The director, the client, his brief and his life

WHAT IS THE NATURE - AND THE IMPLICATIONS - OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLIENT AND THE FILM-MAKER IN THE FIELD OF CORPORATE FILM? AN ENQUIRY - WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO *LOUISIANA STORY* AND *WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING IN 2012?*

Unit 3.1: Final Major Project

TIMOTHY ERIC LANGFORD
MAemca

The Marketing School
London College of Communication
University of the Arts London.
January, 2007.

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Cont.

APPENDICES II

CASE STUDY ONE: London 2012/Hawkshead Television

IMAGINE: PROPOSAL, HAWKSHEAD TELEVISION
22nd June 2004

E-MAIL: MILLER, P: to Vey
'Subject: olympics 1st draft script' , 5th July 2004

DENNY, C, 2006, INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR
recorded 23/10/06 @ 12.00a.m,via telephone, London.

MILLER, P. 2006, INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR
recorded 16/10/06 @18.15, ICA, London

VINCENT, R. 2006, INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR
recorded 28/09/06 @ 17.00, Hawkshead Television, London.

CASE STUDY TWO: Standard Oil (New Jersey)/Robert Flaherty

LEACOCK, R. 2006, INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR
recorded 30/09/06, Paris.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

CD	Creative Director
CORP COMMS	Corporate Communications
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DIY	*do-it-yourself*
DV	Digital Video
EMB	Empire Marketing Board
GPO	General Post Office
IFS	International Film Seminars
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IVCA	International Visual Communications Association
Jersey	Standard Oil (New Jersey)
PR	Public Relations
RJF	Robert Joseph Flaherty
SONJ	Standard Oil (New Jersey)
Standard Oil (N.J.)	Standard Oil (New Jersey)

GLOSSARY

BRIEF
The initial rationale for any creative project provided by THE CLIENT that addresses the aims and objectives of a project. Can be a written document and/or a verbal proposition describing and explaining to the service provider the needs of an organisation/client. Would usually address questions related to: what form, who it's for, why it is required, how it will be used etc. Likely to include client's research or evidence relating to the identified need. Would be expected to make clear the purpose and the audience/target market (normally segmented). Will include information related to budget, timescales, creative and logistical guidelines and some form of measurement of results. This becomes the document by which any response (e.g. proposal/creative solution) will be objectively measured and judged.

BUSINESS TELEVISION
Programmes that are made for business. A term still used within the field of corporate visual communications to describe: a genre, a series of programmes, a channel, webcast or service; related to internal business communications by a commercial organisation. Confusingly, in the 1970s the term was widely used in place of corporate film. The term may be used to separate the purpose and function from that of broadcast television programmes.

CLIENT
The organisation or person(s) who have commissioned the services of a creative service provider or who work for the client organisation. From the film-maker's perspective, it's who you are working for, or the end user of your service. They are therefore the buyer of the services of the film-maker or creative organisation.

COMMISSIONER
The CLIENT. Within this context, the person(s) with the power and authority to "greenlight" a corporate film. Someone who requests tenders from creative service providers in response to their perceived need. Usually, a professional person working in corporate communications or marketing for an organisation. C/ref. BRIEF.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
Describing all internal (to employees etc.) and external communication of information/messages (to stakeholders etc.) by an organisation. Includes PUBLIC RELATIONS and communication of the organisation's corporate image and corporate identity. As a function it is separated from sales/marketing of products or services. Any visual communication (e.g. a corporate film) would be classified as corporate visual communications.

CORPORATE FILM/VIDEO
Current term (increasingly presented as part of Communications Solutions) used to describe a film made, typically but not exclusively, for a non-broadcast purpose and audience (see NON-BROADCAST re: impact of the internet) by a public or private sector organisation. Commissioned within the context of CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS and for marketing purposes. In essence it creatively communicates the CLIENT organisation's messages. There are many types of corporate films but essentially they can be defined in terms of their purpose: sales, marketing, promotion, training, corporate image, internal employee communications and external communications such as public relations. The term emerged during the 1970s (see INDUSTRIAL FILM/BUSINESS TELEVISION and CHAPTER 5 : CONTEXTUALISATION/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: CHAPTER 2: NOMENCLATURE). Corporate films are purposive: designed to influence, persuade, raise awareness about a topic and provide information to an identified target audience.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Was synonymous with advertising but is now a title used to denote the person who manages and oversees the creative direction of projects, programmes, the visual identity of an organisation etc., (e.g. a television channel) throughout the creative industries.

DOCUMENTARY
Dominant non-fiction form in television and film. Term accredited to John Grierson, in response to the film *Moana*, by Robert Flaherty, who made his first, silent "documentary" in 1922 (*Nanook of the North*). Derives from the French *'documentaire'* which was essentially capturing fragments of actuality *(actualité)* from 1894 onwards i.e. films purporting to show real life.

DIRECTOR
Professional designation that probably originated in America in the late 1900s. In essence, responsible for the creative interpretation of an idea, script, or the client's brief and then directing and supervising its execution during the key stages: pre-production, filming, post-production.

DIGITAL VIDEO
Dominant technology for shooting, recording and post-production (replacing analogue video). Translates into small, lightweight, inexpensive cameras (DV) and laptop editing for the lone user.

FILM-MAKER
At its simplest, anyone who makes their own, often personal films (fiction or non-fiction) or is employed by an organisation to make one on their behalf. See DIRECTOR.

INDUSTRIAL FILM
The term (see NOMENCLATURE: CHAPTER 2) was in wide use in Britain and America up until the 1960s to describe what is now called a CORPORATE film. Derived from filming of industry. Shot and projected via 16mm film to an audience within an organisation or in an external setting.

NON-BROADCAST
Traditionally this meant any film or video that is *not* broadcast via a television channel. Therefore shown via video, DVD etc. However, due to the spread of digital media, corporate films are increasingly delivered to an audience via the internal intranet of an organisation, and/or "broadcast" via the internet. The term may become obsolete with the impact of digital technology.

PITCH
To present (often face to face) an idea or a proposal to a potential client in response to their brief.

POST-PRODUCTION
All elements (telecine, editing, design, sound etc) that follow the filming (PRODUCTION). The final finishing process of any film/video.

PRODUCER
In the context of corporate film, the person who has selected the director and manages the budget, the project team, supervises the logistical elements of the production, often manages the client relationship and works closely with the director on issues related to the creative interpretation of the client's messages in the film.

PRODUCTION
Can mean the whole project or traditionally refers to the actual shooting stage of the film.

PRIVATE SECTOR
All commercial businesses or organisations that are not part of the government, or the State sector, and are privately owned.

PUBLIC SECTOR
Government bodies, organisations or institutions who are functioning as part of, or are charged with, carrying out the business of the State.

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Closely linked to CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS. The practice of managing a private or public sector organisation's external messages (and information) with its stakeholders, segmented audiences or the public at large. Increasingly, it is concerned with, or is being replaced by, the practice of Reputation Management i.e. pre-empting or responding to adverse publicity (which is perceived as damaging to the image or interests of an organisation), or working to support and enhance the reputation of the organisation. Public relations practitioners are therefore addressing public opinion, customer opinion or stakeholder perceptions of an organisation. PR may also be linked to Corporate Social Responsibility in terms of contributing to the good standing or reputation of a company in connection with, for example, social and environmental issues.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FILMS
A term used to describe many non-fiction films that appeared in Britain from the 1920s to the 1950s, particularly in relation to government, their film-makers or public relations officers like John Grierson (at the EMB and GPO). Many were shown in the cinema. Forerunners of the modern CORPORATE FILM. (SEE CHAPTER 5: CONTEXTUALISATION/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND).

SPONSOR
In the past, in the context of corporate film, it was the name given to the organisation or even person financing the INDUSTRIAL or PUBLIC RELATIONS film. The term sponsor was in widespread use up until the 1950s and was therefore part of the language of the film-maker, in place of the modern terminology, CLIENT. A sponsor was concerned with the messages of the film, the reputation of the film-maker in question, how it would be seen and what they would achieve by funding the film. The relationship with the sponsor was intrinsic to the work and role of the industrial film-maker of the period, particularly from the 1930s.

TREATMENT
The describing document that expresses the way in which a given subject, messages or set of issues will be creatively presented in a film. Tends to be written by the DIRECTOR (sometimes the PRODUCER or CREATIVE DIRECTOR) so he or she can articulate how a film will look and feel: how it will start, develop and finish *to a third party*. It is the stage before the more detailed script. It may form part of the proposal presented in response to the BRIEF. An 'outline' may form the basis for the more detailed treatment that follows, or the terms may be used interchangeably.

VOX POPS
From the Latin 'vox populi'. Brief expressions of opinions by members of the public or employees. Seemingly, randomly selected and filmed on the street or in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis sets out to address the following question:

WHAT IS THE NATURE – AND THE IMPLICATIONS – OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLIENT AND THE FILM-MAKER IN THE FIELD OF CORPORATE FILM? AN ENQUIRY - WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO *LOUISIANA STORY* AND *WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING IN 2012?*

The question is examined in two ways:

i. WHAT WERE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE FILM WAS PRODUCED?

ii. HOW ARE THE INTERESTS OF THE CLIENT AND THE FILM-MAKER ARTICULATED/EXPRESSED IN THE FILM?

The Question is interrogated through two case studies of corporate films from different eras:

What Will You Be Doing in 2012? was commissioned by London 2012 from Hawkshead Television and directed by Perry Miller in 2004.

Louisiana Story, was made in 1948 for Standard Oil (New Jersey), by the director Robert Flaherty and his company.

Both of these films are located within the field of corporate visual communications and public relations in particular.

Each project has been researched and investigated with the emphasis on finding qualitative evidence that illuminates both the clients and the film-makers' experiences of the relationship. The Methodology section addresses the questions of why and how these were selected, the research methods and the nature of the data that was collected.

These two films offer a snapshot of a relationship that's at the heart of commissioned work. This relationship is of particular interest in terms of what each party needs from the other: Do they, for instance, share the same agendas? Are their respective interests mutually compatible? What kinds of issues might be at stake for each party? Is creative thinking and creative work necessarily compatible with the client's needs and priorities? Given that this is a commercial arrangement, within a marketplace, how does that impact on the relationship and the artefact? And, is it liberating or restrictive for the film-maker?

There is a great deal of documented evidence and biographical work covering The British Documentary Movement and its relationship to its sponsors from the 1930s to the 1940s. A small selection of these studies is discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 4). However, there appears to be little that examines the relationship within the present context of corporate film.

There is one study in the field of American television that throws up some interesting findings. This investigated the relationships between network executives and the key production personnel, working within the same commercial network on prime-time drama,

during the 1970s. It concluded that network drama was *"the outcome of a negotiated struggle"* between all the parties (Cantor 1979, cited Ettema 1982, p.93). Ettema relates the *"negotiation"* to a relationship in which power is shared. One where the *"bargaining games"* between the *"players"*, is determined by the differences between their *"orientations"* or *"stands"* and what each party has at stake: *"where you stand is where you sit"* at the negotiating table (Allison 1971, p.176 cited Ettema 1982, p.94).

The concept of the orientation or viewpoint of the corporate client and the film-maker forms the basis for the hypothesis that follows.

CHAPTER 1

HYPOTHESIS

The commissioner (client) requires "art" that serves the interests of their viewpoint:
The film-maker needs "art" to serve the interests of their own viewpoint.

Evidence of a gap between the client perspective and that of the creative, is provided by a recent advertising survey called *Judging Creative Ideas* (Collister 2006, cited Tylee 2006). This found a disparity of perception between clients and advertising agencies:

97% of clients regard the most important factor in assessing the work is whether it accomplishes its objectives. 45% of agencies *don't* share that view.
13% of agencies or freelancers want their work to be 'radical'. None of the clients agreed.
72% of agencies believe work should be true to the brand. Only 36% of clients thought they truly meant it.

