

INTRODUCTION



This study guide attempts to trace the production process of the forthcoming film 'War of the Buttons' from its Conception to its release in the cinema. In tracing this route students are asked to carry out a number of tasks, many of which relate directly to decisions which have to be made during film production.

Following the development of this one film we have tried to draw conclusions about the mainstream film making process. However, it is important to bear one thing in mind. As the production accountant for 'War of the Buttons', John Trehy points out:

"Each and every feature film I've worked on is completely different from every other, and can only be looked on as a prototype. The production process is always difficult when you're dealing with prototypes and this often explains why so many films exceed their original budgets. 'How can you be a million or

two dollars over?' - is a question that is often asked. The reason is that certain kinds of films are unique and the production team must do things that have never been done before."

Thus, whilst many of the processes which are dealt with in this guide could well hold good for other films, there are certain aspects which are unique. The guide examines both areas and encourages students to use their own experience of film viewing and cinema-going to explore both the generalities and the uniqueness. There is no attempt to show 'the wonderful world of filmmaking'; rather the guide reveals an industrial process, one in which the time spent on preparing for the film to be shot far outweighs the amount of time actually spent shooting. This balance is reflected in the amount of space allocated to each of the various stages of the film. One of the key areas of the guide is the relationship between the creative aspects of the film and their costs.

"the whole thing is a balance between artistic hopes and expectations of the creative personnel and the amount of money that's available. Our job is to make the most of the money and try to hold that balance..."

It is this balance in filmmaking which is explored here.

It is important to realise that the interviews quoted were conducted over a seven month period. The first taking place before filming even began, some during the shoot and others once filming was completed. Much of the guide was written before the film was completed. It is therefore an exploration of the decisions being taken as the film progressed. Some of these decisions had to be taken for financial reasons, others for artistic reasons and finally some for simple logistical reasons.

THE PLAYERS

This study guide is based on a number of interviews with the key people involved in the production process of 'War of the Buttons'. Before we hear what they have to say it is worth giving each a short introduction. This is followed by a synopsis of the film's story.

DAVID PUTTNAM - PRODUCER

Among the most highly-regarded film makers in the industry, David Puttnam has earned his reputation for integrity and vision producing such films as; 'Chariots of Fire', 'Local Hero', 'The Killing Fields', 'Midnight Express' and 'The Mission'. Son of a well known photographer Londoner Puttnam enjoyed a successful early career in advertising before forming the VPS/Goodtimes Production Company with Sandy Lieherson producing hits including 'That'll be the Day' and Ken Russell's 'Mahler' and backing the first films of directorial talents Michael Apted, Alan Parker, Ridley Scott and Adrian Lyric. In 1986 Puttnam began a 16-month tenure as Chairman and C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) of Columbia Pictures. After returning to Britain he formed Enigma Productions and renewed his association with Warner Bros., producing 'Memphis Belle' Columbia Pictures., 'Meeting Venus' and now 'War of the Buttons'

JOHN ROBERTS • DIRECTOR

Graduating from the Central School of Art and Design in 1982, John Roberts spent the next six years as a graphic designer and independent film maker. In 1988 he went to the National Film and Television School and his graduation film, 'This Boy's Story' won the Academy Award for best foreign student film. 'War of the Buttons' is his first feature film.

STEVE NORRIS - ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Steve Norris entered the film industry in 1976 as a trainee with the Rank Organisation at Pinewood Studios, and in 1979 joined Warner Bros.' European Production Department. In 1982, he moved to California to become Assistant Studio Controller for Winters, and in 1983 was appointed to Warner Bros.' World Wide Production Group. In 1984 David Puttnam invited him to return to the UK to join Enigma, running the day to day affairs of the company during the production of films including 'The Killing Fields', 'The Mission' and 'Defence of the Realm'. In 1986, he joined Columbia Pictures as Vice President and Executive Assistant to the Chairman and C.E.O. He returned to the UK in the Spring of 1988 with David Puttnam to reform Enigma Productions, subsequently producing the feature films 'Memphis Belle', 'Meeting Venus' and 'War of the Buttons'.

COLIN WELLAND - SCREENWRITER

Colin Welland entered the film and television industry in 1964. His countless television appearances include 'Z Cars' and 'Blue Remembered Hills' and he has also appeared on stage at the National Theatre and the RSC. His television credits as a writer include 'Bangelstein's Boys', an original television film directed by John Mackenzie, 'Say Goodnight to Grandma', 'Roll on Four O'Clock', 'Leeds United' directed by Roy Battersby and 'Bambino Mio' for the BBC starring Julie Walters. His feature film credits include 'Yanks', the Oscar winning 'Chariots of Fire' and 'A Dry White Season'.

JIM CLAY • PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Jim Clay's work as a production designer spans film television and commercials. Whilst at the BBC he was involved in productions as diverse as 'Christabel', 'The Singing Detective' and 'For Days in July'. 'War of the Buttons' is the fifth film on which he has worked. His other film work includes 'Queen of Hearts' 'Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter' and Neil Jordan's 'The Crying Game'.

RACHEL PORTMAN • COMPOSER

Rachel Portman has been composing music for film and television since 1982. Her first credit was for another Enigma product, 'Experience Preferred but not Essential'. Since then she has worked on over 50 films and television series. She has worked extensively with the Henson Organisation and her feature film work includes such films as 'Sirens', 'Where Angels Fear to Tread', Mike Leigh's 'Life is Sweet' and 'Benny and Joon' for MGM.

DAVID FREEMAN • EDITOR

After a degree in History, David Freeman worked first as a freelance photographer before entering the film industry via the National Film and Television School, where he met and worked with director John Roberts. Since graduating from the NFTS in 1990, he has worked as both a writer and editor. His editing work includes John Robert's Academy Award winning 'This Boy's Story' and Elaine Proctor's 'On the Wire' which won the BFI First Feature Award. 'War of the Buttons' was his first full length feature film, since which he has worked also on 'A Man of No Importance' and 'Feast of July'.

LIZ KERRY LOCATION MANAGER

Starting her career in arts-related jobs with the British Council, the Design Centre and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Liz Kerry first moved into the film world when she took up the post of personal assistant to the director of the National Film School. In 1977 she went freelance as a production coordinator in feature films, working in England, Kenya, Morocco and Canada. With each film, her responsibility grew from unit production manager to Production Manager, until in 1986 she worked as Location Manager on the film 'The Fourth Protocol'. In 1977 she went freelance as a production coordinator in feature films, working in England, Kenya, Morocco and Canada. Since then she has worked consistently on feature films, television series and independent films as location manager

JOHN TREHY PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT

In 1959 John Trehy began working in the accounts department at Elstree, working on films made and financed by the studios which included 'The Young Ones' with Cliff Richard and 'The Punch and Judy Man' with Tory Hancock. From Elstree he moved to Hammer Films in the 60's as a Production Accountant gaining great experience, often working on two or three films at any given time. His first major film as Production Accountant was David Lean's 'Ryan's Daughter'. More recent film credits include 'Superman III', 'Gorillas in the Mist', 'City of Joy' and 'Being Human'.

