they create visuals for someone else's music. How does it feel to be producing your own rap promo for your own music? Rapper David Aidoo, aka ThisisDA, explains. Watch the 'Gridlock' music video on ITSTHISISDA.comsoundcloud.com/ThisisDA

Out of sight, out of mind…

A music video or song video is a short film integrating a song and imagery, produced for promotional or artistic purposes. Modern music videos are primarily made and used as a marketing device intended to promote the sale of music recording (thanks Wikipedia). In this new information age we are living in, album releases always have to be accompanied by a music video; otherwise you risk the chance of the project going unheard. 'Lifers' was the first visual offering from my forthcoming album *Super Arkane*, which was visually bouncy and exciting. This video was a lot more successful than I could have imagined. It was blasted across major blogs, shared by countless people and even found its way onto a French music television channel. With the success of the 'Lifers' video looming over me, I knew I had to follow it up with something equally as creative.

Choosing the right song and director

Although my album will be a free release (meaning putting out a rubbish single wouldn't equal a loss in potential earnings), it is still very important to choose the next single carefully. Once that was done, the plan was to find somebody with relatively high experience to capture what I wanted. So there I was one cold January evening, sitting in the dark with my eyes glued to the laptop screen, skimming through music videos like an ardent bride searching for the perfect wedding dress. A couple hours and outgoing emails later – voilà, I'd found a director.

Influence on location

With regards to influence, there are a few videos that spring to mind when I thought of the edit and aesthetics I wanted for the 'Gridlock' video. These included:

- Ratking – 'Wikispeaks'
- Joey Bada$$ – 'Fromdatomb$'
- Travi$ Scott – 'Lights (Love Sick)'

It's always interesting to pass on your influences to the director and see what they come back to you with. There was nothing particularly detailed involved in the way of 'planning' the video shoot. The director simply put forward a location which channelled the aforementioned influences. Once a date was set, we headed on over to the abandoned factory in a remote part of London, armed with a Canon DSLR; steadicam stabiliser and a mind full of ideas.

The model

I thought it'll be a good move to involve the use of a model within the video. I know many music video lovers drool at the prospect of watching a video vixen drenched in baby oil, rolling around and staring enticingly into the camera – but I'm different. I'm

definitely not a fan of the demeaning male gaze, especially within hip-hop. Nonetheless, I called in a model friend of mine, Annabel Sanguinetti, who always has aspirations of sound engineering within the music business. I'd already helped connect her with links within the industry, so allowing her to cameo within the video would ultimately provide her the possibility of enhancing her profile.

The bigger the budget, the better the video?

I have yet to put together a music video with a strong dynamic and narrative – the likes of which generally only appear worth watching if they are shot with a large crew and highly-equipped camera. It always makes you wonder how much more you could produce with a large budget. But I've got a new-found love in intentionally low-fi music videos – the art and thought seems much more engaging. Videos such as Junior Senior's 'Shake Your Coconuts', Law Holt's 'Hustle' and Ratking's '100' come to mind in this instance.

Just last night I attended a gig here in Bristol, headlined by emerging Scottish 'alternative hip-hop' group, Young Fathers. Before the show kicked off, I spent about an hour talking to one of the members about music, religion, movies and all the rest. How does this relate to this article, you ask... well I was curious to hear about the technique behind their videos as – in regards to the mise-en-scène – they all seem to follow a similar sequence. The location is also tricky to identify as the positioning of characters within each shot is almost always a close-up. They have a habit of shooting videos within a studio rigged with carefully placed lighting, with the trio performing the lyrics to the camera. The member of the group told me that it's all about what you, as an artist, want to see. Labels will always advise you to shoot a high-quality video filled with unnecessary extras and props, but if you are confident that you can shoot something better – then go for it. It makes me realise we really are living in an age of unprecedented expression.

So you've got yourself a music video – what happens with it now?