All corporate film begins with a client brief which identifies their need. At the heart of this are the messages that a client wishes the creative practitioner to convey; which, in turn, represent the objectives and aims of their organisation, conforming to its brand identity, values and corporate strategy. The client's view of the creative solution needs to account for the broader organisational strategy.

Creative practitioners may have other allegiances, priorities or a different perspective on the work. These may be informed by professional ways of working and the need for creative expression, allied to their notions of personal/professional identity (Mumford *et al* 2002, p.710). Barsam described Robert Flaherty as *"an artist of a strong and uniquely personal vision…"* (1988, p.11). Film-maker, Paul Rotha, was hired to make films for sponsors, but each had to be *"his film expressing his point of view"* (Kruger 1999, p.24). And Mumford *et al's* survey of studies examining creativity in the workplace concludes that *"creative people evidence a strong orientation towards autonomy"* (cited Greenberg 1992, Oldham and Cummings 1996, 2002, p.710).

Erik Barnouw argues that a propagandist role is involved in film:

> *…in the sense of trying to convey some view of the world, narrow or broad, in a way that will get an audience to share it* (1983, p.313-314).

This can equally apply to both parties in the arrangement. Underlying the relationship may be the question of: Whose viewpoint is it?

CHAPTER 2

NOMENCLATURE

CORPORATE FILM (or video) is located within the field of CORPORATE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS and marketing. It is also bracketed under the term CORPORATE SOLUTIONS by the IVCA (Drew 2006).

Films are commissioned as part of an organisation's INTERNAL or EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS strategy.

CORPORATE FILM

The following names (normally denoting the form) are used for a corporate film:

NAME/FORM	FUNCTION
Promotional Film	sales of products or services to segmented audience
Sales Film	" " "
Marketing Film	" " "
Public Relations Film	persuade/influence/promote interests to stakeholders/public opinion
Corporate Image Film	promoting/expressing corporate identity to internal/external audiences
Business Television	internal communications/external communications; used by a commercial private sector organisation
Recruitment Film	market employment opportunities to external audiences
Training Film	instructional/educational; often internal employee communications/external audiences
Information Film	instructional/educational; raising awareness of an issue or topic. External audiences/internal employee comms.
Motivational Film	engage/inform/persuade/enthuse: internal corp. comms.

Illustration 1 EVOLUTION OF NOMENCLATURE

From the 1890's the term *Actualié* (actuality) subdivided into*Travelogues, Scenics and Educationals* (in America). *Scenics* that depicted scenes of factories and industrial scenes became known as *Industrials*; leading to the term *Industrial Film*. The *Industrial Film* became known as the *Corporate Video* by the 1970s. However, there were also other terms like Public Relations Films, Sponsored Films (1930s) and Promotional Films.

UK 2007 1990s 1970s 1960s 1930s Ist War
Communication Solutions Corporate Video – Industrial Film – (Propaganda Film)
Corporate Film/Video Business Films Public Relations Film
Sponsored Film

1890s 1900s 1910 onwards
Actuality – Travelogues – Scenics – Industrials – Industrial Film
(railway scenics)

USA Present 1920 or before 1900 on 1897
Corporate Film – Industrial Film – Educationals
Advertising Films
Business Film Sponsored Film Institutional Film

(SEE APPENDICES: NOMENCLATURE: *FROM ACTUALITY TO CORPORATE FILM*: UK/USA, FOR MORE DETAILED BACKGROUND INFORMATION)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary aim has been to collect evidence that offers relatively equal emphasis to two viewpoints and experiences: the client, as the commissioner; and the film-maker, as the service provider. So far as the broad literature search was concerned, the author sought out evidence that reflected issues or experiences related to the core relationship. This came from a number of studies and some biographical publications which had examined the relationship within the contexts of television, film-making and corporate film history. Further material was collected, related to the field of corporate communications. But the focus of the research was primarily concerned with the two case studies.

3.1 CASE STUDIES

The central enquiry of the thesis has been investigated through the selection of two case studies, located within the field of corporate visual communications. The choice of two, rather than more, affords the opportunity to examine the question in more detail. Selecting two projects granted the possibility of comparing and contrasting two sets of data. The narrowing of the number also needed to take account of the constraints of the thesis (in terms of word count) and allow for depth rather than breadth. Clearly, then, by choosing to select two case studies, the study acknowledges the fact that this is one narrow slice of the available material that is out there.

<u>Selection Criteria</u>

1. To seek out qualitative evidence that provided a historical perspective between current practice and the past. This offered the potential for evaluating the relationship (between client and creative service provider) over two distinct periods in the evolution of corporate film and corporate communications.
2. By choosing a historical perspective this afforded the possibility of adding to the knowledge base regarding the development of corporate film within the context of film-making in general.
4. The outcome of the relationship – the film – needed to be regarded as a work of merit that had achieved a standard of excellence recognised within the industry.
5. The wide field of visual communications was narrowed by selecting two films that were located within one specific, clearly identified area: public relations.
6. Therefore, the aims and objectives of each project needed to show a clear relationship to the same field.
7. Each project needed to either have sufficient documented data that was readily accessible, or be in a position to be interrogated further by the author.
8. There needed to be the possibility of collecting sufficient, meaningful data that highlighted the nature and implications of the relationship.
9. It would be useful if the two projects shared some similar characteristics.

Two projects which met this criteria were as follows:

What Will You Be Doing in 2012?
Client: London 2012
Producing company: Hawkshead Television
Director: Perry Miller
Completion Date: 2004

Louisiana Story
Standard Oil (New Jersey)
Robert J. Flaherty Productions
Robert Flaherty
1948

What Will You Be Doing in 2012?
This film had been one part of the client's high-profile and successful campaign to secure the Summer Olympics. The practitioners were willing to be interviewed about the project.

Louisiana Story
When it was made, this film was discussed as a watershed in the evolution of corporate film. Its director was a figure of some controversy and the subject of a great many studies.
(Barsam 1988, p.79, Calder-Marshall 1963, p.211)

Shared characteristics
Both films won major awards and were commissioned for reasons specific to the client's need to address public relations objectives. Both were originally intended for external audiences within the public domain. Each film is located within, and informed by, a setting that reflects economic deprivation or some issues of neglect. The two directors both made films that conveyed the client's messages through using young people to drive the presentation. And each mixes drama with documentary to convey the narrative.

3.1.1 *What Will You Be Doing in 2012?*

There was very little published literature available about this project, particularly as it is a very recent film. Therefore the evidence was largely collected through three interviews. This allowed for an examination of the issues through three comparable lenses. The complicating factor in the relationship was the fact that the client commissioned the company who hired a freelance director. This then, enriched the available data because it reflects current industry practice of employing the creative services of both a producing company and a freelance service provider. The director was involved at a very early stage of the project and co-wrote the proposal with the creative director from Hawkshead.

Methodology
1. The final film was viewed and notes were taken by the author about the issues, the style and the messages in the film.
2. The producing company were approached and agreed to assist with the research.
3. The chosen approach was to record interviews with the three key participants involved in the process: Chris Denny (Head of Marketing at London 2012 and the commissioning client), Rob Vincent (Hawkshead Creative Director) and Perry Miller (freelance director). Therefore, the collection of primary data allowed for some triangulation of the evidence.
4. Secondary, contextual evidence was sought from media coverage of the campaign.
5. The creative personnel were each interviewed face-to-face, separately, for more than an hour. The authors approach was to conduct a conversation with a number of set questions and improvised enquiries in response to the answers.
   The key questions were:
   -Why was the film made?
   -What was the brief and who were the audience?
   -How was the film made?
   -What was the creative solution and how was it arrived at?
   -What role did each party play in this process?
   -What apparent constraints affected their capacity to deliver on the brief?

Questions also related to how each perceived the project and the client;
some focused on the key stages and the client's intervention; there were also questions enquiring about the relationship between the director and the creative director.

In the case of the director, discussions were held about his views on corporate film, on working for clients in the industry and his views on the creative process.

6. Because he was unable to meet, the client was interviewed for approximately 35 minutes over the telephone. The interview was recorded with his knowledge. Similar questions were put concerning why the film was commissioned and how it fitted with the organisation's strategy. Questions were put to him in respect of:
   - The creative solution and the creative process.
   - His views of creative people and the wider context of corporate film.
   - He was asked about how the film was used and whether it fulfilled the desired aims.
7. The recordings were later transcribed (see Appendices).
8. There was little material available to evaluate the impact of the film as the client had no data to add to the information recorded in the interview.
9. The Proposal and a few e-mails between the director and Hawkshead were made available to the author (see Appendices).

Variables, margin of error

A. The interviews were conducted two years after the film was made. Some recollections of events were hazy. However, on comparing the responses there was consistency in their memory of key turning points or milestones within the project. Interviewing the client over the telephone limited dialogue and interpreting non-verbal responses.
B. Gathering data after the event, rather than observed data of the actual process, clearly limits the richness of the material. Nuances in the relationships and a full comprehension of why decisions were taken at a given moment, are confined to how the participants remember and rationalise them, well after the event.
C. The author relied on the help of the production company in terms of facilitating the initial interviews. No attempts, to the author's knowledge, were made to influence the interviewees. Corroboration relied on the three participants.

3.1.2 *Louisiana Story*

Methodology

1. The film was studied and notes taken assessing the themes, messages, and observations about the director's style and choice of scenes.
2. The literature was assessed in terms of what kinds of evidence, recurring issues and patterns emerged with particular regard to:
   - Why the film was made.
   - How it was made.
   - The terms of the contract between the two parties,
   - The brief and what messages the film was intended to convey.
   - What creative solution was chosen and why?
   - The effectiveness of the film from the director's perspective and the client's.
   - The director's experience of making the film and the client's experience, with particular regard to how they viewed each other.
3. After a search of the literature, the focus moved to collecting primary evidence. This came from two sources:

a. The Columbia University collection of The Flaherty Papers (1966) pertaining to the film. This contained memoranda, letters, contracts, storylines and notes; the client's internal assessments of the effectiveness of the film, and a copious amount of publicity materials and articles published between 1948 to 1949.

b. The last surviving member of the crew who was close to the director is Richard Leacock, the cinematographer on the movie. Leacock was interviewed at length about his recollections of the experience. This was recorded and transcribed (see Appendices).

c. Correspondence was conducted with Jack Coogan of The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Centre at The Claremont School of Theology in America: jack.coogan@cgu.edu. He knew the film-maker and was able to confirm certain information about the project.

4. The client's "story" was also sought from the literature about Standard Oil. There are two major sources for this (see Literature Review) and some additional material related to the oil industry in the 1940s.

Variables and margins of error

A. The authorship of some of the correspondence within The Flaherty Papers is occasionally unclear. There are letters written to the director but no evidence of replies.

B. Richard Leacock has recently been ill and his memory of events (of very many years ago) was incomplete. However, the key elements of his answers can be compared to two published articles he wrote in the 1990s.
These corroborate the answers he gave the author:

On Working With Robert and Frances Flaherty - Richard Leacock -1990
http://www.afana.org/leacockessays

Notes on reading: Filming Robert Flaherty's Louisiana Story; The Helen van Dongen Diary – Richard Leacock December 10th 2000 - 1998, The Museum of Modern Art, New York – http://www.richardleacock.com/index.html

C. The balance of this study may be compromised by the profundity of material that is available about the film and its director compared to that of the client. However, the case study has sought to balance this out through the inclusion of background evidence collected from the Standard Oil literature.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 The relationship of the creative practitioner to production

James Ettema (1982) has investigated the interrelated matrix in which television production is carried out. This reflects a recurring theme in the recent literature: positioning the individual practitioner's work within the contexts of production routines and organisational conflict. Ettema, together with Whitney, in the Introduction to *Individuals in Mass Media Organisations: Creativity and Constraint* (1982), starts from the position that professional autonomy and creative freedom is the prevailing issue for practitioners within organisations (1982, p.8-9). Ettema found that the messages, or viewpoints, in the realm of public television production, are the result of compromises, "negotiated" between the different parties involved in the process (1982, p.91). But the Introduction also finds that organisational politics can energise the creative output of the individual.