ROB HUBBARD CASTING DIRECTOR

Ros Hubbard was born in Dublin and at the age of seventeen went to California for two years and decided that she did not want to work in films! After spells working in the advertising industry in New York she returned to Ireland and started her own model agency. This quickly developed into a casting agency. Moving to London she worked initially as a public relations officer for the British Menswear Guild, but eventually formed a company with her husband in the casting business. Hubbard Casting has since gone from strength to strength and is one of the premier casting agencies in the United Kingdom

THE STORY

Ballydowse and Carrickdowse are villages on opposite sides of a tidal estuary in South West Ireland. Though the townsfolk don't at first know it, there is an undeclared war between the children of the villages - the Carricks and the Ballys. In the Ballydowse classroom, serious plans are being hatched. The Ballys swab graffiti over the Carrickdowse parish church - and the war is declared. The Ballys capture 'Gorilla', one of the king-pins of the Carrick gang and subject him to the most humiliating torture; the removal of every button of his clothing. Feigns, the leader of the Ballys, is the next victim of this ritual - earning him the wrath of his stepfather who has already threatened to send him away from home. The battles escalate, emotions run high and the drama of this children's fantasy becomes grimly serious, with betrayal, new friendships and moments of intense joy and sorrow punctuating the action - with unexpected results for leaders of both gangs.

THE GUIDE

This study pack will take you through the whole production process of the film *War of the Buttons*, from the original idea to its opening at the cinema. It will try to answer the following questions:

How does the film industry work? Why does the film industry work in the way it does?

What does the industry produce and why? Who is involved in the making of a film? How do audiences find out about films?

Before going into any detail, let us start by trying to come to some agreement about some of the terms and ideas that are fundamental to the film making process. Why do you think people make films? Why do you think that people go and see films? If we talk about the film industry', then what exactly do we mean by the word 'industry'? What is an industry? What is its purpose?

Normally, when people study the film industry, they look at three areas - production, distribution and exhibition. By doing it this way, however, they avoid looking at the two key areas, the two moments in a film's life when money changes hands and which guarantees the film a future - the moment of investment and the moment of viewing. We, as members of the audience, experience the second of these two moments, and so it is here that we will start. In going to the cinema you make a choice as to what to see. You pay money to see a film. What is it that attracts you to certain films? What is it that makes you pay money to see a film? In the chart below, write down the various things about a film that might make you want to go and see it. Some of these ideas may be about the film itself, others may be about where the film is showing or how you heard about it. Try to keep these two sets of ideas separate in each of the two sections below.

- Appealing aspects of the film itself

- Other factors which inspired you to see the film

THE FILM ITSELF

The last question that we need to ask at this stage is this: What do you expect to get in return for the money that you pay at the box office? If you say that 'industry' is about making and selling things, then what is the film industry selling us! If we pay money for a product, say food or clothes, do we know exactly what we are getting for our money?

When we pay to see a film at the box office, do we know exactly what we are going to get for our money? At the other end of the film making chain, investors will put money into a film to get it made. They are likely to read a script and be given some idea of what the film will cost and who will be in it. In many ways they also have only a general idea of what the film will be like. So, you will see that at the two moments of investment in a film, both investors - we, the audience, and the people and companies who pay money for the film to be made - are only paying for a promise.

Make sure that you keep all of your notes from this stage. As you work through the pack, note down those points at which you consider that what attracts you as a possible member of the audience might also influence decisions that are made whilst the film is in production.

FUNDING FILMS

Cinema, like any industry, is concerned with money. Money needs to be invested in a film so that it can be made and the money then recouped at the box office (and through video and television sales) by attracting an audience to see the film. It may seem that the sole criterion of the film industry is what pleases investors. However, we, the audience, must also be 'pleased' by the product we pay to see. The film companies will make films which they hope the audience will want to see. But it is not simply the case that they will look at a formula for making films, and only make films to that formula. Many considerations are taken into account when decisions are being made to finance a film.

The financing of a film is often a long and difficult process. Normally, the money for production does not come from just one place. The producer of a film, in raising finance, will look for a backer who will be sympathetic to his or her project. Backers of a film might well ask for changes in a project. Before we look in detail at 'War of the Buttons', it is worth laying out in general terms the financial 'life' of a film project.

THE IDEA

The first step in a film's life will be the idea This could be an original idea, in adaptation from a book or other film. Once the idea exists, then it is normally up to the producer to raise the finance to make the film by presenting a 'package' to various funders in the hope that he or she can raise the money to make the film. The producer's role in a film is therefore crucial. So, we have two things which we need to look at. Firstly the role of the producer, and secondly the idea of the 'package'.

WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

David Puttnam, the producer of 'War of the Buttons', describes his role as producer in the following ways: **DAVID PUTTNAM** : "Initially, I'm the person who raises the money, and makes a series of commitments to the investors and ensures that these commitments are kept regarding the cost and nature of the movie. Then, I'm the person who consistently reminds the director both of his or her original intentions and of the nature of their communication and relationship with the audience. I'm the glue... no one producer has control over a movie. That really is a fallacy, a figment of the media's imagination. A movie is made by hundreds of people.'

A producer should be seen as the 'enabler' of the film, in the sense that, although the idea for the film may have come from elsewhere, the producer as coordinator/organiser/controller is the person responsible for overseeing the making of the film.

The first thing that a producer has to obtain is development money in order to get the idea into script form and to develop a 'package'.

THE PACKAGE

The producer has to put together a package which will attract investors. The package will normally be made up of 'stars', a director and the script as well as a preliminary production plan and budget. It is this package which the producer will use to raise finance.

As part of the package, the producer will also need to define the potential audience of the film; it is vital that the film, even at this stage, is shown to have a reasonable chance of recouping its costs and making a profit.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Assuming that it looks as if finance money can be raised, the producer's next task will be to ensure that all necessary planning is completed in preparation.

THE BUDGET

Whilst an initial budget will already have been drawn up during the development of the project, as shooting nears, a precise itemised budget needs to be constructed, related now to the overall amount of money that seems likely to be raised. It might be decided that not enough money has been raised to allow as long a 'shoot' or as many locations to be used as originally planned and so either the script has to be altered or other ways of shooting the film examined. A good producer will probably already have foreseen most of these problems to avoid time being wasted during the shoot.

PRODUCTION

It is here that the majority of the money is spent. Careful budgets will have been drawn up, allocating money to different areas of the film's production. Actors, design, accommodation, travel, etc all need to be carefully calculated and balanced so that the film does not exceed its budget.

All of these costs are taken into account when looking at the level of money needed to recoup the budget from box office receipts.

THE IDEA 'WAR OF THE BUTTONS'

The production company of 'War of the Buttons', Enigma, has a number of commitments from different companies to make films. As well as producing films for Warner pros, they also have a close relationship with the Japanese company Fujisankei. It was from this company that the idea came to remake the classic French film, 'La Guerre des Boutons', into a new film in English. The original film was made in 1963 by Yves Robert and Daniele Delorme. It was an adaptation of a novel of the same name written in 1913 by Louis Pergaud.

The Japanese confirmed that they were prepared to finance the early development costs, and it was then up to Enigma, led by David Puttnam and Steve Norris, to develop the script and put together the package

STEVE NORRIS: "Warner Bros. were interested in becoming involved in the film. Enigma has a relationship with Warner Bros. and this was one of the ideas that we put to them for our next film. They liked the idea and wanted to become involved both creatively and financially."

Look carefully at the description of the film. What do you think might have been the attraction of the story to the Japanese company? Why do you think that they were interested in this film as opposed to a completely new film from an original idea? How would having the original film and novel in front of them help them to decide?

In addition to the production logistics, the most important thing that Enigma needed to do was to find other partners who would share the cost of making the film.

INVESTMENT FOR PROFIT

When investors put money into films, they hope that they will get a return for their investment. They believe that the film they are funding will be popular with audiences and that people will pay to see it. Unlike television, film has to attract people to a cinema or, later, to a video shop. People have to be persuaded to leave their home to purchase a product that they have become interested in.

STEVE NORRIS: "You must never forget that companies such as Warner Bros. and Fujisankei are in the business of film - this is not a philanthropic exercise for them. They have an obligation to their shareholders to make a profit - if they are prepared to support this project financially to the extent that they are doing, then it is because they share our belief that it can become commercially successful. These companies release at least 25-30 films per year and so they must attempt to diversify the projects that they are involved with between the different genres and types of film. I think that our film has a particular place within that group of pictures."