For an artist like me, looking to propel my career to the next level, the best person to help with promotion is a PR agent. Their primary job is working within the boundaries 'of managing the spread of information'. The artist brings them a finished product, be it a song or video, and they hold all the relevant connections necessary for the video to spread properly. This is not without the use of a press release and planned campaign, which we both worked on putting together. It's really as simple as picking the release date, tweeting everybody you know (and don't know), blasting out a few emails, then hoping to God they agree that you've put together a video worth watching.

David Aidoo (ThisisDA) is a Bristol-based rapper who first album *SuperArkane* is out now.

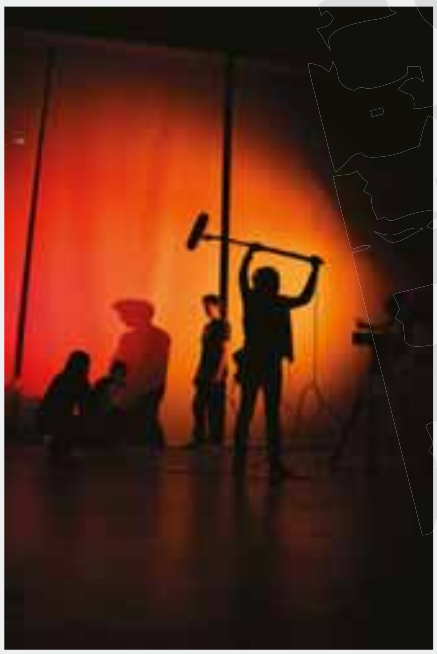
A DEGREE IN FILM? SO WHAT COURSE WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Jonny Persey, Chief Executive Officer of the London Met Film School, explores some of the issues and options to consider if you're thinking of studying film at Uni.

The UK's film industry is one of the strongest performing sectors in the economy. We are a creative nation, and this creativity is what is driving a resurgence in filmmaking in the UK. In recent years some of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters have been made and set right here in London; whether it is Guy Richie's adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes*, Marvel's *Thor 2: The Dark World* or the huge *Fast and Furious* franchise, not to mention the success of the *Harry Potter* films.

Filmmaking also involves a range of different roles, requiring different skills and knowledge. On a typical film set there will be between 30 and 100 different jobs from director to cameraman and set design to script supervisor. This means that for young people interested in working in film there are many different routes and opportunities to explore.

While there are many opportunities, there is no hiding the fact that film is a competitive industry to get into, and for those working in the industry there is little stability as many work as freelancers or on a project-by-project basis rather than a salaried, permanent job. If you are thinking about a career as a filmmaker then it is important to understand the realities and the challenges of working in this sector. However, if you have the passion and talent to make it, then the UK film industry offers many exciting opportunities.



Why a degree course?

If you are thinking this all sounds great but how do I get into the industry, you are not alone! In the past most people would have said that the best way to become a filmmaker is to get a job at the bottom in the industry and to work your way up. However, the strength of courses available at universities across the country means that this is now, for many people, a much better option. Studying film at university can not only give you a recognisable qualification that will help you get employment in any number of job roles, it can also equip you to go straight into the film industry after graduation.

There are two main types of film degrees: courses that take an analytical and theoretical approach to studying film, and courses that look at the more practical aspects of filmmaking. That is not to say that one approach is better than the other; it all depends on what you want to get out of your time studying at university.

If you are interested in studying film but do not see yourself having a career as a filmmaker then the more academic degree programme would be better suited to you. This will allow you to study a subject that you are interested in, whilst focusing on more transferable skills such as writing, analysis and research. However, if your

ambition is to become a filmmaker, taking a more vocational degree will equip you with those specific skills needed to get started in the industry. This is the type of programme we offer at Met Film School and will often be run by independent film schools rather than the traditional university simply because these film schools can offer industry level practice, relationships, facilities, equipment and technology that many universities can't.

Despite the higher fees on an intensive two-year programme like ours at Met Film School, this is becoming an increasingly viable option for many students because the increased state tuition fees for students in England make a traditional three-year programme comparable in cost.