Creative identity and autonomy is a theme taken up in *Leading Creative People* (Mumford *et al* 2002), in its review of the many empirically based studies into the performance of creativity within organisations. What is of interest to the thesis is their summary of the relationship between creative work and leadership. The authors challenge the belief of some studies which find that creative people require visionary leadership. Imposing an external vision *"seems if anything, to inhibit performance…"* according to Jung and others (2001, cited Mumford *et al* 2002, p.738). Leadership, they argue, is about striking the right balance of controls: neither too loose nor too tight (2002, p.724). Creative people need a *"professionally meaningful mission"* which is about defining problems *"in terms of organisational needs and goals"* (2002, p.714). What follows is about how creative ideas are integrated with the needs of an organisation. This, of course, is directly attributable to what a corporate client is seeking to achieve in the form of a brief.

Other recent surveys by Patrick Collister (2006), examining the relationship between advertising agencies and their clients, found glaring differences between how each party perceived the other. What mattered to the client was whether the agency work met their objectives – which reflects Mumford's survey of relating creativity to organisational needs – whereas the work for the agencies was assessed by different criteria related to creative expression.

4.2 The relationship of the film-maker and the client in corporate film

A key source is Erik Barnouw's *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (1983), the only comprehensive study that locates corporate film in the narrative of cinematic history. He recognises the role of the corporate sponsor as intrinsic to the evolution of non-fiction film, citing documentary film as the *"…most prolific sub-genre* (of the)…*promotion documentary"* (1983, p.309). However, he views the industrial sponsor as an intrusive presence within documentary film, warning that he is *'concerned with promotion of sales, policies, institutions, views'* (1983, p.212). Yet he also acknowledges that the relationship has driven the development of the form. Ian Aitken's study of non-fiction film supports Barnouw's thesis, perceiving the developing commercial (private) sector, from the 1930s onwards, as one where "*film-making had to conform to the agendas of the sponsors"* (1998, p.23).

The agenda of the corporate film-maker in the 1930s, can be found in the writings of corporate film-maker Paul Rotha and a biographical analysis of him by Robert Krugers (1999). Rotha, working in the private sector, sought out the support of the public relations "man" who possessed an enlightened outlook (1973, p.143). He advised that, *"a film-maker must establish a good working relationship with his sponsor"* (1973, p.267) but Kruger adds the caveat *"He* (Rotha) *had to be in charge. It was his film expressing his point of view…"* (1999, p.24). The GPO, as a client, says Rotha, enabled experimental animator Norman McLaren, *"… to explore his ideas…"* (1973, p.137).

Historical analysis of the early development of corporate film in Britain and America can be found in Brown and Anthony's *A Victorian Film Enterprise* (1999), Joseph Corn's *Selling Technology: Advertising Films and the American Corporation 1900-1920* (1981), and William Bird's study, *Enterprise and Meaning: Sponsored Film, 1939-49* (1989). The broad themes establish the commercial nature of the relationship: film-makers, as entrepreneurs, employed the language of business to sell the medium as a persuasive tool for sales and image enhancement by publicising a company's manufacturing process.

The International Visual Communications Association has an archive of articles from the 1960s to the present. The modern, specialist, trade literature effectively re-positions the relationship as that of a partnership/alliance that recognises the needs of the client (replacing the older notions of sponsor). For example, in the nineties, a leading IVCA member writes in *Televisual* magazine that clients *"now demand…a developed understanding of their business"* from corporate producers (Appleton 1993).
The merging of the previous trade organisations in the 1980s - representing the service provider - into the IVCA, incorporated the interests of both seller and buyer. This appears to presage a symbolic shift in the relationship. For example, Chief Executive Wayne Drew gives voice to the clients' concerns, *"The challenges facing those who commission… services are many: reputation management, improving staff morale..."* (Drew 2006).
A recent industry panel at an IVCA seminar saw the relationship as key: *"it's about the chemistry…the ability of the producer to understand*…(the client)*"* and to recognise that *"clients buy people"* (Langford 2005, *Corporate Overview*, Item 4d/e p.1, in Appendices).

The broad thrust of this literature review raises some of the following issues:

- Reconciling creative expression with the demands of the marketplace.
- The need for autonomy (evidenced by empirical studies) versus the *imposition of a creative vision* by the client.
- The organisation (client) underwriting individual creative expression versus their organisational interests in employing creativity to express their messages, values and aligning the work with the corporate vision.
- Reciprocity in the relationship (sometimes paradoxical in Barnouw's view).
- The personal/professional agendas of film-makers versus the agenda of the client.
- The notion of an *intrusive presence* (Aitken/Barnouw) versus partnership (enshrined in contemporary practice advocated by the IVCA).

4.3 Corporate Communications

Both of the case studies are positioned within the field of public relations. Therefore the literature review has highlighted its practice within corporate communications.

The literature on corporate communications, links its development to public relations. A review by Balmers (1998, cited Bennett and Kottasz 2000, p.225) outlines the evolution from the 1950s when PR focused on corporate image, to the 1970 and 1980s when it gave way to corporate identity and corporate communications; and the 1990s with the emergence of corporate brand management and "thence reputation".

Ironically, the literature draws attention to the "reputation" of public relations itself. As the title suggests, *Contradictions in Reputation Management* (Campbell *et al* 2006), argues that public relations is intimately involved in issues of trust, yet there is *"an exhaustion of trust in organisations…"* (2006, p.192). The academic work of Gruning and Hunt (1984) is interpreted by the authors as an attempt to re-position PR because of its perceived *"propagandist connotations"* (2006, p.192).

However, Bishop in *Theory and Practice* (2006), argues that Gruning and Hunt's work is a significant enhancement in the function of PR. It represents a radical shift, from an older, inappropriate one-way (monologue) model of communication, to a *"two-way symmetrical model"* that recognises and allows for the response of the receiver. It therefore fits the modern conception of a dialogue between organisations and their constituencies (2006, p.215).

Public relations began in the service of business in America, according to Ihator in *Corporate Communication Reflections* (2004). His historical analysis discusses the growth of PR and its role in selling *"capitalism to the American people"* (2004, p.247), driven by the needs of business leaders who were worried about pre-war public and government hostility to the role of the corporation in society.

As a practice, PR has devolved into a tool for managing corporate reputation. This is surveyed by the work of Murray and White (2005), who suggest that corporate reputation is now *"perhaps the pre-eminent business asset"* (2005, p.348). The UK Institute of Public Relations defines PR as *"about reputation"* (Bennett and kottasz 2000, p.225) which reflects the rise of both Corporate Social Responsibility and the valuation of intangible assets (the name and what it signifies) as a business commodity i.e. reputation. CSR can be seen as a response to a changing business environment, and evidence of the *"two-way symmetrical model"* advocated by Bishop (2006, p.215).

4.4 Robert Flaherty and *Louisiana Story*

There were, prior to 1980, at least 350 published texts on the life and films of Robert Flaherty according to William T Murphy's Preface (1978, x). Clearly this indicates his significance as a seminal figure in the documentary genre. Since then, any number of websites and articles have been added, such as Dean Williams (2002) and Murphy (2006), interpreting the film from a modern perspective. Some, such as the publication of Richard Leacock's recollections and critiques via two websites (1990 and 1998), have offered contrasting views regarding *Louisiana Story* and its director.

An evaluation of the key literature that contributed to the thesis, is presented in the Appendices (see *Robert Flaherty and Louisiana Story: An overview of the sources*).

The first-hand accounts by his collaborators Frances Flaherty (1960), his editor Helen van Dongen and Eva Orbanz's research (Orbanz 1998) and cinematographer, Richard Leacock (1990, 2000) - based on notes, diaries and letters – all offer useful comments by those who were close to the film and had dealings with Standard Oil. His two early biographers Calder-Marshall (1963) and Griffith (1953) briefly discuss the relationship.

A narrative theme emerges from the work of Barsam (1988) and his study of non-fiction film (1992), Barnouw (1983), and Rotha (1983), together with his editor Jay Ruby, about the director's contentious relationships with collaborators and clients. In seeking to retain his autonomy he sought funding from private, government and industrial sponsors, yet he is presented as someone wholly unsuited to the demands of this relationship. Barsam (1988, p.56) reflects that his working methods were at odds with the requirements of sponsors, e.g. the need for a script and accounting records. While Rotha said *"It is certain that at no time did Flaherty understand, or want to understand, the theories of sponsorship, propaganda…"* (1983, p.286).

The primary source for the production of the film and clues to the client relationship is the *Flaherty Papers* archive held by Columbia University (1966), containing contracts, storylines and memoranda etc. However, this also highlights one of three specific issues relating to the client's story that is evident in much of this literature:

1. The Flaherty Papers and the Flaherty family (Robert, Frances and their son) are the main source of information about Standard Oil (N.J.) for the above literature. The client's role in the project tends to be evidenced from:
a/ The SONJ press release quoting Robert Flaherty (Rotha 1983, p. 342-343).
b/ Versions of Frances Flaherty's explanation (1960, p.34-35).
c/ Anecdotal comments from van Dongen's diaries.

2. The gap in this literature – from the perspective of the thesis' central enquiry – is the client's needs and role in the relationship.

4.5 Standard Oil (New Jersey)

Standard Oil's files, pertaining to the film, are archived in the *Flaherty Papers* (1966). They offer evidence of a coordinated corporate strategy that is consistent with the findings in the literature about Standard Oil (N.J.). In addition, there are several commentaries of the period, such as *Fortune* and *Tide* magazine, which highlight the relationship of the film-maker and the film to the company's public relations strategy.

The literature on Standard Oil (N.J.) and the oil industry illuminates the issues facing the company during and before the forties. The evidence is primarily to be found in Larson *et al's New Horizons 1927-1950: History of Standard Oil Company (New Jersey)* and Plattner (1983). Their historical data and analysis is based on internal company documents and the views of the personnel who commissioned the film, such as George Freyermuth.

Standard Oil's story is contextualised by the narrative of Olien and Olien (2000) in their revisionist view of the oil industry. Further anecdotal, eyewitness evidence comes from the OCS Oral History Project, University of Louisiana (2003). The evolution of the many brands is surveyed by Droz (2006) in *en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Oil* .

4.6 London 2012

Sources examined were archived websites which featured press and media articles. All provide evidence of the background, the broader issues encountered and the challenges that were faced prior to its successful conclusion. Despite the limitations of these and the consideration of bias – the client's own website, *The Guardian* and *Evening Standard* – this literature offers some insight and information relating to the client's strategy, the role and views of the press, public opposition and support, and the IOC's perception of the bid.

http://www.guardian.co.uk *Guardian Newspapers*
http://www.nolondon2012.org Protest site *Say No To London* (but now defunct)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_2012_Olympic_bid Background information
http://www.london2012.com Client site
http://www.thisislondon.co.uk *Evening Standard*
http://perplexcitywiki.com/wiki/Tales_From_Earth:The_London_2012_Olympic_Bid
: archives the Olympic Committee process and assessments of the competing bids

Imagine: the proposal from Hawkshead Television and Perry Miller for London 2012: 22nd June 2004. (see Appendices).

CHAPTER 5

CONTEXTUALISATION/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter has two aims:

1. To offer evidence of the historical evolution of corporate film. A more thorough illustration of this is provided in the Appendices (See *Illustration 4: Corporate Film Dateline*).
2. To, briefly, show some of the underlying factors that have informed the Relationship during the course of that history.