Look carefully at what Steve Norris has said. Try to come up with a list of possible aspects of a film that you think would attract someone to invest money in a film. When you have done this, look back at your list of the types of things that make you want to see a film. Compare the two lists. Are there any similarities? Why do you think this?

PUTTING TOGETHER THE PACKAGE

The key elements then to any film when raising finance are the script, the director and the stars. The script can either be unique or else it can follow on from popular genres or be a sequel to an already popular film. These three, together with the producer go together to form what is called a 'package'. It is the overall package which is the principle method of attracting investors.

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TASK : Look through your local newspaper or through a film magazine to see what films are currently showing or will be showing in the near future. Try to break each one down into the relevant parts of the package and then say what in each film would have been attractive to investors and why. In addition to script and stars, the third section of the package is the producer/director. Why should this be important?

With these three things - the director, the star and the script in place it is then possible for the producer to start raising the finance. However, it is important to bear in mind that the cost of a film will be relative to its possible success at the box office. If a major star is signed up for the film, then the budget will be bigger than if no stars are in the film. This is because:

- a major star will need to be paid more money; the potential box office returns are greater, so the whole scale of the film tends to increase (look back at the list of things which attracted you to see a film. We are sure that stars are one of them)

TASK : You are now going to create your own film, for which you will hopefully be able to find investment. Bearing in mind the work that you have done so far about audience and investment, write a short outline of a film that you think might attract investment. Your outline should be about one page long and give the brief outline of the story.

When you have written your story, think of stars who might fit the central roles. You will also need to think of a director for the film. When you have completed all of this, write a letter to a possible investor in the film, which should set out the following things:

- what there is in your film that you think will attract audiences
- what the possible audience will be for this film
- details of where the money will be spent.

In your class, divide into groups. Each group should try to develop its own package. When you have all done this, present your own package to the rest of the class. Which package do you think sounds the best idea and why?

SPREADING THE RISK

At any one time, a major Hollywood studio will have four or five films in production - either fully or co-financed by them. These will be different styles of films. No studio would make just thrillers or just romantic films. Because of the cost of film making in the 1990's and the unpredictability of a film's performance, studios will spread their money (and thus spread the risk of losing money or making profits) across a wide range of films. This range will reflect all genres of films and budget size. No studio can afford to make only expensive blockbusters. They will have a mixture of small, medium and big budget films. Small budget costs (in the 1990s) would range between \$3 - 5m, medium budget between US\$6 - 15million and big budgets (in the 1990s) would start at US\$16million and go anywhere from there.

Look at the range of films being released in the UK by Warner Bros - www.warnerbros.co.uk .

Can you pick out any which you think are big budget' films? What would make them big budget? From the descriptions of the films, who do you think the audience would be? How does the spread of audiences also help to spread the risk'? What do you think were the attractions for each film which persuaded 'Warner Bros. to become involved?

ART AND COMMERCE

From the work that you have completed so far, it would seem that film making is only concerned with is making money. Film has, however, been called 'the art form of the 20th century'. Yet when we think of art, we do not necessarily think of profit. So how do film makers view this merging of art and finance?

STEVE NORRIS: "Film making seems to me to be a meeting of art and commerce. I wouldn't dare say at what point they meet, but they're both important for different reasons. On the one hand there's the desire to engage in a profitable enterprise, but on the other hand there is the need to understand that it can only be achieved by artistic endeavour. So there must be a constant balance."

Film making, as an industry is a very expensive process. Whereas painting a picture or writing a novel cost little. Film making needs hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of pounds in order to produce a finished product. So how do the two come together?

STEVE NORRIS: "I think it is perfectly natural for the director to focus only on making the best possible film he can, whereas the function of the producer is to try and assist in making the best possible film within the present framework - in other words, within the cost that the financiers and the producer believe will make the film economically viable. Although film making cries out for the discipline that other large industries have, it has that irrationality about it that will never completely let this happen because of the personalities and because of the artistic sensibilities involved."

To actually film a story is very different, to realise the idea is expensive. Stars, directors, sets, travel - all cost money. Everyone involved wants to make the best film possible, but the possibilities do not always lie in the story itself. They also lie in the amount of money available to make the film. Thus, compromises often have to be made between what the director wants and the money available to realise those desires.

STEVE NORRIS: "One of the other obvious jobs that the producer has is to convince the director and the other creative people, that at some point there are compromises that will have to be reached, but that with the proper dialogue between everyone concerned, there is an understanding that we're not making compromises purely for financial reasons but for the benefit of the story and the picture."

THE SCRIPT

As you will have seen, the idea for 'War of the Buttons' did not originate with Enigma but was a suggestion from one of their partners. In many ways this is different from many of the projects that David Puttnam has worked on in the past. Nearly all of his Films have been generated from his own Company.

However, the attractions to the film were numerous and he turned to Colin Welland to adapt the original French film 'La Guerre des Boutons' into a new international film.

Puttnam and Welland had worked together on the Oscar winning 'Chariots of Fire'.

Welland had already built up an impressive list of screen credits, both in film and in television. However, the task of adapting a French film into a British one was full of challenges.

COLIN WELLAND: "If you are adapting something then it is often better if the original hook or film isn't very good. You can do something with it, turn it into something better. Obviously, it is more problematic if the original is very good. You have a responsibility to the original work and also you have the chance to completely mess it up.

If you take someone like Dickens - a marvellous storyteller - you have a tremendous responsibility to try to deliver the whole flavour and diversity of the novel. Alan Pater said that if you have to adapt anything it is much better to work on a slight work. It allows you more of a possibility to develop it into something good.

The original French film, 'La Guerre des Boutons' was an excellent work in its own right. However, we decided that we were not trying to remake this dark little French film, made in black and white, a hit like a film noir, which looked at the darker side of childhood. Unlike the French original our version is more a celebration of childhood. The cruelty of the original has mostly gone although we've retained some of it. It was necessary so that there could be some light and shade in the characters."

Thus, Welland was taking a film which was set in France and adapting it into an English speaking environment. But how would the original story change and what did he have to bear in mind?

COLIN WELLAND: "It was my idea to set it in Ireland. The story calls for two communities, adjacent to each other, where kids from both of the communities wage war on each other. There's only one place in the English speaking world where you can find this and that is In Fire, Southern Ireland, I'm very familiar with Ireland and felt that I wouldn't have a problem writing dialogue for Irish characters.

One problem was not to make it too dated. I didn't want to write a period piece, setting the whole story 20 odd years ago, and I was worried that the kids of today might have gone beyond the sort of life which would be shown in the story. I wanted the story to be relevant to young people today.

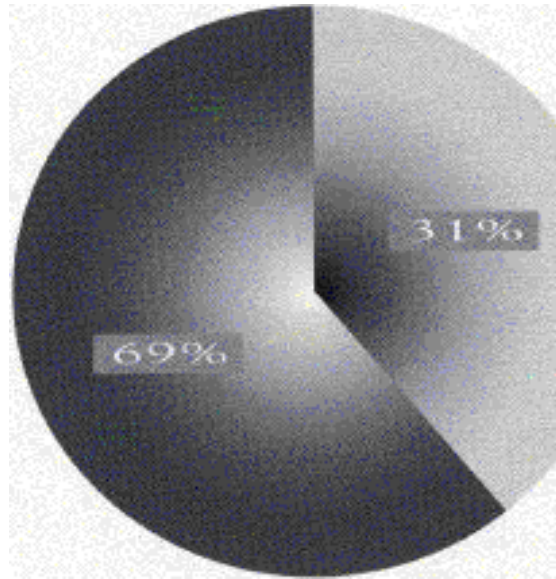
I was really encouraged when I was looking for locations in Sligo. I was driving along a country road when I saw two kids by a hedge with bows and arrows. I stopped and asked them what they were playing and they said they were having a game of Robin Hood, I thought 'great', it is still going on. Kids do still play their own imaginative games so I would not be taking liberties if I set the film during the last few years. I thought that I had the location right and that I had a story which would involve young people."