Delivering a BA programme in two-years means that students can get into the industry much sooner; and from our perspective it allows us to better bridge the gap between education and industry. Our students are on site five days a week, 45 weeks a year. This is an intensive programme of study but we want to treat our students as prospective filmmakers, and demand that they learn to behave not simply as students but as professionals from day one.

Finding the right course, asking the right questions

So, if you are thinking that the more practical form of study is the way to go, what should you be looking out for when researching the different options? The first thing I would look for is the access you will have to the equipment needed to make your films. How many cameras/studios/editing suites does the institution have? Is the equipment of industry standard? How easy is it for students to access these facilities?

You have obviously chosen this path because you want to make films. So are the facilities there for you to do this? How many opportunities will you get throughout the course to create your own films, either individually or working as a group? When you come to look for your first job, the work you have created at university will be your portfolio to share with prospective employers, so the more opportunities you get to develop your skill the better.

Also, find out more about the tutors and their backgrounds. Learning from tutors who were, or are practicing filmmakers will give you a fantastic insight into what it is actually like to work in the industry. When you are working you will rarely have the opportunity to ask the more in-depth career questions from more experienced people that you are working alongside, so take advantage of having this access to working professionals while you are studying.

Links with the industry

A good film course should also have strong links with industry, enabling students to learn and witness current industry practice and begin to build their networks before graduating. Met Film School is based at Ealing Studios so we have the luxury of having real-world productions going on around us all the time, and we have an integrated production and post-production company – so we are always able to blur the boundary between education and industry for the benefit of the students. Some of the things we offer to students to build their experience and links with industry are guest speakers, opportunities to work on productions at Ealing Studios, and support to arrange internships for both students and recent graduates through our dedicated careers support service Met GO.

Finally, I think it is important that – if you have the opportunity – you talk to some of the current students. If you are choosing an intensive, two-year practical course, the university experience is not going to be the same as if you have two lectures a day on an

academic degree. Talking to students will take you behind the promotional literature and let you know what it is really like to study at that institution.

So what – or who – are the universities looking for?

Because of this different approach that some of the more practical film courses take, admissions tutors are likely to look for different things from prospective students. Theoretical courses will generally have higher entrance requirements, because the focus of these courses is on the academic study of the subject. However for courses like our BA Practical Filmmaking, it's more important to us that you demonstrate your passion and talent for filmmaking. We want to see something in your application that shows to us that you have what it takes to become a filmmaker after graduating.

This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to apply to film school having already undertaken a range of different work experience opportunities. We are keen to hear about any work experience, but we are just as eager to hear about what you have done in your own spare time. Have you created your own films using a camera phone? Have you developed a storyboard or written a screenplay? With technology on mobile phones and access to editing tools on the internet, almost anyone can try out making their own films, regardless of finances, resources or contacts.

For young people with the talent and passion to become filmmakers, there are many exciting opportunities for a career in the UK film industry; and continuing your education onto film school can give you the skills, knowledge and experience to get there. I would like to finish by sharing a few tips for making the most of your time at film school to give you the best possible chance of forging a successful career in the industry.

1. Use your time at university to experiment with styles and genres. This is your time to take risks in a safe and secure environment. Your tutors and classmates are there to critique and challenge helping you to refine your skills and become a better filmmaker. You can't do this if you play it safe all the time.
2. Try to get experience of a range of different roles. You may come into film school having an idea of what you want to do but it is important not to close off your options too early. You may discover a hidden talent for another job role and, if not, it is just as important to develop an understanding of the different roles on a film set as film making is a collaborative process.
3. Make the most of the access you have to your tutors. Don't be afraid to ask questions about their careers or turn to them for advice. Most tutors at film school will have been through it all and are there to support you to make your first steps in the industry.
4. Start to build contacts in industry by talking to guest speakers and getting involved in real world projects wherever possible. Also, don't forget that your fellow students will one day also be filmmakers and potential colleagues who could offer you work or come to support you on a project.
5. Most importantly, use this time to find your voice as a filmmaker. The best filmmakers all have a clear idea of what their identity is as a filmmaker. You will never have a better opportunity to experiment with new ideas to find a voice of your own that will help you stand out from the crowd.