In 1894, the entrepreneur Louis Lumière made the first European film, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory Gates*. This simple, short, actuality film was first shown at a Parisian industrial convention in 1895, some nine months before it was screened to a paying public. The film was promoting the Lumière Brothers Cinématograph, and the company, to a target market of French industrialists. It was, to all intents and purposes, as Eric Barnouw (1983, p.7/p.29) argues, an *"industrial film"* (depicting scenes of industry).

The emergence of the industrial film – for sales, promotion, public relations – is woven into the very fabric of the wider film industry itself. In 1915, the same year as *Birth of a Nation*, the Essaney Fim Company of Chicago was making a sales film: *The Home Electrical* for General Electric (Corn 1981, p.52). Industrial Films (a term common place by 1920 – Corn 1981,p.57) had emerged in Britain as a genre from the early scenics. The success of *Phantom Rides* in 1900 – scenes of the landscape shot from a train – was viewed as both entertainment (by the audience) and as a means of selling tickets by the railway industry (Brown and Anthony 1999, p.53).

An early form of the relationship was established by the Lumière Brothers' targeted strategy of seeking out Royal patronage by training a team of Cinématograph publicists (film-makers like Felix Mésguich, who made the first advertising films in 1897 for Dewars Whisky and 1898 for Ripolin Paints) in order to gain market share for the company's patented camera/projector technology. This form of sponsorship served both parties' promotional interests but, says Barnouw, the film-makers paid a price as *"agents of imperial relations"* (1983, p.22).

By the early 1900s – in a clear separation of service provider and commissioner – governments and private industry were commissioning moving pictures from the film industry in Britain and America. In 1901, British Biograph, a producer of fiction, had established a specialist department to make promotional films aimed at the businessman. Their brochure, *Picturing Ideas,* listed the attractions of film as a sales medium linked to corporate image, *"How many customers have any idea of your works, your plant…?"* (Brown and Anthony 1999, p.318-320). "Educationals" in America became the means by which private business could circumvent controls and restrictions on advertising, within the commercial cinema. These sponsored films, offered "educational insights", to the public, of industrial processes and manufacture. Offered free to the cinema owners, *How Henry Ford Makes One Thousand Cars A Day*, in 1914, was produced as a result of the Chairman's relationship with entrepreneur Thomas Edison (marketing the Kinetograph). It educated the public about the "miracles" of the process; and promoted the firm, its name and products to a market it came to dominate (Corn 1981, p.56).

The rise of the non-fiction documentary form is inextricably linked with the growth of corporate film. In 1922, Robert Flaherty completed *Nanook of the North,* the first documentary to gain an international audience. This was financed by a fur trading company, Revillon Frères. For the company (their name was on the opening title) it was an opportunity to raise their profile in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company (Barsam 1988, p.16). For the film-maker, the support of his sponsor enabled him to establish his reputation as an *auteur*; leading eventually, to his hiring by Standard Oil.

An illustration of the conflicting outlooks of the creative/commissioner relationship is contained in the 1929 film *Drifters.* This early form of public relations film was commissioned by the Empire Marketing Board. The EMB, Paul Rotha (1973, p.25) explains, was expecting a film *"about herrings"* but the director, John Grierson, made *"a poetic montage documentary"* (Aitken 1998, p.53). Despite the client insisting on the removal of scenes, Grierson secretly re-inserted them later. The artistic success of this film established Grierson's reputation which, in turn, empowered his negotiating position with his employer and, paradoxically, brought a certain prestige to the client. When former, EMB film-maker Basil Wright was asked about his views regarding the aims of the organisation, he replied, *"I couldn't give a fuck about the EMB. I wanted to make films…"* (Wright 1987 cited Aitken 1998, p. 245).

The creative function of the film-maker, in relation to the needs of corporate communications, changes as its practice evolves: from the 1950s when public relations focussed on corporate image; to the 1970s and 1980s when it gave way to corporate identity and corporate communications; and the 1990s, with the emergence of corporate brand management and reputation management (Balmers 1998, cited Bennett and Kottasz 2000, p.225).

There appears to be a clear narrative and purposive shift in the 1930s-1940s, an explicit move to tell stories and to personalise them, closely linked to the emergence of public relations. This is driven, in the UK, by John Grierson's "Documentary Movement", hand-in-hand with client's/commissioners such as public relations specialist Jack Beddington of BP and Shell-Mex, who believed in providing "information" rather than the cruder "publicity" (Kruger 1999, p.24). In the USA there is a strategic repositioning – away from product and services sales – to the notion of corporate image (known there as *"institutional advertising").* This occurs as business comes under increasing attack as a result of the effects of the Depression and the popularity of Roosevelt's New Deal. Business was galvanised into telling its story to the American people*.* This was translated, by both the film-maker and client, into humanising business (Bird 1989, p.24). Bird and others argue that American commerce began to see the need for public relations and dramatic expression (through the visual media and radio) as a means to *"re-establish a political climate conducive to the autonomous expansion of corporate enterprise"* (1989, p.25, supported by Ihator 2004, p.247).

In the modern era, the concept of emotive visual communications, finds support from both the client – *"a powerful, emotive…medium"* (Triefus 1993, cited Purdon 1993, p.18) – and the creative practitioner –*"'telling a story that has an emotional impact"* (Vincent 2006, p.16) – reflecting and serving the needs of public relations, as manager of the corporate reputation (Murray and White 2005 and Bennett and kottasz 2000, p225).

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY ONE
What Will You Be Doing in 2012?
London 2012/Hawkshead Television

6.1 Introduction/Scope of the case study

6th July 2005. Trafalgar Square, London. Wild euphoric scenes erupt in the centre of the city as the International Olympic Committee announces that London has narrowly beaten the favourite, Paris, to host the Summer Games of 2012.

June, 2004. Canary Wharf, East London. London 2012 invites several corporate production companies to submit proposals for a short, non-broadcast film. The winning tender would form one-part of the organisation's national, external public relations strategy as it built towards its final presentation to the IOC. Hawkshead Television won the commission. The film, *What Will You Be Doing in 2012?* was completed in August 2004.

This is a retrospective case study of a public sector corporate film, largely based on three interviews conducted by the author in 2006, with the three key participants:

- the client: The head of marketing at London 2012, Chris Denny
- creative director: Rob Vincent of Hawkshead
- freelance director: Perry Miller, hired by the production company.

It has collected personal testimony (primary evidence) in order to examine the core thesis enquiry – regarding the nature and implications of the relationship – in the context of contemporary corporate film and its application to the field of public relations. It discusses the conditions under which the film was made and how the interests of the client and the two directors are expressed in the final presentation.

This case study was selected because it offers a comparison with the second one, *Louisiana Story,* from an earlier era, for some interesting reasons:

- both films are located within the field of public relation aiming to influence public opinion
- both chose young people to drive the narrative and the messages
- both are addressing impacts on the environment and the community
- and are set in areas of neglect and economic impoverishment
- each was recognised by their peers, receiving major awards.

6.2 Description of the situation

The bid from London 2012 – formed from The British Olympic Association – followed in the wake of three consecutive unsuccessful attempts, by Birmingham and Manchester (2). Despite this poor legacy, by 2004, they had the full backing of the Labour government and The Mayor of London in their campaign to persuade the IOC (International Olympic Committee) of the merits of their case. London faced stiff competition from the other four candidates particularly from Paris and Madrid, New York City and Moscow. Its core proposition placed "youth" at the heart of its strategy and promised a major regeneration project – a projected £1.4 billion Olympic Park and village – in the Stratford/Lea Valley area to the east of London.

Media reports of the time (2004) offer some insight into the challenges at home and abroad that the bid was facing:

> *The organisers claimed that 3,000 new permanent jobs would be created, but opponents of the games were concerned that some of the 11,000 existing jobs in the Olympic Zone may be lost.* (Wikipedia 2006)

"Legacy", through reviving poor areas, was the *"buzzword"* for the IOC, claimed the *Evening Standard* (Dougherty, 2004), reporting that six out of ten Britons backed the bid. *The Guardian* highlighted a number of other issues that London was facing:

> *…last May* (2004)*…a working party* (from the IOC) *rated their bid as only third behind those of Paris and Madrid. The city's road and rail system was highlighted as a potential problem as was the perceived lack of public support.* (Mackay 2005)

The question of public support was presented as a national issue:

> *…many British citizens felt that the north of the country would benefit more from hosting an Olympics Games than London, which is already widely perceived to receive more than its fair share of national resources…* (Perplex City Wiki 2005)

There was also some local protest from businesses, facing compulsory purchase orders in the affected area, highlighted by the existence of an organisation called *Say No To London 2012* (2006) and their website: http://www.nolondon2012.org.

London 2012 had carried out their own market research. Chris Denny commented -

> *I'll go back to my point about scepticism….we had good knowledge about what people were concerned about…* (2006, p.6),
> *…one of the…most important things we wanted to achieve was public support across the country for the bid and that would send a strong message to the people deciding on who was going to host the Games.* (2006, p.1)

To this end they were running a *"Back the Bid"* campaign, with banners positioned on the streets of London and endorsements from high-profile sporting icons. In addition the Prime Minister, Tessa Jowett (Dept. of Culture, Media & Sport), Ken Livingstone and Sebastian Coe (as bid leader) were campaigning at public meetings and through the media.

6.3 Analysis/Diagnosis

Between the competing promises and counter-claims, it is apparent that London 2012 had several different, but interconnected, target markets to win over:

- The local communities in the areas directly affected, facing enormous changes - with some believing that the last major development, at Canary Wharf, had simply seen an influx of people from the city taking most of the jobs (Denny, p. 5/6)
- London as a whole; concerns about added costs, disruption and infrastructure.
- The UK at large: prejudice against the capital.
- An international audience, but crucially…
- members of the IOC: the ultimate target market for the bid, who were conducting their own private polling in order to gauge local and national support.

The Messages, the Brief and the Target Market

London 2012 had already commissioned one high-concept inspirational film (*Make Britain Proud*), from New Moon Television, which projected their corporate image and was being shown on in-bound flights aboard Virgin and British Airways (London 2012, 2005).

What they needed to do, in the light of public *"scepticism"*, was to build support locally and further afield in order to influence the ultimate target audience, the IOC. Chris Denny:

> *…legacy was important, the notion of inspiration was crucial, economic benefit...* (2006, p.6) and, *we had a central strategy that…*(concentrated on) *the opportunities for young people both in sport but also wider socially.* (2006, p.1)

Rob Vincent quotes from the film's brief:

> *The audience is local London communities, and wider London, to show at community meetings… Its task is to communicate the rational benefits. It does need to excite and inspire.* (2006, p.10)

The client then, had a *"shopping list"* (Vincent 2006, p.16) of key messages:

- the opportunities linked to regeneration: economic, employment, cultural, sporting
- the issues of transport in response to a widespread perception that London lacked an adequate infrastructure to cope with demand (Denny 2006, p5/6)
- justifying the cost
- sporting legacy: new facilities, but specifically, inspiring participation

London 2012 segmented the target audience geographically by prioritising the five boroughs directly affected: Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Greenwich (Denny, p.1). But more specifically, it was the type of audience identified by Rob Vincent of Hawkshead,

> *…this wasn't a programme aimed at young people…* (it was) *aimed at opinion formers…their target audience was cynical gown ups* (2006, p.7)

6.4 Methodology for change/solution

The budget for the new film was around £15-20,000, a relatively low-figure, which would have a direct impact on the proposed solution. This would be Film Two of four films. So far as a being part of a systematic strategy, Chris Denny (2006, p.4) said,

> *I wouldn't like you to get the impression that we sat down and had a strategy paper with a brand identity and then out of that flowed a film. It wasn't that mechanical.*

The client (Denny 2006, p.10) stated that the small size of the budget – which he related to the limited use of the film for non-broadcast audiences – equated with the anticipated *"production values"* expected from the film and the way in which it would be made. Rob Vincent perceived it as part of the client's *"PR campaign"* (2006, p.15),

> *It had to complement the kind of gloss and glamour of this Film One…*(it) *could be more pragmatic and not about rhetoric allied with glossy images* (2006, p.9).