Having decided on a setting, Welland then set about reconstructing the story to fit in with his own ideas.

COLIN WELLAND: "From the original story we've retained about 75-80%. What we have really changed is the flavour, the texture. Similarly, the characters have changed in order to reflect that change in texture.

The characters have evolved in a different way. Any writer gets involved with their characters and they evolve in your own way. They will reflect your attitudes. It's the whole thing about developing and evolving the story. I recently had to write a synopsis of a story for America. They kept asking me what would happen in the story and I found it very difficult to say. How can I say how the story will evolve until I actually start to write it?

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET



ABOVE THE LINE • Total 30.97% of Budget.

Story, Rights, Continuity Producers Unit • Direction • Cast Travel & Living Fringes

BELOW THE LINE Total 69.03% of Budget

Below The Line Costs include:

PRODUCTION PERIOD	POST PRODUCTION
77.27 % of Below The Line Costs.	13. 26% of Below The Line Costs.
9.43% Production Stall	Including: Film Editing
2.33% Extra Talent	Music
2.77 % Set Design	Post Production Sound
6. 14% Set Construction	Post Production Film & Lab
0.32% Set Striking	Main & End Titles
1.87%	Set Operation
2.63% Special Effects	OTHER EXPENSES
3.56% Set Dressing	9. 47% of Below The Line Costs.
2.00% Properties	
3.67% Wardrobe	Including: Publicity
1.33% Makeup & Hairdressing	Insurance
3.79% Lighting	General Expenses
5.31% Camera	Variable Overheads
1 .97% Production Sound	Fringes
12.22% Transportation	
28.80% Location	
5. 36% Production Film & Lab	
0.18% Tests	
2.04% Misc. Expenses	
4.28% Fringes	

COLIN WELLAND: "When I write I always try to get inside the characters. I always say if you're writing a conversation between two people, don't sit in the third chair and try to overhear what the characters are saying. Get inside the first, hear what they say and then when the second character replies get inside them, get into that second chair, leap across into them. You should be an observer, you should be involved. So, when I was writing one of the kids' parts I'd try to get into the character. I'd become the one who is jealous, or the traitor, or the intellectual."

However, after the first draft was completed, there was still much work to be done. Welland explains his role once pre-production and then shooting started.

COLIN WELLAND: "Puttnam involves you as much as is possible. I don't like going on set. You end up wandering about like a ghost. You're tolerated. Your job is done before they start shooting so what can you contribute? Mar of the Buttons' was a little different. There was a lot of writing to be done whilst the film was being shot. This had to be done for the sake of the economics - per/taps they were running behind so that some scenes had to go but the story still had to make sense. Then there is the fact that some scenes just didn't work. Once the film was cast, some of the characters went a different way so scenes had to be changed in order to fit the actors and actresses."

As you will see later on in the guide, there were other hands involved in the final version of the script that was shot. So, from the outset, Welland had an idea of what the film should be like and how, in his own imagination, he would like it to turn out. His wish for the film is as follows:

COLIN WELLAND: "I hope that the kids who still play like that will recognise themselves and will rejoice seeing themselves in this celebration of their lives. I also hope that the kids of today who are wired into electronic games and all that stuff will realise what they are missing."

TASK:

Welland talks about the way that he has retained 80% of the story. Thus, he has retained the narrative itself, the actual events, and then created his own setting and characters around these events.

Take a story or novel that you have recently read. Break it down into events, the various things that actually happen in the story. Try to make sure that you do not mention actual places in your breakdown, or mention what the characters are like.

Now, try to reconstruct the story, but setting it in a different time and place. What sorts of additions do you need to make to your story? How do you go about deciding what the hero/heroine will be like? In what ways do the decisions that you take reflect the approach that Colin Welland has outlined in his description?

THE BUDGET

STEVE NORRIS : "Budgeting is a complicated process on a film of this size because the options available are many and varied. Obviously, given the resources available and the subject matter, the film had to have a scale to match its ambition. Additionally, Warner Bros. were prepared to guarantee completion of the film, which is to say that as there are other investors involved, Warners guaranteed that the picture would be

completed. As producers, we must therefore satisfy them that not only have we evaluated properly the plans for the film, but that those evaluations stand up to very close scrutiny by Warners' own production experts."

Enigma Production presented the package for 'War of the Buttons' to Warner Bros. who, as has already been seen, liked the project. Steve Norris, the associate producer, explains what happens next.

STEVE NORRIS: "Once the financiers have the script and are aware of the key creative elements involved, both they and the producer must decide the amount that should be spent on physically making the film and the production company then carries out a series of budgetary evaluations. Within a normal budget framework, costs are divided into two areas, 'above the line' and 'below the line'. The main difference is that 'above the line' costs are, in general, the costs of the stars and other leading creative people and the underlying rights necessary to make the film, whereas the 'below the line' costs are the variable costs relating to the actual manufacturing of the film itself.

When Warner Bros. consider how much they think the film should cost, the creative-elements-factor is all important. Their calculations would have been based, in part, on the success of the previous films of the star, producer and director. It is useful to evaluate your project against another with similarities. They're obviously not the same films, but one can assume that the audiences would be similar if the same quality was to be achieved. As to the budgeting process on 'War of the Buttons', we began with a preliminary run-through to evaluate roughly how and where we might make the picture. A number of detailed locations 'recces' were carried out to provide exact information, and this was consolidated into the first draft. It was done with/tout consideration, at that stage, to exactly what the below-the-line total would have to be. We approached the whole planning phase from an 'ideal world' point of view, and as is always the case, our total was higher than it would have to be when we actually made the film. Doing that put us in a position where we could go back and isolate the different parts of the film and discuss with the director and all the various departments involved exactly where the necessary creative compromises could be made in order for us to bring the budget back in line with the financiers' expectations."

The budget for the film is set. A percentage is on 'above the line costs'. What remains is the money available to physically make the film, the 'below the line' costs, the money that will be spent on making the sets, creating the costumes, hiring the film crew. This is a complex process and proceeds hand-in-hand with the scheduling of the film, deciding what scenes will be shot on which day and where.

JOHN TREHY: "The first step is that the script is broken down into a schedule. We evaluate how best to approach the film but there are a number of factors that will have to be considered - details such as start date, availability of certain artists, availability of locations, weather, the need of the director to shoot in a certain order if possible - amongst many. Slowly, a framework is produced and then the budget is prepared."

As Steve Norris points out, all three must balance.

STEVE NORRIS: "The relationship between the budget, schedule and script is very important indeed. Once you have scheduled a script and budgeted that schedule, those three now all conform technically to each

other. Once you have done this then you have to make sure that the balance remains. You might decide to shoot for an extra week, but you then need to look at how this will affect the overall cost. You may need to take money from one department to pay for another. It is constantly balancing the books."

The aim of the process is to try to deliver a film which is as close to the director's original concept as possible. But, as you will have seen from the section on 'Art and Commerce', there is a constant tension between the budget and the creative ambition of the director. The comments of Norris and Trehy so far have talked about the 'ideal' situation. In reality the production team is faced with a series of choices and compromises based on a financial responsibility to the funders of the film.