Jonny Persey is Chief Executive of the Met Film School.

WHERE REALITY MEETS MAKE-BELIEVE: A FAN'S STORY.

Librarian Ruth Kenyon is a true Sherlock fan – a proactive participant in the Holmes' industry. Here's her account of a very special day in London's North Gower Street.

London has been the centre of countless tales, both historical and fictional, with something new (and old) to learn on every street corner. Authors, poets, and songwriters have long felt the attraction of the great metropolis and their writing is full of the city, its people, places, and endless stories. When handled skilfully, London becomes a character in its own right. As a librarian and former inhabitant, I've always been fascinated about how this happens. I know how the city can draw you in and become your friend, and I certainly miss it now I live elsewhere.

Arthur Conan Doyle understood all that I have talked about here when he created his original tales about Sherlock Holmes. As the characters dash through the London fog, solving crimes and hailing hansom cabs, Doyle is very specific about the places he writes about. Most of these landmarks still exist. Even now a modern reader, and especially one who knows London, can find their way around with or without one of the many books written on the subject.

When we bring this story up to date, with the creators working on the modern TV drama *Sherlock*, we know they had a challenge on their hands. Not only did the characters and their actions have to be brought into the 21st century, but the city they live in had to come along too. In the DVD commentary for *The Blind Banker* Mark Gatiss talks about *Sherlock* 'fetishising London'. The loving attention given to it on screen shows us this.

In February 2013's *MediaMagazine* I explained in how I personally got involved in this fandom. I had friends who live in other countries, or are even British but don't know London as well as I do. I was asked to find about Sherlock's city and how it fitted into mine.

This academic year the Media Studies students at my college also have an episode from Series 1 as their exam focus text. I was asked to bring my knowledge of the TV drama to help them out. It's been interesting to talk about how real London becomes the city on screen. As the lecturer told us,

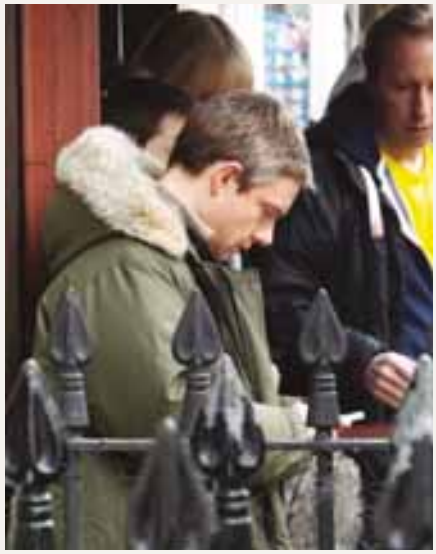
"this is why the media is sometimes described as a window on the world; it impacts on our understanding of the world and impacts on our own identity too."

I also learnt a new word and that was verisimilitude.

Last Easter I was in London risk-assessing, preparing to take students on a trip to view *Sherlock* locations for themselves. As I walked into familiar territory I spotted something odd going on in North Gower Street. There were an awful lot of people there and standing on the pavement opposite I watched as shiny brass numbers for 221B were attached to the door to 187. There were also street signs for Baker Street being put up, and then I spotted a large A-frame with coloured letters telling me 'Caution. Filming in Progress'.

Filming in a street in London isn't unusual. I lived in the city for a long time, and I was used to it being a popular place for this sort of thing to happen. I also know it involves a lot of equipment, and a lot of people. The day I met Sherlock on North Gower Street, the area was filled with an assortment of vehicles, crew and equipment. So much was involved that, as I learned later, the main operations base, with its production offices and trailers for the actors, was two streets away by Euston Station.

There was also the inevitable gathering of other *Sherlock* followers as word



about filming had got out on Twitter. In these online days you can't keep a good fan down, and mobile phones and social media were being used to further communicate today's excitement. Over the morning the mêlée would grow incrementally; by the time I left it was spilling over the pavements and needed a police presence. This is nothing I have ever seen before, but from talking to the security team, who also work on *Doctor Who*, I found they too have to plan for crowd control.