One underlying reason that London 2012 chose to commission a non-broadcast film, was to bypass the traditional media:

> *…* (the press) *can cheerlead a debate and they tend to take quite firm and strong views* (depending on bias)…*I'd say in this area they weren't overly powerful…we wanted to try and have a direct conversation with people…that would be played at community meetings when anyone was making a speech, providing us, with a direct conversation that circumvented the media* (Denny 2006, p.1).

So commissioning their own film enabled the client to control the message and the agenda. The client also had educational packs (and a website) aimed at schools, linked to its engagement with young people: part of a broader marketing strategy to communicate the core message around youth and participation in sport (Denny 2006, p.4).

Hawkshead Television, a long established specialist with a track record in making documentaries and drama for government and private sector clients, was one of probably three or four companies tendering for the project (Vincent 2006, p.1). As a Creative Director, Rob Vincent's approach to a solution is encapsulated by his philosophy, *"communication which has integrity and honesty"* (2006, p.12) and putting people *"at the heart"* of the communication (2006, p. 25). For him, corporate television is; *"…less and less about 'command and obey'… more about changing attitudes, raising awareness, having an emotional impact"* (2006, p.5).

He viewed the client's brief as not untypical, in that the challenge was *"how you make a programme that isn't overburdened by facts and information…*(because it) *becomes deadly dull"* (2006, p.10). Most briefs are the starting point for a dialogue between the commissioner and Hawskhead, *"that's why they're coming to us really, to kind of, come back with the solution*" (2006, p.2). But the restricted time factor (for really knowing the subject, the target market, doing the research) in which to produce a proposal can mean *"… you're going to throw your darts at the board…but there is no way you're expected to hit a bullseye…"* (2006, p.2). Therefore, it was possible the final film might not entirely conform to the proposal.

1. The client wanted a film with *"a practical, pragmatic tone, no rhetoric and hype"* (2006,p.5) that would support face-to-face conversations.
2. The budget would constrain what could be achieved. According to Vincent: *"we can't lose money…on a production"* and therefore they had, *"…to find a way of doing this leanly and efficiently*" (2006, p.23).
3. The pitch (see proposal *"Imagine"*, 22/6/2004 in *Appendices*) for the work would be a collaboration between Vincent and Perry Miller (the director would write the film's treatment/script). He was hired, in part, because they'd worked well together in the past and Vincent trusted him (2006, p.23). But here, several factors appear to fit together linking the choice of the director with the brief, the clients influence and the budget:
    - Perry as *"auteur"* - in this context someone who could direct, shoot DV and edit (Vincent 2006, p.22) - and the budget limit (small crew/DIY editing) was circumscribing their thinking in terms of the mechanics of how it might be made.
    - The director had previous experience making films with young people (Miller 2006, p.21), which tied in with -
    - what Vincent had noticed about the client's strategy; he *"homed in…*(on) *this school pack thing"* (2006, p. 8) where he recalls *"they were asking young people to imagine"* 2012 as part of a school lesson plan (p.6) .This was reinforced by their conversation prior to writing the proposal.

The author asked Chris Denny (2006, p.9):

> ***Did you suggest in the brief to consider using vox pops? Do you remember?*** *… I would have said something like… one way to disarm people is to use youth…What about using people from a local school? I imagine they went on and thought about it…*

Rob Vincent's recollection was, *"…*(He) *didn't say to us it's got to be young people, it's going to be shot at the school, we've got to have young people imagining."* (2006, p.19)

The creative director's response was to think of a treatment for the film that reflected the *client's idea and schools strategy* and proposal of vox pops: *"When I sat down with the director I had already in my mind the idea, let's use the kids in the school as an anchor for this film"* (Vincent 2006, p.18). What followed was a brainstorming session where the client's idea of using vox pops, which appears to have envisaged Londoners on the streets talking on camera, was re-located to the school classroom in the form of a lesson plan. Vincent wrote a one page brief, for Miller, who then worked it into a script outline where the key messages were articulated by school teenagers.

The exciting and emotional elements of the brief took on the form, of what Perry Miller calls, the *"the magical motif"* (2006, p.9): *"…we came up with the three kids idea thinking about what they would…be doing in 2012"* (2006, p.23) and Vincent adds, *"visualising themselves as an architect, an engineer…athlete …* (which meant the film would be) *a step outside the realist documentary"* (2006, p.8).

In essence, the solution was to adopt and adapt the client's schools lesson/teaching aid concept: to film a classroom of 12 to 15 year olds who would respond with answers to a teacher's questions about the key issues with inspirational, fantasy sequences featuring three teenagers imagining what the Olympics would mean to them in 2012. The film's duration would be around four minutes. It would be filmed by Perry, without a crew, but with a freelance producer provided by Hawkshead.

This appeared to reconcile and account for:

1. The budget limitations.
2. Hawkshead's own business interests (i.e. Vincent, *"we can't lose money"*).
3. The client's central strategy and proposition (i.e. youth and schools agenda).
4. The director's own experience and multi-skilling capacities (c/ref. the budget).
5. A transformation of the client's idea of *"vox pops"* to a structured approach, where an element of fantasy was introduced by the two creatives. This approach would enable –
6. The director to balance the content needs of the client (for information) with a more visual (imaginist) style driven by him with the support of the creative director.
7. A proposal, where arguably, the appeal of youth (enthusiasm etc.) suggested by Denny, could be a way of challenging the sceptical adults in the key, target demographic market for the film; thus serving the client's needs.
8. Such an appeal would be made – *based on the client's suggestion* – from subjects within one of the key geographical locations in which the film would be shown and where the Olympics would impact. Therefore the proposal was, in essence, about one younger (enthusiastic), segment of the community, speaking directly to an older (resistant) demographic, from the same community, through the medium of video.
9. The solution – *"people at the heart"* (Vincent 2006, p.25) – very much reflected Hawkshead's philosophy of effective communications.

6.5 Account of the results achieved

Several points were highlighted by the interviewees in relation to the production:

1. A fantasy, running track scene was moved to Hyde Park, at the request of the client, in order, said Denny, to both show the spread of the Games and that they were open to all (2006, p.11). The director received an e-mail or a call, *"Chris thinks it's too East End"* (Miller 2006, p.6).
   (see Appendices e-m MILLER, P. to Vey:*'Subject: olympics 1st draft script'* 5th July 2004)

2. The client put forward a choice of two schools. The school was chosen by the director but the school 'cast' the classroom. He selected the teacher who acted as facilitator. According to Perry Miller, the client expressed some concern regarding *"who were these kids going to be?"* (2006, p.17) as they *"…really* (had) *no idea how the kids would react"* (2006, p.19). Nevertheless, the school *"…had sort of ambassadors…*(who had) *actually done the stuff for London 2012 before…"* (Miller 2006, p.18).

3. Chris Denny and the director both agreed that he would not attend the shoot due to the intimacy of the shooting style and the feeling that he might intimidate the subjects (Miller 2006, p.10). So Miller appeared to have total control of the filming.

4. There was a clear understanding between the client and the creatives that it was unrealistic to script the teenagers. Nevertheless, according to Miller, the responses were very positive and their ideas seemed to articulate those of the client (Miller 2006, p.17); *"the script as shot was very close to the script as originally written by me"* (2006, p.7). It was the creative director who asked him to change the ending in the script. Rob Vincent commented on how surprised he was that *"the finished film does mirror the proposal. That's rare"* (2006, p.20).

5. The client requested the director to include *"extra points…I want you to get into the discussion"* regarding the key issue of transport (Miller 2006, p.14).

6. Chris Denny thought there was a *"structural problem"* with the first cut of the film: *"You didn't want too much of one type of person or too much of one type of attitude or too much of one view",* and it *"…didn't get to the resolution quick enough"* (2006, p.15). Changes were made in accordance with his wishes.

Post-script

From the client's perspective, the film, achieved the desired result with the target audiences: The *"strategy of using young people disarmed a lot of the sceptics and the critics"* (Denny 2006, p.8). It was in use up until the day before the client achieved their primary objective: winning the IOC contest on the 6th July 2005.

What Will You Be Doing in 2012? won a prestigious 2005 IVCA Gold Award in the Public Relations Category. The judges citation stated " (The film) *fits its objectives perfectly in generating debate about the impact on London communities of the London 2012 bid."* (London 2012, 2005)

ICM research of the 15.02.05, found that 74% of those questioned backed the bid from a random sample of 1,012 adults across the country, but 52% of Londoners thought the bid would fail. (2005, cited Thisislondon 2005)

On November 20th 2004, journalist Duncan Mackay, wrote on *The Guardian's* website:

> *The British press is the most cynical in the world and it is going to take more than a few well-produced videos to convince them after the Wembley and Pickett's Lock fiascos that London is capable of delivering everything it is promising.* (Mackay 2004)

This adverse reaction appears to support the client's strategy; using the video as a means of by-passing the press and speaking directly to his target market.

6.6 Reflective analysis of the process

1. For the client organisation the primary concern was the bid's reputation vis-à-vis the IOC. The role of the film was in supporting the client's public relations campaign to influence public opinion (primarily in London) *in order to affect* their reputation with the IOC members.

2. No evidence could be found for issues of conflict, conflicting interests, or dissatisfaction within the relationships (Vincent 2006, p.26). There was mutual consent between all parties on the scope, focus, interpretation, changes, practical implications of the approach and the final form of the film. This is in contrast with Barnouw's views on the client as an intrusive presence (1983, p.212). Perhaps, none of this is surprising in light of some of the other findings.

2. The director's primary client, and therefore key relationship, (Miller 2006, p.8) was with Rob Vincent of Hawkshead Television, whose client was London 2012. But the director adopted the client's agenda even though he made one interesting revelation in his remarks about London 2012's bid: *"….I am a sceptic…I was that sceptic, sceptical person and I still am actually…"* (Miller 2006, p.22). In effect he was his own target audience who didn't exactly buy into the message. His principle need was fulfilled by what the experience enabled; working with young people and the autonomy he enjoyed because of the way in which the film was made.

3. Paradoxically, the director was liberated as a result of the restrictive budget: he self-operated the camera and edited the film on his laptop. Because of the nature of the agreed approach (structured documentary but unscripted subjects) and the small budget, the client was content to allow him latitude and autonomy. This theme is reinforced by the next finding.

4. The client's interests may have been evident in the choice of the two schools (who had prior experience of London 2012, according to Miller) yet Denny didn't know what to expect, but accepted the consequences *"…if you're making a film like that, you know, you have to react to circumstances…"* (2006, p.13). In other words, he was complicit with the film-makers in adopting their professional outlooks. Indeed, the client's attitude appears to fit Paul Rothas' ideal of the *"enlightened PR man"* (1973, p.143). When asked about autonomy, Denny's believes:

…creative people generally want clear parameters but within those clear parameters they want - freedom to be able to…create…" (2006, p.13).

This supports the review of studies by Mumford *et al* (2002, p.710) on autonomy within the relationship.

5. One interpretation of the role of Rob Vincent is that of a mediator/interpreter between the director and their client. He was the link between both parties, interpreting and briefing the director. His view of the purpose of the film (*"having an emotional impact"* 2006, p.5) was perfectly in synch with that of his client's philosophy:

   I'm a big believer in film… using the emotional side of the brain rather than the rational side of the brain…I think no film is effective unless it somehow touches one's heart…" (Denny 2006, p.17).

   Rob Vincent's attitude, *"…we work in partnership with our clients"* (2006, p. 26), reflects the ethos of a business (as opposed to the freelance film-maker) serving this sector. This finds expression in the inclusive outlook of the IVCA and Drew (2006) – discussed in the Literature Review – who have institutionalised the interests of both the commissioner and the creative service provider.