As you will have seen from the section on the producer, the job of holding, of 'gluing', everything together rests in his or her hands. They are ultimately responsible for delivering the film on schedule and on budget. And without detailed planning this would be impossible. So how did the planning of 'War of the Buttons' develop?

STEVE NORRIS: "...we wanted to spread the available monies as far as we could to give the director as much time and as many resources as he could have. One of the other obvious jobs that we have is to convince the director that at some point there are compromises that will have to be reached, but that with the proper dialogue and information they will be for the benefit, in the long run, of the picture. Usually, you will never have enough money or enough time but that's the age-old problem. What you must do is to ensure that the important parts of the film are covered first. My job is to convince the director that we can get the best with what we've got."

TASK

Look back at the comments made by the various members of the production team. Can you sum up the major problems that confronted them? How do problems seem to be solved? If you look back at the budget sheet that you were given can you identify which of the 'below the line' costs might change once the initial budget has been drawn up? Try to give reasons why you think these things might change.

The budget and schedule are drawn up and the film is ready to shoot. However, the constant flux of film making means that nothing is ever set in concrete. The production accountant cannot simply present a budget and say: "There you are, you can get on with it now."

JOHN TREHY: "The actual budgeting/costing process goes on all the way through the film, particularly on a film like this where resources are scarce and David and Steve are trying to ensure that every single penny is used as efficiently as possible. Questions come up such as "would it be cheaper to do that here or there?" or circumstances change, or we do things in different places or even in different ways ..."

STEVE NORRIS : "From a business point of view, everything is costed in as much detail as is possible. The budget is a 70/80 page detailed document dealing specifically with a complete approach to the film so from the day we start the picture, we know absolutely what the film will cost if we make it exactly as planned. One of the skills of the producer is to understand where moving away from the chosen plans is important from a creative point of view and understanding exactly what the financial implications will be. The costs are constantly reanalysed. We must know, instantaneously, the effects to our budget of decisions being made every day. For example, if we lost a day of our schedule due to illness or bad weather, we will know what the daily costs of our moving unit are, our labour, hotel, living expenses, equipment hire, everything else that will be affected. We can deal with any complications or problems quickly. Although it sounds as if the creative side is always suffering from financial constraints, there is often a hidden benefit for the script itself when compromises need to be made. And there are sometimes positive problems when the filming starts, problems which can actually save money, but only because detailed planning has gone on beforehand."

IDEAS INTO MONEY

The funders have given their agreement to make the film, but it will obviously have to be within a certain budget.

STEVE NORRIS: "Our final budget was close to \$7 million. We use dollars as the international currency of film production, although the film was primarily funded in Irish Pounds, Sterling and French francs. We scheduled the film out to eight weeks of shooting and then discussed whether it was possible to actually do the filming in that time. In fact it was. It involved the writer going back and reducing parts of the script but I think the script improved because of it. There was an ongoing consensus that the film should not be longer than ninety to ninety five minutes in length. We tinted the script and it was clearly longer than it should be and if we could reduce it we would save shooting scenes which would ultimately end up on the cutting room floor and not be in the film. Thus, a certain amount of money was available, but it was necessary to ensure that the most was made of this money."

Whilst budgets were set for casting, construction and travel, there were other ways in which the money could be carefully spent.

David Puttnam explains his concept of '300 hours':

DAVID PUTTNAM: "You look at a film and say 'Right, we've got 300 hours to make this'. Basically, that's the amount of time you have on the film once you take away the bits and pieces. You give the director 300 hours to do his film. It's a finite sum, .. You've got an eight week shoot with, say six days shooting each week, ten hours on the set per day.

You start with 480 hours but if you travel an hour a day that comes down to 300 hours. You need to maximise the amount of time that you've got available. So, if you choose locations that are two hours away from your location base then you are losing time when you could be shooting. I was quite cruel really and said that in order to get the most out of our budget, all locations had to be within a 15 mile radius of the

base. Beyond that we were eating into time and money and we wouldn't get the film that we wanted. If you choose locations that are nearby then it's only half an hour each way and then you've got fifty extra hours for the movie and extra time to be working on shooting.

That is the nitty gritty of it when you're working with a finite sum of money. It's about trying to find out what the priorities are and addressing those and realising that in other areas you simply can't address them in the way that you'd like; there's no such thing as a situation where you can afford everything and you have to decide where your priorities lie."

Thus, as Steve Norris earlier pointed out, there was a balance between what was required artistically and what could be afforded. Whilst Puttnam held the director to local locations in most instances, he did allow the whole team to shoot one section of the film in a valley which was beyond his agreed area. A compromise was made when the director agreed to give up another location, a schoolhouse, which was also beyond the agreed area.

FROM SCRIPT TO PLANNING

The script is accepted, the film scheduled, the budget allocated. Before a single frame of film passes through the camera, however, months of research and preparation have to take place in order to ensure that the eventual filming process runs as smoothly as possible.

TASK

Look at the still above. Write down a list of all of the things that would have had to be planned and prepared in order for this scene to be shot. You probably have written a long list of preparations that were needed for this scene. But did you think of the following:

- Where did the actors stay while they were filming on location?
- How was the location found?
- Everybody was on location all day. How did they have lunch?
- How did they get to the location?
- All of the actors and actresses in this scene had to be on location on the same day. How was it known that they would all be available to film on that day? The answers to these questions and many more like them form the nuts and bolts of film making. Can you now look back at your list of Preparation and planning to think of additional items to go on it?

The next section of the study guide will examine the ways in which the members of the production team prepared for shooting to take place and how these plans were put into operation.

LOCATIONS

Because the film was set in Ireland, the first thing to do was to decide where the filming would take place. It was not, however, simply a question of looking for the right locations.

JOHN TREHY: "We went over and had a look at West Cork and looked at it from the point of view; 'What would the problems be in making a film in this area?' You must have a certain infrastructure in place to contemplate some of the things we did. In the first week we found an office centre we could use as our main base, we found three different factories that we could use for shooting and storage, we found a works/top for our construction crew and also in the same building we found a warehouse where we could build our sets."

STEVE NORRIS: "When you see the film, you'll realise that the film deals with the relationship between two towns divided by a river estuary and joined by a small bridge. This is a fundamental part of the story. Quite clearly the first thing we had to find was a river estuary with a town either side and a bridge in between. We certainly didn't have the money to actually build the bridge. Later when the investors had expressed their willingness to be involved and John Roberts became involved as director, we went back and looked at it from a purely logistical point of view. We had to shoot in peak summer in a tourist resort, we needed at least one hundred hotel rooms, and in a small town this could have presented quite severe problems. We had to ensure we could have weather cover. The rainfall in July and August in the south of Ireland is fairly unpredictable and we had to have the option to work indoors if necessary."



Having found the general area where the film would be made, it was then up to Liz Kerry, the location manager, to flesh out the general ideas about where, when and how the film could be shot.

LIZ KERRY: "I start by talking to the director and reading the script, breaking it down into different locations and then going out and looking, with a camera, on my own. A lot of driving is involved, photographing the locations with the script in mind and then bringing them back and showing them to the producer, the production designer and the director. I'd then make a short list and take the director and producer to look at the locations, in order that decisions could be made. Later, we made a technical 'recce' which involved the cameraman, the electricians and the more technical members of the crew to look at the details of how to make the actual shooting on location work.

Then there is the detailed nitty gritty of actually filming, or preparing for when we film. We require a large number of vehicles ferrying to and from the location and we need parking space - for some very heavy vehicles at the location. So we need to look at getting separate per-missions for these vehicles to be parked. Access to the location is particularly relevant in Ireland because the ground in Ireland is often very soft, and so in some areas, to allow heavy vehicles to get in, you have to build roads effectively, sometimes even make an artificial roadway so that vehicles can get in and then park up. So it's a transport orientated function.