Apart from a scattering of hard-core Conan Doyle readers of all sexes and ages, the main demographic was young and female. It wasn't hard to work out who they were here to catch a glimpse of either! I would meet some older, more analytical *Sherlock* fans like myself later, but for the moment I chatted to some Americans and Niamh from Newcastle. Watching the setting up going on round us, Niamh commented,

"when you see them doing all this just for a few moments filming you appreciate all the hard work and the detail."

By now Gower Street was beginning to suffer under its double strain. The crew setting up was busily occupied, swarming inside and outside the buildings. Speedy's Café, still open even in the midst of this organised chaos, looked to be flagging under a constant onslaught of hungry fans. Poor harassed boss Chris Georgiou told us he planned to close about 2pm and was concerned that he might run out of chips before he did. Earlier in the day we'd been told filming was to start around 3pm, but nothing was happening.

I had already learned that film set-up crews are friendly and chatty; it was time to put this knowledge to good use. A quick word with the lighting guys enlightened me to the fact that their equipment was stuck on the M25. Charlie Malek, the man in charge of the props van, wanted to know exactly who I was. 'You aren't from the press are you?' he asked. I like to blend in when mixing with fans, and quoting Dr Watson from *A Study in Pink* and saying 'I'm nobody' wouldn't have helped today. Thankfully, showing my college Staff ID and explaining my involvement with teaching students reassured Charlie I wasn't a media hack. He invited me join his crew on the back of his van while he explained the intricacies of his job.

Looking after props for *Sherlock* involves keeping everything in order, and transporting them safely to and from locations and the TV studios in Cardiff. There were many carefully numbered cardboard containers stacked in the van, including the all-important 221B box. This included the door furniture for all three houses on camera, and nets for the flat above Speedy's. Everything has to be carefully stored in the years between filming too, ready to be used again. I'd have loved to spend more time with Charlie because he was full of really interesting stories, but suddenly the prop van needed to be moved.

While a camera on a crane was being set up I went off set to get sandwiches and returned to a ripple of excitement. Some of the show's creatives were arriving! Writer Mark Gatiss is a very

recognisable face, even in a crowd, and producer Sue Vertue has a no-nonsense air about her. Then it really did become like something out of a Hollywood movie as Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman arrived amid fan-girl screaming. The two had been given a shiny new black Jaguar to drive them onto set, and even had minders to look after them.

I'd fallen in with some more visiting American fans and was getting to know my new camera too. A 30x zoom was invaluable for getting good shots from a distance. My group of new friends had a refreshingly cynical attitude to what was going on, and the comments swapped as we snapped away were hilarious. Having seen filming enough times, I'd have thought we'd be witnessing what a crew member once called 'hurry up and wait.' Again *Sherlock* surprised me: everything moved swiftly and precisely onwards. Apparently Sue Vertue had posted something on Sherlockology.com about a 'punishing schedule', and they did seem to be working to a very strict timetable. Following some line-memorising by Martin Freeman, a scene outside Baker Street was speedily rehearsed and filmed. There was a break, then more filming. Unfortunately, my camera batteries died – almost a relief as it gave me a chance of a breather. I do enjoy massed-fandom activities but by now I was feeling a little overwhelmed. The day had been quite difficult to process; usually we watch *Sherlock* from the characters' point of view, we are within the experience. Here I was on the edge of events, looking through my view-finder. I gave up my spot in the crowd. Perhaps it was time to go home.

Of course, I should have realised that there still would be things to learn, and that I should have patience. As I walked back in with new batteries through the back of North Gower Street, I glanced through a side passageway. At the end of the row of houses was a group of crew standing round a monitor displaying what was being recorded on camera. It put *Sherlock*'s world exactly where it should be – back on a screen.