6. The idea and therefore the basis for the solution came from the client. The director was subject to the external vision (Mumford *et a,* 2002, p.738) of the creative director (the lesson plan) yet contrary to Mumford's findings, this does not appear to have inhibited him, possibly because he was then able to impose his creative vision on the shooting and editing. The creative director had, himself, adopted the client's suggestions – local school, kids and lesson – *and therefore the expression of the client's interests,* early on in the process. This was then creatively interpreted, by Vincent and Miller, in a relationship based on trust.

7. The expression of both creatives' interests was evident in what the director called *"the magical motif"*. The vested interests of all the parties – contained in both the content and the form – may be seen in Illustrations 2 & 3 on the following page, of the (abridged) final script. The style of film-making represented the vision of the director, but both he and the creative director are mediators of the client's interests: in terms of the messages, the setting and the demographic profile.

The author asked the director about his views of client relationships *in general*:

…a good client…is somebody who…gives you a clear brief, basically…who just listens to you and when you come back…with a recommendation…something that works from a film-making point of view… they need to….make a judgement call as to whether they need to adjust, you know, adjust their position accordingly. And frequently…that means doing something that is shorter, has less information and therefore will become a more visual or more powerful film…
The client knows nothing about film-making essentially, absolutely nothing, why should they? You know they just know about London 2012 or making chocolate or selling stocks and shares or whatever… but at the same time you're having this dialogue about, you're talking about the script. So you're sitting down talking to somebody who knows nothing about film-making, you know, you're going through a script…and that can be difficult... (Miller 2006, p.28-29)

WHOSE VIEWPOINT? ANALYSIS OF PAGES 1 & 6 OF THE SCRIPT

Olympics bid video script draft 2 8th July 2004

Caption: LANGDON SCHOOL, EAST LONDON

1 INT. CLASSROOM (WED 0915 - 1015?)
20 children aged 12 - 15 split into small groups. They are all busy discussing something.

The teacher (Dan) writes WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING IN 2012? in the middle of the board and rings it.

Dan calls for quiet. He says he wants ideas from everyone about what they could be doing in 2012 if London gets the Olympics.

Children put their hands up and we hear a selection of ideas. Eg:
'I want to get a job in the stadium'
'Interview athletes for TV'
'I'd like to compete'

1

CLIENT: puts forward choice of two schools. During briefing: *"I would have said something like…one way to disarm people is to use youth"*

THE DIRECTOR:* "casts" teacher, and school. Structures 'lesson', "frames" subject - autonomy on shoot/edit

CLIENT: communicate benefits: *"the client had a shopping list"*

Illustration 2 (Miller 2004, p.1)

THE SCHOOL: "casts" the kids:*"They had, sort of ambassadors"*

THE LOCATION: in one of the 5 boroughs: key target market audience for the **CLIENT**

THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR: *"homed in…*(on) *this school pack thing"*: identified teaching aids as inspiration for the idea - that originated with the **CLIENT**: who advocated "*vox pops"* approach, during briefing

THE CLIENT: key issue/message on *"shopping list"*: public transport concerns

DIRECTOR & CREATIVE - DIRECTOR *"we came up with the 3 kids idea…"* : focus on 3 subjects visions of their future in 2012

DIRECTOR & CREATIVE – DIRECTOR originate vision - *"Lets get these kids to imagine…" – "The magical motif"*

Dan raised an important point for discussion by the whole of the class.

Q: Is the tube system going to be able to cope?
A: (From teacher after ideas). 10 rail lines into Olympic Park at Stratford.

The camera focuses on a boy listening - RIKESH.
The sound of voices in the classroom
gives way to the ROAR of a crowd as another sporting event reaches its climax.
We hear the boy's voice.

'I want to be right in the middle of it all. Making it happen.'

6. INT. STRATFORD STATION.
We find Rikesh looking round the high-tech concourse of Stratford Station
where again the filming style gives the sequence a visionary quality.

Graphics:
STRATFORD STATION
7 MINUTES FROM CENTRAL LONDON

6

Illustration 3 (Miller 2004, p.6)

**NOTE: THE DIRECTOR WROTE THE STORY OUTLINE AND SCRIPTS.*

CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY TWO
Louisiana Story
Standard Oil (N.J.)/Robert Flaherty

7.1 Introduction/Scope of the case study

Louisiana Story was a feature length, American film released theatrically in 1948. The movie and its famous director, Robert Flaherty (credited as the Father of the documentary), were garlanded with praise and international awards: Erik Barnouw, in *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, has described it as the most celebrated sponsored film of its era (1983, p.216). It was commissioned by the world's largest petroleum company, Standard Oil of New Jersey, who invested $258,000 in the movie.

This is an "industrial film" (Barsam 1988, p.79) and therefore a forerunner of the modern day corporate video; but, unusually for the period, there is an absence of the sponsor's logo, identity or even a credit. It is presented in the name of the film-maker, as a Robert J. Flaherty Production.

The director was described by his contemporary, John Grierson, as someone who, *"couldn't conform…to a world…in which the practicalities of sponsorship could be more than ordinarily disillusioning"* (1960, cited Rotha 1983, p.287). Richard Barsam's biography discusses his fierce drive for autonomy and remarks on how, *"he fought the establishment with a naïve belief in the transcendency of art over money"* (1988, p.2). Yet he was making a film for an oil company *who were the industrial establishment.*

There are, then, many intriguing facets to this relationship, particularly in the light of this dissertation's central point of enquiry into the nature and implications of the film-maker/client relationship. This case study examines the project from each perspective, based on primary evidence, gathered from an interview with Richard Leacock (who shot the film) and the Flaherty Papers (Columbia University archive), and a selection of the Flaherty literature, together with studies of Standard Oil (N.J.) and the oil industry.

Film Summary

Louisiana Story is a fable-like story set in the wilderness of a Louisiana bayou. The idyllic peace and tranquillity of the Cajun Latour family is interrupted by the arrival of a large, floating, oil derrick prospecting for oil. The story is presented from the point of view of an innocent, superstitious young boy, Alexander Napoleon Ulysses Latour. As the friendly Texan wildcatters struggle to find oil, the boy becomes entranced by the mystery of their endeavours. After a dramatic explosion on the rig, the tale climaxes in their discovery of oil beneath the swamp. For the boy their success is the result of his magic. As the stately derrick leaves, the boy mounts the "Christmas Tree" (the cap on the well) waving farewell to his friends, as peace returns to the wilderness. Employing minimal dialogue, the film mixes drama with documentary. All of the characters are played by non-actors.

7.2 Description of the situation

In 1942, at the height of the attack on Pearl Harbour, Standard Oil (N.J.) was the world's largest producer and distributor of petroleum products, with revenues of $1 billion. The company had more than 50,000 employees with interests spread across the world (Platner 1983, p.11). It had many affiliates like Humble Oil of Texas and marketed its products under the name of ESSO or "Jersey Standard". Jersey had emerged in 1911 as one of 34 companies, after the break-up of the Standard Oil Company, following the supreme court anti-trust, monopoly ruling (Droz 2006).

Olien and Olien in *Oil and Ideology* have discussed how Standard Oil came to symbolise a whole industry (2000, p.99): *"Defenders of the regulatory State from Theodore Roosevelt onwards begin with the 'Standard Oil Story'…"* (2000, viii). They had acquired a reputation, as a "monstrous monopoly" (2000, p.55) and been accused of corruption by journalist Ida M. Tarbell in the 1900s, an expose that led to the anti-trust case. The image of the oil industry was framed in terms of reckless irresponsibility, contempt for the law and as gamblers who profited at the expense of the American people (2000, p.212). This perception, which the authors argue may have been unjustified, was held and perpetuated by many journalists, politicians, intellectuals and social thinkers (2000, p.253).

Evidence of the effect of the oil industry on the community, collected by the University of Louisiana, reflects its positive economic impact in the region where the film is set, though in the 1940s, Jersey and other oil companies impacted dramatically *"on the social and cultural dynamics"* of the area, as the industry expanded to meet demand during the war. Its workforce, in 1937, according to one employee Alfred Lamson, *"had a very bad reputation in those days. The exploration people were hard working, hard playing… gambling type people"* (Lamson 2003 and OCS Oral History Project 2003).

At the beginning of the American entry into the Second World War, Standard Oil (N.J.) was subject to a series of Senate hearings in March/April 1942. The Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice alleged that the company had conspired with a German company, I.G Farben, in a cartel arrangement that had caused a severe shortage of synthetic rubber in the United States (Larson *et al* 1971, p.440-1 and Plattner 1983, p.12).

Though the charges were found to be without foundation, the fallout was immense. According to Olien and Olien, newspaper headlines created the impression of a company that was a "Nazi collaborator" (2000, p.233). For example, a New York publication, *"PM"*, printed a series of letters addressed to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (of SONJ) accusing the company of being *"an ally of Hitler, an economic enemy agent"* (1942, cited Larson *et al* 1971, p.441), whilst Senator Harry S. Truman was quoted as saying, *"I think this amounts to Treason"* (1942, cited Olien and Olien 2000, p.233).

According to Larson *et al's* study of company files, the effect within the organisation was traumatic (1971, p.441-443). ESSO Marketers told executives that sales would suffer and Rockefeller Jr. urged the board to improve their standing with the public.

7.3 Analysis/Diagnosis

Jersey's response was to hire public relations consultant Earl Newsom. He instigated a systematic series of public opinion surveys, at home and abroad, by the Elmo Roper Organisation, that continued throughout the 1940s. The key findings of 1942 revealed:

- that *"Jersey was disliked…because it was believed to be greedy"* (1942, cited Larson *et al* 1971, p.449); and that all Standard Oil companies were assumed to be one concern and therefore still a monopoly, which reflected the earlier history of the company.
- the second key finding was discussed by George Freyermuth, the Director of Public Relations, at Jersey, in 1976:

> *Roper's early surveys showed clearly that the erudite, the academic, the educated people were able to make judgements…the more they knew about things in general, the less they liked the company…*(the theory then and one still valid)…*is that public opinion is established by opinion leaders…In general, opinion leaders of that time were supposed to be among the educated, the artistic and that kind of sophisticate.* (1976, cited Plattner 1983, p.13)

The survey, according to art consultant Carl Mass also deemed this segment to be *"more conscious of art than the public as a whole"* (1972, cited Plattner 1983, p.13).

Standard Oil embarked on a mission to put in place a programme *"for establishing effective communication with the public"* which would aim to create a public impression that the company was *"a good citizen…is open, friendly and communicative* (and)… *manages its affairs democratically"* (1943, cited Larson *et al* 1971, p.630). These internal company documents show a transformed outlook; in order for the company to survive intact and compete profitably, it needed to act and be seen to act in the "public interest".

In response to the key findings about *opinion leaders* and their consciousness of art, Jersey's strategy was to invest in the visual media in order to influence this section of the public. One cornerstone of this policy was hiring Roy Stryker (a "liberal" photographic curator), who was briefed to connect *"with that part of the public with aesthetic interests"* by employing documentary photographers to show the relationship of oil to community. (Larson *et al* 1971, p.631)

This strategy led to an informal approach to Robert Flaherty by his friend Stryker in 1944. The Flaherty Papers show that, following a series of meetings and briefings with their public relations department (George Freyermuth, Ed Stanley), and after reading *"Mr. Pratt's book Oil in the Earth",* Flaherty wrote to Stanley in response to *their* idea for a film:

> *…I believe that the subject of bringing in a well which, if you will remember, you, yourself, suggested, is a great subject…*

Flaherty proposed that the film would feature real people playing the parts *"right out of the industry itself"* and two main characters *"the young exploring geologist and the hard-boiled old driller…"* It would be a story *"of trials, failures and ultimate triumph"* ; would include sequences which illustrated the *"vast importance of oil to the world"*; cost $150,000 *"at most"* (including two short films) and would depict the *"social side of oil, its impact on a little community…"* (Flaherty 1944, reel 1923).