When we're actually filming it's making quite sure that those people who own the location are happy with what's happening. Any last minute decisions that the director might make about the use of the location is cleared with the person who owns it. The location manager acts as a sort of ambassador between the location and the film unit. We hired marquees for the catering and had two of these on the go at once - one where we were filming and the other already set up on the next location. Don't forget, all those people sitting out on a hillside need feeding all day. There was one particular location which needed special planning as it was so far from any town or village. We were required for script purposes to find a location for 'War of the Buttons' where the two boys escape up a mountainside, so I already knew when I read the script that we were going to be in for something fairly difficult. When looking for the location I wanted something that would be a dramatic environment, but also one we could reach without too much difficulty. I spent a lot of time trying to find the right location - to find a high cliff coming out of a high valley, not running down to the sea, which was not easy to find.

I eventually found a place at the end of a single track road very similar to a location I'd used for another film in Scotland, so I knew we could make it work. It's really about maximising everything that's already there. We built a rope walkway, and with the help of a mountaineering team, I really thoroughly investigated everything we could possibly use that was on the location."

TASK:

Look back at Liz Kerry's description of her job. How would you break down the different areas of work that she has to carry out? In what ways does her work affect the final 'look' of the film? Which other departments of the film crew do you think she would have to work with?

DESIGNING WAR OF THE BUTTONS

When we watch a film we get hound up in the story, providing that the story looks 'real' on the screen. By this we mean that the buildings, the costumes, all of the props that we see in the locations fit together everything that appears on the screen should naturally appear to fit in with all of the surroundings. Jim Clay, the designer for 'War of the Buttons' explains his job on the film

JIM CLAY: "My task is to conceive and realise the overall look of the picture. Not alone, obviously, but together with the director, and eventually the cinematographer and the whole creative team. That includes my own art department team, comprising an art director, assistant art director, draughtsmen, set decorators and a location manager with whom I work closely on finding and changing locations to our needs. Also the costume designer. You want to co-ordinate a style, or a look using essential colours and textures. The starting point is with the script and a lot of discussion with the director. Sometimes with the writer, but essentially with the director and with the producer. We break the script down into the various scenes and then decide whether they would be best done as a built set, as a found location or as a location to which we add our own features .



When I read 'War of the Buttons' I felt that it was a magical story. It's about children growing up in a wonderful area, and although it's contemporary, it's in a kind of era and a community which much of the world wishes could still exist and sadly doesn't, although it does in West Cork. So the job was to match reality to the magic. John Roberts didn't want to make it schmaltzy and sickly and I didn't want to make it 'picture postcard' Ireland, but we needed to give magic to the reality, so it meant finding locations which we could enhance but which wouldn't stand out of the landscape. I think the biggest part of my job is that if I've succeeded, people don't realise that I've ever been there

until they go and look for that village and find that it doesn't quite exist."

In this particular case, we wanted heightened realism. I think a good example of this is probably the boathouse, which didn't exist in the script. Colin Wetland had written that some of the action should take place in a ruined cottage. Now, we also had a ruined school, a ruined monument and a ruined castle and we wanted to break the mould. John had said that he wanted to make the two communities, the two villages, give a feeling that they really existed and so we took one community which was essentially farm tug and another community which was mainly fishing, and had this idea that as we were so closely related to the sea, we should make one of our locations a boathouse. It would be a derelict place which the children could take over and make into their headquarters.

Once we've read the script and I have ideas for the locations, I'll then either sketch each location or model it. I often work in 3 dimensions straight away, to model form, and the director can then see exactly what he's getting. We agree on the set at initial sketch stage, then it will be translated into a working drawing which the carpenters and painters can make, My art director takes my sketches and does full drawings to



scale which are then costed. We then have to agree that we can build it for the money we've got, the drawings go to the workshop, and the construction crew start to build it. Often building is done first in a workshop, preassembling walls and making specialist joinery such as windows and doors before being moved to the location for assembly."

Design for the tea rooms

TASK

You know that the film is going to be set in two villages in Southern Ireland and that these two villages are going to be joined by a bridge. You will need to find illustrations, photos which will guide your art department into making the villages look Irish'. Try to find as many pictures as possible of shops, villages and also the landscape in order to give the art and costume departments a good enough brief. Similarly, think carefully about what people would be wearing. Look back at what Colin Welland said about when the film was set. How would you dress the characters? You have two groups of boys, two gangs. How could you dress the children so that you instantly knew which group each child came from?

CHARACTERS TO ACTORS

Whilst locations are found and sets designed, it is up to the casting director to find suitable people to play the various roles. Ros Hubbard, the casting director of *War of the Buttons* was set the task of finding a large number of children to play the roles of the two gangs. She explains how she went about her task:

ROS HUBBARD: "We contacted every acting school, almost every school, it 'a a' seems, in Ireland. What we were looking for were not just children who could act but who also looked right for the various parts. I'd read the script and felt I knew what we were looking for. I'd discussed the roles with the director and we went out looking at children across the country. We only had a very short time to do this so it was quite a back-breaking task."

The casting director can have an influence on the way a film finally looks. Colin Welland mentioned that the casting meant he had to rewrite scenes.

COLIN WELLAND : "When you saw the children's faces you realised that certain scenes wouldn't work, that a particular child didn't look innocent or knowing enough to say the words that I'd written."

THE DIRECTOR PREPARES

The director will already have read the script thoroughly and worked out how he or she sees the film being shot. However, it is not simply a question of turning upon the day and hoping that everything will go well.

GETTING READY TO SHOOT • THE STORY BOARD

As we have been saying, one of the key aspects in filming is planning and preparation. Whilst the design department is drawing up its plans for how the backgrounds to the film will look, the director is already planning how the film itself might look. In order to do this he or she will often construct a storyboard, a series of drawings which reflect the way in which a particular sequence is to be filmed.

John Roberts, the director of the film, explains how and why he storyboards certain scenes:

JOHN ROBERTS : 'Most of the time the preparation gets done. Without it, you wouldn't know what you were doing. We prepare storyboards or a shot list. When time is important, you need to know these things, what sort of a shot you want, how one shot will follow another, so that you know how a day's shooting will go on one particular scene. For example, we storyboarded some of the main battle sequences. This was useful because then battle was filmed on different days and in different places. Because it was so complicated we storyboarded the main action. It was filmed over 3 to 4 days, with three cameras running. On the battle I tried to find the main thread to keep the story alive. The characters, what's going on between them, the audience must be able to follow that. It's 'faces' that are valuable. With the battle background with forty kids throwing flour bombs, it's mayhem, so you need to know exactly what you want in the foreground.'

In certain scenes, the director will not carefully prepare shot by shot but will, instead, go through the scene with the actors and then decide how to shoot it. The scene is then 'blocked', (decisions are made on the day as to how the actors will move and deliver their lines and how they will be 'shot' by the camera person).

JOHN ROBERTS: "You weigh a scene along with the camera operator and lighting cameraman - you manoeuvre and choreograph the scene with the actors... there's no time to rehearse the scene beforehand so what you finally get seems natural. I block a scene out then let the actors play it. It may not be what you had in your mind originally but you let them work. Then after the run-through, I block with the camera operator, let's say three close-ups and two wide shots and then shoot. The problem is that it can take an hour to do this, to set up the whole day, and people are sitting saying 'what's happening?' But everyone then knows what is happening for the whole day and knows what we need to achieve."

But how does a director know what type of shot to use?

JOHN ROBERTS: "It's instinctive. You feel you ought to be shooting closer or wider, you almost feel yourself going in there when you're re-writing. You know when you have to get in close with a shoot in order to emphasise what is happening or go out in a shot to establish a scene or a group of characters."