By the time things had packed up, and filming stopped for a meal break, I'd had my fun and I decided to call it a day. Despite all the excitement, London itself is still the real draw for me and I needed a pause before going home. The area being filmed in is not one I've visited much; a wander might find me a park to visit or some old buildings to photograph. I set off to explore.

What I didn't expect here was to face my own interject into this day of TV London, and a real test of my composure. Two streets away, as I paused to talk to some other fans, writer Mark Gattis passed by. We kept our cool and politely said hello, and that today had been totally brilliant. The man smiled and left us with a thank you. So far so good, but it wasn't going to be the shock to end all shocks.

With so many vehicles parked in the area, footpaths were narrowed to one-person traffic. Turning another corner someone a lot taller than me swept past, and right into my personal space. Looking up I met a pair of familiar eyes and blinked in surprise. Time stood still. I took a breath, then there was a flash of purple shirt and swirl of dark coat and I was alone again.

Off-set Benedict Cumberbatch looks nothing like Sherlock, and he seemed a little tired and a little preoccupied. Thank goodness I had been rendered speechless; it wasn't my job to be a fan-girl or put him under more pressure. After that final adventure I gave up exploring and headed straight for the nearest Tube station. I often say fans need to be well behaved when in the presence of their heroes, but that isn't easy when they creep up on you!

Ruth Kenyon is librarian at Lowestoft 6th Form Centre.

BAFTA

At the time of writing, we are just recovering from the British Academy Film Awards, better known as the BAFTAs. Held annually in London, this prestigious event has become increasingly high-profile since 2002 when it was moved to February in order to precede the Oscars, attracting the brightest talents of both the British and Hollywood film industries. However, there is a great deal more to BAFTA than the presentation of awards. The organisation also provides unrivalled support to people trying to progress in the film, television and games industries, and that includes producers.

According to BAFTA's mission statement, it

> **"supports, promotes and develops the art forms of the moving image – film, television and video games – by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspiring practitioners and benefiting the public."**

In addition to this, BAFTA has a specific Learning Vision, which states that

> **"The UK boasts a wealth of talented people who could make a huge contribution to the continued excellence of British film, TV and games. We want to ensure that this talent is nurtured and supported, so that talented individuals have the opportunity to succeed whatever their background, and – through learning from peers and established practitioners – reach their full potential."**

I spoke to Tim Hunter, BAFTA's Head of Learning and Events, to find out more about the many resources they offer, specifically to emerging producers.

Bafta Guru

The first port-of-call is the website. Aside from BAFTA's main website (www.bafta.org), there is BAFTA Guru (guru.bafta.org), which is an online learning channel aimed at 'democratising access to award winners and nominees and BAFTA members'. This site is a treasure trove of talks and interviews in which leading professionals discuss their craft and offer practical tips and advice. There is a whole strand of the site devoted to producers in which dozens of the biggest names in the industry share their expertise: guru.bafta.org/craft/producing.

Of particular interest to aspiring producers on this page is the brand new video strand, Overview of Producing – what to expect when becoming a producer. Tim Hunter explains:

"This is a series of three videos exploring the challenges facing people starting in the industry, and uses different people to address issues such as getting funding together and recruiting a team."

You can also follow BAFTA Guru on Twitter – @BAFTAGuru.

Events

BAFTA has a year-round programme of 250 events, which can either be attended directly or accessed subsequently online. These include:

– Regular screenings of television previews followed by a Q&A session, in which producers talk about how they work and the process of bringing the production to screen. There are also games previews, with some of the people behind the game talking on a panel about what they've done.

– Filmmakers' Market, a one-day event each July comprised of 'masterclasses, screenings and advice sessions' aimed at emerging film talent, looking at the different aspects of creating a film, such as casting, distribution, crowd-funding and how to work with talent. This includes one-to-one surgeries with film professionals.

– Generation Next, a similar event to the Filmmakers' Market, offers an overview of how career starters should best position themselves in order to build a sustainable career in the television industry.