7.4 Methodology for change/solution

Following extensive research, Freyermuth asked Flaherty to submit a "recommendation", a story outline (Freyermuth 1944, reel 1923). This document, *Early Story Outline: Memorandum on Proposed Film, "The Christmas Tree"* (Flaherty Papers 1944, reel 1923) states that the film will:

> *…present the story of oil with the dignity and epic sweep and assure the story of oil a lasting place on the highest plane in the literature of the screen.*

Page 3 of the proposal outlines the potential for a *"coordinated public relations program"*:

- By serving a non-theatrical market: an *"increasingly important educational film field".*
- Through a release in the American and international theatrical market (cinema): *"because of it's entertainment values".*
- But, in order to achieve a cinematic release:
  …any mention of the company will have to be kept out of the film itself in order to assure theatrical showings, nevertheless it will be possible to identify clearly the company with its production in both exploitation and advertising publicity.
- It anticipates: *"Good will…* (for the company) *from the industry and from the public".*

Page 4, under "About Mr. Flaherty", suggests that the reputation of the director will increase the status of the film (and therefore serve the interests of the client):

> *Mr. Flaherty's name on the film and the recognized high level of his work, will assure both critical and popular acceptance and freedom from any suggestion of commercialism.*

A paragraph ("About The Film") discusses their relationship and the impact of the movie:

> *He will both produce and direct it… It will, in effect, be a partnership undertaking with the Jersey Company venturing the initial capital…* (and ultimately) *will result in a permanent and artistic record of the contribution which the oil industry has made to civilization*

The contract (Robert Flaherty Productions Inc., 1945), of December 26th 1945, was between Robert J. Flaherty Productions, Inc. and the Standard Oil Company (N.J.). Flaherty would retain the theatrical rights to exploit the film internationally. However, there was a clause (paragraph 7), stating that the US rights would revert to Standard Oil if Flaherty failed to secure a distribution agreement six months after the film's completion. The client would have the right *"to suggest changes…*(to the film) *with regard to technical inaccuracies and business policy"*. Three films would be made for an *"estimated"* cost of $175,000. Paragraph 3 states –

> *We undertake and agree to produce the feature picture substantially in accordance with the story therefore heretofore submitted to you…*

This was a treatment describing the film. According to his cameraman, Richard Leacock, *"not a script in the sense of every shot but a boy's view…of a refinery".* Leacock says Standard Oil's lawyers made him initial every page of the document in front of witnesses (though this is not confirmed from any other sources). He also states, with regard to the contractual requirement for two short films (which were conventional, industrial information films), that, *"he* (Flaherty*) went along with it, why not?"* (Leacock 2006, p.2).

The copies of this treatment, in the Flaherty Papers, have a number of sequences that show the sponsor's message in terms of the importance of oil to America, the world and its relationship to civilisation. For example, in the section titled, *"The Stake"*, on page 10:

> *…we explain, too, the part that heat and compaction played…the geologist has – found a fabulous new frontier. It underlies more than a third of the surface of the world!*

Page 19, describing a sequence called *"The Storm"* (Flaherty Papers ca1946, reel 1923):

> *…there is the little man…He was made for oil – he who is America…new fields, new prospects, freedom to live…freedom to take a chance – that's what brought him to America in the first place. That's what made America; that's what most certainly made oil!*
>
> (emphasis in the document)

The solution seems to have envisaged two stories woven together: the directors film which was essentially an intimate tale of a boy in the wilderness and his relationship with the oil workers (the *"social side of oil, its impact on a little community…"*); and the second story – arguably the clients interest in the bigger picture (which, for the director meant, opening out the story onto a national and international stage) – relating it to the company's oil refineries and oil's value to civilisation (the *"epic sweep"* dimension).

Flaherty appeared to have tried to broker his vision with that of the client's message about Standard Oil (*"the good citizen"*). Leacock said *"all his films see the world through the eyes of a boy"* (2006, p.9). Barsam (1988, p.43) argues his films are all about Flaherty (based on his experiences as a boy brought up in the wilderness and man's struggle with nature). Barnouw gives support to the boy as a recurring metaphor (1983, p97-98).

Further insight into why Standard Oil sought out the film-maker is contained in an internal company memo of 1948 **(**Flaherty Papers 1948, reel 1923). Page 1 of *"Suggested Plan of Exploitation"*, suggests a publicity campaign focusing on *"…exploiting Flaherty's international reputation as a film-maker…"*

In sum, the choice of Flaherty rested on his status as a recognised artist of international standing *(Nanook of the North, Moana, Man of Aran)*. Through his name, Standard Oil (and its corporate message) were able to gain access to a national and international cinema audience that was generally beyond the reach of industrial films. The hiring of such an artist may be seen as a perfect fit with their strategy (derived from the public opinion findings) of engaging artists and their art, in order to target their key segmented market: *"opinion leaders"*.

As a Robert Flaherty Production it might be argued that the roles of sponsorship and, therefore the relationship, were in one sense being reversed. The director was lending his name to the client's message. The absence of corporate branding was a small price the client was willing to pay, given their aims, their parlous reputation (with the key target market), the apparent value and cachet of Flaherty to the client, and his reputation as an artist of some independence. The contract had given Flaherty a large measure of control over the project which suited his evident need for autonomy. The question remains: would this relationship and the film serve both their interests?

7.5 Account of the results achieved

Louisiana Story was released in 1948. A Standard Oil report to the company's directors, issued in1949, assessed the impact of the film at home and abroad. It estimated that 30 million American readers had received a favourable impression of the oil industry *"and its employees in relation to the community".* The report provides details of exhibition: 425 theatres, increasing by two a week. The company had been identified with the film in 19 out of 25 magazines and 27 out of 35 newspapers. Some eight national magazines and four major newspapers had *"commented on Jersey's foresighted public relations policy in sponsoring the film".* Page 2 lists awards (Venice and Edinburgh Film Festivals) which had brought it *'to the attention of artistic and intellectual circles'.* Page 5, onwards, discusses the international impact. For example, in West Germany (an occupied, divided country):

> *The U.S. Army has praised the film as the finest representation of the American way of life they have had…* (it has been requested by) *every embassy in the world.*

In Canada, a special screening was attended by:

> *…leaders in art and cultural groups, society and business leaders…Many new public relations contacts were made.*

Whilst in Britain, the *"value to the company"* came from *"special showings"*:

> *…at which contacts were made with opinion leaders in the fields of government, business, art and letters, press and radio. Jersey's sponsorship… has been of the very greatest value to Anglo-American* (their international company)*, especially amongst the most influential people in this country…*(Standard Oil Company (N.J) 1949, p.1-6, reel 1922).

The film appeared to have achieved its stated aims. Jersey had systematically set out, *"to influence the direction in which the exploitation shall take"* and to *"get the maximum public relations return from the film"*, outlined in its strategy memo, *Suggested Plan of Exploitation* (Flaherty Papers 1948, reel 1923).

What is apparent from its impact is the way in which the company, through the film, and (the now) enhanced reputation of the director, became part of a wider story. Internal Standard Oil correspondence from January 1949, to George Freyermuth, discusses a future relationship with Robert Flaherty in the context of *"serving ourselves"* and the interests of the nation, in the context of international, ideological conflict:

> *If we do not like communism, and the very great threat it presents, we ought not abandon to them abroad the field of documentary film…We have the greatest documentary film ever produced …a considerable investment in Robert Flaherty's name …he now has an understanding of the industry, and of the Company…We ought …to capitalise on Flaherty's name and genius* (Anon 1949, p.2 reel 1922).

Lewis S. Baer of the Dept of the Army, Civil Affairs Division, wrote to Flaherty to commend him on his achievement, citing the political value of the film:

> *…as a potential tool in the re-orientation program of this agency in the Occupied Territories of Germany, Japan, Austria and Korea…The sequences between the landowner and the company imply fair dealing and man-to-man relationship rarely associated with negotiations carried on with an impersonal corporation* (Baer 1948, p.1/2 reel 1923).

Yet by 1950 there was no evidence that the Standard Oil/Flaherty relationship would develop further. In a letter to Flaherty's lawyer, following a meeting with George Freyermuth, Ed Stanley (PR) writes:

Now, George did say he would be very interested in a film on oil conservation, that is, the importance of withdrawing the maximum yield from any pool…But this does not seem to me like Bob's pigeon (Stanley 1950, reel 1922).

This implies that their view of Flaherty was as an artist who made prestige films, rather than the more typical, conventional industrial film commissions of the period.

The film's message has been critically re-evaluated since the 1970s by Barnouw (1983), Murphy (2006), Williams (2002), arguing that the message is related to the environmental impact of oil (destruction, pollution etc.) and the oil industry as environmental violator (see Appendices: *Illustration 5 - Literature reviewed: Louisiana Story*). But the evidence of the period, in The Flaherty Papers (for example, in the overwhelming number of press reviews) and that of Larson *et al* (1971), Oliens and Oliens (2000), Platner (1983), would appear to suggest that the intended message was about Standard Oil's relationship to the social environment (community), oil's value to civilisation and the company's desire to re-position itself as a "good citizen" in terms of its general conduct and reputation. The meaning is, therefore, a question of the context of the time in which the film is viewed. Nevertheless, the reputation of ExxonMobil (formerly SONJ), in the light of global warming, is still driving debate today, particularly amongst the same social groups identified by the company in 1942.

7.6 Reflective analysis of the process

Flaherty spent fourteen months filming on location. The client, of course, was in New York. Accounts in the The Helen van Dongen Diary (Orbanz 1998, p.46) tell of the occasional client visit and how Flaherty showed them thousands of feet of film and entertained them. There were in fact many changes to the storyline (c/ref The Stake and The Storm sequences). The client's bigger picture, the *"epic sweep"*, was dropped and Flaherty focused on, arguably, *his* story of the boy and the boy's relationship with the drillers (and their attempts to find oil). According to his wife (Flaherty 1960 cited *Louisiana Story DVD,* 2003), the story became:

…the lovely movement of the life around us (the natural world and oil barges)…*coming of the derrick and the ballet of the drill pipes going down…*

In other words, his artistic vision. However, such *"substantial"* changes were contrary to the agreement (c/ref. paragraph 3 of the Agreement). Clues to the client's handling of the relationship may be found in an article in *Investors Reader* of 1949:

…few film fans know (Standard Oil)…*gave Bob Flaherty a free hand…*(a Jersey official said) *We let Flaherty alone. That's the answer. Any company which wants to make an industrial film should throw out all the meddling vp's whose hobby is 16mm cameras.*
We wanted a work of art and that's what we got… (Investor's Reader 1949, p.11).

This may have been no more than gloss (good public relations) and/or a recognition of Flaherty's need for autonomy, which the client was buying because; they believed this would lead to a *"work of art"* (one of the rationale's for hiring him and his reputation). Flaherty reminded everyone of where the power lay in the relationship when *International Cinema* quoted him as saying:

I told them…I would do the film if the company would keep its name and hands off – and they did – never interfered a bit (International Cinema ca1949, p.1).

But the relationship was, of course, more complex than this. The evidence suggests there was a rational strategy in place, in terms of hiring Flaherty to ensure client exposure.

The notion that they never tried to interfere is not quite true. Jersey documents in The Flaherty Papers, prove there were several attempts to intervene by the client, particularly by Edward Sammis, an editor of the company magazine in the PR department. He sent many lengthy notes offering creative and story advice: suggesting changes. But they were framed in ingratiating terms: *"P.S…I find it has a slight implication that I am trying to write the story for you"* (Sammis1946a, p.5).