SHOOTING

It is when the actual shooting of the film begins that all of the planning comes into its own. Every day of the shooting period has been planned - what will be shot, who will be required on set, what special arrangements need to be made. The 'one line schedule' details every day of the shoot, which scenes will be shot and how much of the film will be shot in any one day.

As you will see from the example given, the film is not shot in sequence. On the first day of shooting, scenes 1, 59, 78, 71 and 72 were planned to be shot. For each day's shoot, a call sheet is prepared, which details everybody and everything which will be required for that day. Various departments will be responsible for ensuring that everything is in place so that shooting can begin with the right people in the right place. Overall control of the day goes to the production manager who must act as a 'general', organising everything so that each individual department can get on with their job to help the director achieve what he wants during that particular day. At the end of a day's shooting a progress report is prepared, so that a complete up-to-date record is made of the progress of the film.

STEVE NORRIS: "It's not like walking down a straight road. All the time there are changes. And each change will have an effect on the budget and the overall film. All of the time you weigh up possibilities, look for solutions for any problems which might come up. There are questions of weather to bear in mind and the Enigma production team will always try to have bad weather cover ready - shooting indoors when the weather is bad."

EDITING

From the first day of filming the editing process begins. All the material shot each day is sent to the laboratory for developing and then to the editor to assemble, select and start to piece together. (Some may go back to the location first for the director to see how things are looking - these are called the 'rushes' for obvious reasons.)

Because films are not shot in sequence, the editor needs to have a good knowledge of the film script so as s/he is aware of what is required from each scene and sequence shot.

One of the reasons why editing starts so early is that it gives the film crew a chance to reshoot a scene if the editor thinks that there are problems with what has already been done.

The editor of 'War of the Buttons' explains:

DAVID FREEMAN: "The editor of a film does not have that total emotional involvement with the film. He or she can sit and look at what has been shot and say 'No, it doesn't work, it ought to be shot again.' Then it's up to the director and producer to decide whether that is possible. It is not that the editor is hypercritical, just that you are seeing the film from the point of view of the audience. You say; "Well, if I don't think that scene works, or from the material that we have I can't understand what is happening, then neither will the audience'. I always think that the editor is the advanced guard of the audience."

Freeman's first job was to construct the rough cut of the film. This is putting together a copy of the film faithfully following what has been written in the script. Freeman calls this the 'editor's cut'.

Normally, when filming has been completed, the producer, the director and any executives from the financing company will look at the rough cut and decide what changes need to be made, where any problems may lie with the way the story is told, whether there are any scenes which are not working as they should.

Then the editor will sit with the director for 6 to 10 weeks, cutting the film in order to solve any problems, to ensure that the film flows and can be understood and enjoyed by an audience.

DAVID FREEMAN: "We take the rough cut and work out how we can do it better. We might move scenes around, add a shot here, take a shot away there. It is important not to see the editing process as merely cutting things out. There is a word - 'montage' - which I think describes the editing process far better. It suggests that what we are doing is, in fact, constructing something from the materials which we are given."

The rough cut of 'War of the Buttons' was 110 minutes long. Enigma were looking to release a film of approximately 90 minutes to suit the intended audience. So, the story would have to lose as much as 20

minutes of film. As Freeman has said, it was not simply a case of cutting out these 20 minutes, it was a matter of adding as well as losing shots and scenes which would make the film flow, make it coherent for an audience.

DAVID FREEMAN: "You're always thinking of the audience, thinking of how much they need to be shown, whilst at the same time making sure that they are not aware that the film has been edited. In the main battle scene, for example, there are 70 to 80 different cuts from one shot to another. The audience must flow through the battle, seeing it from different perspectives. The main thing is that they get taken along by the film and aren't aware of what you have done in the edit suite."

When a cut of the film has been made which satisfies the director and the producer, it is then sent to the sound editors who will recreate each and every sound in the film, from footsteps to bird song, from a car engine to a bicycle wheel spinning.

DAVID FREEMAN: "To achieve a totally natural sound, everything must be artificial. We need to get the sound balance right so that what is being said can be heard but in the background we can also hear all the other sounds. We might choose to reverse this if we want to keep something back from the audience. Film is like this. A totally artificial recreation to give the sense of reality. But, of course, it isn't reality. It is what we expect from a film."

When David Freeman has finished his job, a taped copy of the final cut is then prepared for the composer. It will be up to him or her to create the music, both for the beginning and end of the film as well as for those short moments in the film where it is felt that action needs to be supported by music.

COMPOSING THE SCORE

In 'War of the Buttons' there are 50 minutes of music, which considering the length of the film (95 minutes), is quite substantial. Rachel Portman, the composer, explains how she goes about composing the score:

RACHEL PORTMAN: "The music that I write has got to be part of the world of the film so I watch the film through again and again until I'm almost living and breathing it. Then I'll meet with the director and editor and we'll spot the film, that is we will decide where music is needed. Because I've come into the film later, I can often bring a new perspective to it and make further suggestions.

Then I go away and start writing. Once I've produced some ideas, things begin to solidify and I'll then start producing the complete score, going round and round looking at ideas again and again. You are writing the main short sequences, to show a change of mood, or to link between lines of dialogue. It might come in linking one scene to another. You are composing to a stop-watch. It can be difficult if the film does not offer much scope for longer sequences of music but 'War of the Buttons' has three battle scenes and then a final piece of heroism which certainly allowed me to get to grips with longer pieces of music.

The music in 'War of the Buttons' is not simply accompanying the action. In many places it is helping to create the mood. The music has to sound as if it came out of Ireland. We didn't want it to sound 'paddy

whacking', but to have an Irish feel, a folk music feel. We were luck to record the music in Dublin with Irish musicians so they certainly had a feel for what we were trying to do.

The composer, therefore, is writing short pieces of mood music which will link in with the overall feel of the film and help guide us to react to the film in a certain way."

With the addition of the music the final print of the film is ready. Months of work have finally been completed and the print is handed over to the distributors. It is now their job to build an audience for the film.

DISTRIBUTION

Even before 'War of the Buttons' was completed, the publicity department of Warner Bros. were thinking about the advertising campaign for the film. It is their task to ensure that the potential audience for the film are aware that the film is coming, are aware of what type of film it is and are encouraged to see it. In many ways their jobs are just as important as the filmmakers'. No matter how excellent a film is, if it is badly sold then no one will be interested in seeing it.

Like any other product which is on offer to the public, a film must be distributed correctly in order to reach the widest potential audience. Although many people might think that the production side of the film industry is the most creative, film distribution is highly specialised and involves the manipulation of many different factors.

WHAT IS A DISTRIBUTOR?

A film distributor can either be a small organisation which specialises in certain types of films, or a multinational corporation with a branch or agent in each major territory of the world. A distributor will hold the 'rights' for a film in any one country. By 'rights' we mean that the distributor has the power to hire copies of a particular film to cinemas, and to publicise the film in that country.

A distributor may acquire the distribution 'rights' to a film in different ways:

- invests a sum of money in the production of a film before any footage is shot, and in return receives distribution rights and/or a percentage of the profits;
- buys a package of 'rights' from the production company or producer when the film has been completed, without making an initial investment;
- the production company responsible for the film is part of a large organisation which also has a distribution 'arm', and films are handed over for distribution once completed without leaving the 'parent' company.

In the case of 'War of the Buttons', because Warner Bros. had invested money in the film, they had the 'rights' to distribute the film as well.

The role of a film distributor is varied, but includes:

- the negotiation of the release of the film in contracted territories;
- providing sufficient copies of the print of the film to meet release schedules;
- arranging shipping of the prints to all territories releasing the film, together with trailers and publicity material
- providing advertising and publicity material
- arranging for any merchandising deals which may arise.