– Short Sighted, an all-day event hosted twice per year in London and once elsewhere, looking at the distribution and exhibition of short films. 'Shorts', as they are usually known, have long been regarded as one of the best ways to get started in the film industry. Hunter says:

"One of the things we've found is that short-film makers will focus on getting funding together and won't necessarily think about the life of the short beyond production, so we offer an overview of the different opportunities for where you can screen it, how you can monetise it, how you can use the film as a calling-card for what you can do."

There are videos of some of the best content from previous Short Sighted events on the Guru site: guru.bafta.org/shorts/top-tips.

– Commissioners' Breakfasts, a series of sessions in which the top controllers and commissioners in television discuss the kind of content they're looking for, along with advice on new funding opportunities.

Most of these events are open to everyone, and the best way to find out about them is via Twitter (@BAFTA), or by signing up to BAFTA's mailing list via the main website, which will enable

you to receive a fortnightly email with details of upcoming events.

Podcasts

Another excellent resource is the regular, free BAFTA podcast:

> **featuring top industry guests, the show features the best bits from BAFTA's busy events programme as well as insider information for anyone interested in making film, TV or games.**

You can sign up here: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-bafta-podcast/id552392818?mt=2.

Also on iTunes is the BAFTA archive, an extensive collection of interviews and discussions with top professionals and industry insiders.

Identifying New Talent

Consistent with BAFTA's vision not just to reward excellence but to identify it, the organisation actively seeks out emerging talent, with the aim, as stated in their Learning Vision, of ensuring

> **that this talent is nurtured and supported, so that talented individuals have the opportunity to succeed whatever their background.**

Tim Hunter told me that

> **In November 2012, we published our Career Pathways Report – a survey of 2000 young people, assessing their views on how easy or hard it is to break into the film, TV and games industries. The report revealed that many young people from low income backgrounds are put off working in the industry due to the strong perception that you must work for free to get experience and have family connections.**

(The report is available here: static.bafta.org/files/career-survey-booklet-v8-online-1569.pdf)

Partly in response to these concerns, BAFTA has introduced various initiatives, including:

– Breakthrough Brits,

> **a group of industry newcomers who were selected to represent UK talent across film, TV and games… a new initiative to celebrate and support the UK's future talent. The group of 17 was selected by a jury of industry experts from an open call for nominations**

quotation from the BAFTA website

Hunter elaborates:

> **we actively went out to the industry to find people. We got recommendations from the industry. The idea is that we're judging people purely based on their talent and what they've achieved rather than who they know. Not only do BAFTA identify these young people, we also give them a year of industry support – pairing them up with people in the industry who can help advise them and advance their careers.**

2013 marked the first year of Breakthrough Brits, and the inaugural list included two film producers and two games developers alongside actors, writers, directors, and a broadcaster.

– Scholarships Programme, which, according to Hunter,

> **enables young people to study at post-graduate level. Again, BAFTA not only pays for their fees, we also offer them mentors and other industry support throughout their study. One of them – Rienkje Attoh – is studying production at the National Film and TV School.**

The current BAFTA scholars are profiled here – https://www.bafta.org/about/supporting-talent/scholarships,3731,BA.html.

So next time you watch the great and the good of the movie and television worlds lining up on the red carpet to compete for those iconic bronze masks, remember that the glittering ceremonies are just the most public face of an organisation that works tirelessly behind the scenes to develop and support the future bright lights of the British film, TV and games industries.

Did you know...?

- BAFTA HQ is a highly impressive and historic building on Piccadilly in London. BAFTA was able to move there in 1976 thanks to the Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh's donation of their share of profits from the film *The Royal Family*.
- The building has its own 227 seat cinema, which has a state-of-the-art projector giving the best 3D experience in London.
- The current President of the Academy is Prince William.
- The famous BAFTA trophy was designed by the American sculptor Mitzi Cunliffe in 1955. The hollow reverse of the mask bears an electronic symbol around one eye and a screen symbol around the other, linking dramatic production and television technology (source bafta.org).

Simon Bubb is a leading actor, about to take on the role of Benedick at the Globe.