HOW IS A FILM DISTRIBUTED?

Once the final cut of the film has been approved by the director, the producer will arrange a preview for the distribution company. One of the first things that must be done is to check that the film originally bought for distribution has the same elements which initially attracted the distributor to make the deal, and that if any changes have been made to the cast or screenplay, they will not affect the success of the film.

Each distribution company has a schedule of forthcoming films which is prepared months in advance, showing definite and tentative release dates. After seeing the film, the company's top executives will discuss the optimum time for its release, bearing in mind the subject matter of the film. The subject is important because the success of the picture may depend on the time of year it is released.

Why do you think that 'War of the Buttons' is opening in October?

The distributor will show the film to the exhibitor of his choice (i.e. the controller of a cinema chain), and ask him whether he has a suitable cinema/cinemas free at this particular time. For the summer holidays, schedules are booked as early as January/February, and for the Christmas period they are arranged very early in the year, often in the spring.

Usually, a firm release date is set for London's West End and then a release schedule will be decided for the rest of the country. Again, this will depend on the type of film that is to be distributed. For example, a film aimed at the teenage audience (the 16-25 year old audience goes to the cinema most often in this country) might be released simultaneously in London and the 'key cities' (Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, etc).

A film which has a smaller appeal may have a 'staggered' release. It will play in the London area and perhaps another key city to gauge reaction, then other cities will be booked in afterwards, depending upon results obtained.

CREATING THE AUDIENCE

Quite often the advertising campaign of a film can 'make or break' a film's success. The campaign must be targeted at a particular audience and aim to give the audience an 'idea' about the film. It must try to attract a particular audience to a film.

TASK

Look back at the work that you completed at the very start of this study guide on the things that persuaded you to go and see a film. Undoubtedly, within that list were such things as who was the star, what type of film it is, what the story is about.

If you say to a friend "I've seen this great horror film" then they will understand certain things and, should they decide to go and see it, they will have certain expectations of what will happen. They have expectations of the conventions used in this type of film - conventions of story, character, settings. These can be used in an advertising campaign to create posters, trailers, etc. In the chart below list the convention that you would expect to find in the following types of films.

CONVENTIONS/EXPECTATIONS

HORROR

COMEDY

ACTION

WESTERN

CHILDREN'S FILM

When you have seen 'War of the Buttons' try to describe what type of film it is. What genre would it fit into?

When creating a campaign, it is relatively straightforward to get ideas for the campaign if the film fits into a popular genre, or else has big stars in the film.

'War of the Buttons' has no big name stars in it, so what are the selling points of the film? Look back at the work that you carried out at the start of the guide. What were the selling points of the script? Who the audience that the scriptwriter and production company had in mind when they were trying to finance?

THE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

When the publicity team and agency have seen the film, the first step is the drawing up of a publicity budget. The publicity director will have been given by the company's executives the maximum amount of money s/he can spend on publicity and advertising, and it is important for her or him to keep within this amount. Below are some of the possible areas of expense that the distributor could incur.

PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION

1 Campaign: Poster/Front of House Stills, Artwork & Production	5 Trailers
2 West End & London Release	6 Campaign Books/Synopsis: Artwork & Printing
3 Provincial	7 Promotional Items: Marler Haley Displays/Window Stickers/ Giveaways Etc
4 Press Office: Kits/Stills/Special Photography/ Invitations.	8 Outside Agencies, Research, Etc

LAUNCHING EXPENSES

9 West End & London Release (Excluding TV & Radio)	15 Joint schemes with cinemas - promotions etc.
10 TV. Spend	16 Screening and Press Receptions
11 Radio Spend	17 Trade Advertising
12 Continued Advertising & Commitments	18 Eire Campaign
13 Provincial Release	19 Outside Agencies: promotions, etc.
14 Shared Advertising with Exhibitors	20 Cinema Advertising
	21 West End: Front of House Displays

Having constructed the budget the distributor will then design the actual campaign for the film. The key to this will be the poster design.

The poster should instantly say something about the film - possibly its genre, its stars. It should also be eye-catching. Similarly, it must not contain so much detail that it would look too finicky if it were shrunk in size to be used as a newspaper advertisement.

Artwork for a film poster can either be an original painting, colour transparencies which are taken during film production on set by the official stills photographer, or a still from the film itself. The publicity director will choose one or more transparencies which depict a scene/scenes that s/he considers highly relevant to the subject matter of the film.

- Opposite is the artwork for the poster for 'War of the Buttons'. What does the poster tell you about the type of film being advertised? Do you think you have been given enough information to make you want to see the film? What idea about the film is given?



The advertising campaign used in the press will usually utilise the same image as the film poster, unless the poster is very detailed and will not reproduce well in the smaller sizes of advertisements.

TASK After you have seen the film you should try to design your own poster for 'War of the Buttons'.

You should carefully study a number of film posters or advertisements before you start work on your own 'War of the Buttons' poster. Look carefully at the various pieces of information that are included in the poster. Probably you will find the names of the stars, the title, and also a 'byline' - something like a catch-phrase.

Now consider 'War of the Buttons'. Let's look first of all at the title. What does the title 'War of the Buttons' suggest to you? Note down a few ideas.

How could you use these ideas:

- in deciding what to put in your poster?
- in thinking up a 'byline', a catch-phrase for the film?

Your task, having thought through these few questions, is to come up with a final poster design for the film 'War of the Buttons'. You might have your own ideas about what to include and the style of lettering that would be appropriate for the poster.

What you put in the poster is up to you. But remember, it must be eye-catching, give an idea about what the film could be about and must also seek to interest audiences.

BEYOND THE POSTER

Would a film poster alone generally influence you to see a film, or would you also rely on other things, and if so, what?

Write down a list of the ways in which you find out about a film. How does the distribution company try to make you aware of the release of 'War of the Buttons'?

Two obvious examples that you will probably have come up with are trailers and radio advertising.

TRAILERS

Key scenes will be taken from the film and put together with exciting narrative to form a trailer lasting two or three minutes. Where possible, the trailer will be hooked to play at cinemas already showing similar types of film.

RADIO ADVERTISING

As well as press, extensive use is made of radio advertising on the country's commercial radio stations. The publicity director and/or advertising agency will prepare a script for radio commercials which will usually consist of a short excerpt of dialogue from the film with a narrative voice-over detailing the cinema where it is showing and release date.

TASK

After you have seen the film, you should try to complete the following task:

You have to produce a 30 second radio trailer - no less, no more than this time. You will have to create an idea of the film which might fit in with the one you have chosen for your poster.

You will probably need to use voice-over and so you will need to write a script which gives information to the listeners. How are you going to sum up the film, give the audience some idea of what the story is about?

If you can, record your advertisement. You could add background music or sound effects; the choice is up to you. If you cannot actually record it then you could produce a detailed audio script for the advertisement.

The ideas that you came up with for the ways in which you find out about a film could possibly be divided into two areas - those for which the film company has to pay (advertising) and those which come free (publicity/promotions). An example of the latter would be a review on Film 2002 hosted by Jonathan Ross. Can you divide your list up into these two areas?

TRACKING 'WAR OF THE BUTTONS'

How successful were Warner Bros. in creating an awareness of the film? How did they place the film? What audiences do you think they were aiming at?

REVIEWS

From archive sources on the internet, collect as many film reviews as you can about the film. Look very carefully at all of the reviews, from both national and local papers. Do they have anything in common? What do they say about the film? How does each describe the film? What information is given about the film (don't forget there is a difference between information and comment about the film)?

You should also try to find out how 'War of the Buttons' performed at the box office. Was it the critical and financial success when it was released? How did the press treat the film after it opened?



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