In *"Random Thoughts"* he asks if there will be *"some animal stuff towards the end…so that those who love the animal stuff won't feel let down?"* (Sammis ca1946b, p.3).

Then in 1947, a note to Flaherty, reflecting the wider affiliate, corporate interests:

> *If the driller…could tell the boy, "This well is costing us a quarter of a million dollars", it would make the Humble* (an SONJ affiliate) *people very happy.* (Sammis 1947, reel 1923)

The fact is, Sammis lacked the authority to impose his will on the film-maker. But the changes (or the requests he was ignoring) did have more serious implications. Sammis was intervening on Flaherty's behalf with the hierarchy of Standard Oil, as is apparent from a letter to the director from his lawyer:

> *I had a lot of talk with Mr. Sammis, who tells me in confidence that he will probably have a tussle with his principals about the inclusion and exclusion of certai information material.* (Fitelson 1947, reel 1922)

The changes that the client imposed were largely in relation to matters that were technical and legal (as they were entitled to do under the terms of the contract). Richard Leacock spoke of spending many months filming a splendid refinery sequence; *"the sequence was junked…"* because everything they were showing was illegal according to Standard Oil, and therefore bad for their image (2006, p.4).

Standard Oil's interests were imposed by a scene at the end. Flaherty had to show how the family had materially benefited because of oil. Leacock calls it *"pretty stupid"* (2006, p.17). He managed to avoid putting in a scene about *"royalty cheques"* (Sammis ca1946b, p.3) but the compromise shows a new dress for the Mother, some kitchen pots and a new shot-gun for the boy. The client's interests, in general, are mainly represented by the film-maker's ability to present the warm, human side of oil in his depiction of the oil workers.

Flaherty never delivered the other two films (his son may have done) and the final cost was $83,000 over budget. The film-maker delivered the audience and target market for the client. In doing so he effectively lent (or sold) his reputation (stature) to that of the clients, creating a new channel of communication for the company to prosecute their PR strategy. The Flaherty "brand" opened up the theatrical market and turned the film into an event. They respected (perhaps revered) his artistry and either gave in, or chose to grant him the autonomy to execute his own creative vision largely as he wished.

If Case Study One is an example of a shared vision (a partnership with the client); this is an example of a singular vision (a partnership on paper) which the client appears, above all else, willing to accommodate:

- The client largely ceded control to the film-maker. They could impose their will when the discussion was framed in terms of technical or legal issues.
- Flaherty had client advocates to buttress his interests (e.g. Stryker/Sammis).
- There was a demarcation between information (client interest) and artistry (film-maker interest). There was little transgression of this by the client.

- His reputation was a powerful tool in negotiating changes or rejecting requests when the discussion was framed in terms of art and its expression.
- The film-maker gratified his need for personal expression to the extent that the wider client interests (literally the bigger picture) were removed from the story. He moulded the opportunity so as to fit in with his own artistic ambition. Had he delivered the original version of the film it is, arguably, likely he would have violated his own creed (and brand) and compromised his reputation.
- Paradoxically, the client wanted a *Flaherty picture* so it seems likely they were complicit in adopting his vision of the final film.
- This was also an entrepreneurial arrangement. Flaherty seems to have been aware of the needs of the marketplace and striven to adapt the product to it.
- He was, early on (perhaps when he was eager for the assignment) well aware of the client's needs. He appears to have succeeded in balancing the public relations requirements of the client with that of his own needs, commercially and artistically.
- The final film was not a conventional, industrial film. Both parties were striving for the same thing *("a work of art")* so there was less scope for conflict since they had all signed up to this objective.
- The client met its corporate communications objectives through buying the Flaherty brand in order to enhance their reputation. This also strengthened the negotiating position of the film-maker (for example, as the costs increased).

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

8.1 Adopting the clients idea

In each Case Study the client proposed the initial idea, which reflected some aspects of their need, their interests and the broader organisational strategy. Each client asked a question of the practitioner which acted as a stimulus to their respective imaginations. This drove the film-maker's response: to adopt the idea then interpret and adapt it. If the idea is shared, then the ownership is shared. The implication is that each stands to gain or lose by their association with this. Case Study One is a collaboration between all the parties. Case Study Two sees the director eventually take control of the idea. The client then has to adjust their viewpoint to the practitioner's who retains autonomy in the field.

8.2 Clients want creativity

Both sets of clients encouraged the directors creativity and accommodated the changing interpretation of the original proposal. But this was constrained by, and directed towards, the broader organisational needs of the client in Case Study One. The communications objectives of the client in Case Study Two, were met early on: which was to hire an "artist" whose international reputation would be employed to enhance their own.

8.3 Reputation buys autonomy

Case Study Two demonstrated the power of reputation within the relationship, as a negotiating lever that served the film-maker's personal interests and viewpoint.

8.4 Changing relationship

The two studies show evidence of a historical shift in the dynamics of the relationship. In *Louisiana Story* the role of the "sponsor" (from the perception of the film-maker and, it seems, the client) was to support the practitioner in pursuit of their artistic vision and viewpoint of the client's message. In 2004, the sponsor is now the client, implying a change in the nature of the relationship. The corporate production company aligns its interests with that of the commissioner in a "partnership". The freelance film-maker is then seeking to satisfy and fit in with the employer's ethos (the production company) and their client in terms of two sets of demands. The personal viewpoint of Perry Miller, in respect of the client's case, was relegated, or played no part, in the execution of his work.

8.5 Client and market forces

Client's create a marketplace in which ideas and reputation are bought and sold (a commoditisation of the role of the film-maker). The competitive tendering – three or four companies pitching for the work – can place a premium on ideas, their creative expression and track record. Thus, it acts as a stimulus to the creative impulses of the film-maker in pursuit of potential solutions – that need to be differentiated from the competition and pragmatic – in order to win the business. But all of this is circumscribed by the practical implications: of a client's budget; timescales; the genre of film required; organisational strategy; brand positioning; and the identity of the target market. This may be one of the defining characteristics of the corporate sector. The implication for the film-maker is that they are, at least initially (at the proposal stage) expected to originate creative and innovative approaches but they are then subject to a process of measures, criteria and tests, all of which are essentially defined by the needs of the client (objectified in the brief). Therefore, their professional viewpoint of an idea or the messages will be obliged to fit with that of the client. Their personal viewpoint in current practice is largely nullified by the processes that are woven into corporate work. What they may gain is some autonomy, subject to the circumstances and a clients understanding of their needs.

8.6 Client language and conversion of information by the film-maker

The client needs to communicate information (in the fulfilment of their communications objectives). Information – facts, figures, arguments etc. – is, itself, presented in the clients language of corporate communications and forms part of their territorial interests. The film-maker employs a different language – reflecting the grammar and techniques of their medium and profession (and territory) – to convert the client's information into the visual language of the film/video medium. They are speaking in two languages: hence, Perry Miller's comments about engaging in a dialogue with a client who knows about stocks and shares and Flaherty's adaptation of the clients messages into a form of artistic language. The effect of this is to open a gap in the relationship which then has to be progressively closed by adjustments of both parties in their respective orientations. Flaherty skewed the film towards his own position but the terms and conditions of the modern marketplace demand that the film-maker adopts the client's agenda.

Case Study Two showed an initial proposal from the film-maker that accommodated the clients broader communications strategy, involving a great deal of explanation vis-à-vis the client's interests in the bigger picture. The film-maker is implicitly set a task, by the client, in converting hard information into visual information, adapted to the corporate film medium (often shorter than a typical television programme) as a form of creative treatment. This is the challenge and the puzzle, but it also potentially sets up the field of conflict between the two parties. Precisely because, for example, information (the client's territory) – compared to a print medium, which is information rich – has to be edited out, shaped and adapted to conform with the demands of visual expression (less information rich) and the needs of the director's medium. The issue for the client is to adapt their position and viewpoint to the medium's characteristics and director's interpretation. The issue for the film-maker is to channel information into visual expression which is consistent with the client's brief and messages but also remains true to the practitioner's treatment/approach.

8.7 Trade and negotiation

Point 6 implies a *trade* between the parties involving some form of negotiation (Ettema 1982). In a 'partnership' (collaboration/shared ownership) power is shared – expertise, skills, authority – but there appears to be a trade between different (and sometimes aligned) perspectives. This complicating set of factors requires a trade of information and its conversion to the director's medium; a trade between notions of a film versus a communications solution; between creative vision and the client's criteria of meeting communication objectives; and a trade between controlling factors, the client constraints imposed by the brief and the practical effects of these, versus the creative need for some autonomy (in terms of working practices, professional creeds etc.). Within such a negotiation some form of compromise will follow. The nature of corporate film regulates the environment for both parties but particularly for that of the film-maker. This calls for a set of strategies involving adaptation to the medium and the clients message.

8.8 Emotion as common ground

There is the recognition that communication should be emotionally involving if the client's target market is to be engaged. It is expressed in their respective philosophies (viewpoints) which further cements the relationship as a partnership of shared interests.

8.9 Negotiating with power

The ultimate power, if exercised (in present practice) lies with the client's right to say "no" or make changes. This encourages film-makers to develop pre-emptive strategies to accommodate the client interests/viewpoint. Or, accept the nature of the relationship.

CHAPTER 9

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

If the medium of corporate film is to be more fully explored, then an opportunity exists for a more sustained study of the symbiotic relationship between clients and creative practitioners. Such work could evaluate whether there is evidence of changing roles and in what ways creativity is either liberated or constrained by the relationship.

Outside the scope of this enquiry was a definitive and catalogued history of how private and public sector corporate film evolved, developed and influenced the history of film-making. There is a shortage of studies that investigate the period before the 1930s and the 1960s to the present.

Further research could be carried out regarding what we may learn about the modern organisation through analysing the content, themes and messages of the corporate film. For example, it might provide a different way of understanding the evolution of industry and its wider relationship to society.

There is a need for a comprehensive archive which provides a home for the enormous amount of corporate video material that is out there. Such a resource could be made available via the internet and perhaps curated by the BFI and the IVCA.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

The relationship is that of a buyer and seller, trading in corporate interests and the creative needs of both parties. All film-makers are obliged to satisfy the terms of the client and stay *on message* in their creative interpretation of the brief. This implies a need to conform to the interests of the client, who equally has a vested interest in facilitating creative expression. The client buys creativity and the reputation of the film-maker to deliver a solution to their organisational needs. For some clients that may be a “communications solution”. But the professional viewpoint of the film-maker is to see it as a film. Because there is reciprocity in the arrangement there is apparent latitude in the evolving creation of the final product.

It is a trading relationship, seemingly touching upon all aspects of the work. A trade in expertise, knowledge, ideas, time, budgets, messages, information and agendas. One may, perhaps delicately, pull and push the other through an ongoing process of negotiation which reflects a modern concept of partnership, though the nature of the relationship and its location within a competitive marketplace means the film-maker must adjust their professional, operational outlook to that of the clients. They may evolve strategies for accommodating this but ultimate control rests within a clients capacity to change the film or choose to take their business elsewhere.

We have seen evidence of the need for adaptation by the film-maker to the conditions of the relationship. Adopting the client’s ideas and interests, then seeking to add value through creative interpretation.

But it seems a delicate balance between corporate, broader organisational interests and the individual’s need to find gratification on a professional level and, perhaps, through creativity as an expression of personal identity.

Both are regulated by the nature of the corporate film medium. There are the complicating implications of the trade in the client’s information and its conversion, by the film-maker, into their visual language. Here we can see the differences between the ‘stakes’ and ‘stands’ of the two parties located within two distinct territories, representing different professional viewpoints. Each is required to negotiate (or in the case of the film-maker, to sometimes justify) in the process: a trade between the informational, organisational need and its creative expression.

Yet it is the client’s need which is driving the creative expression of the film-maker. Acting as both a stimulus and a test of their film-making abilities. The nature of the relationship imposes a set of constraining corporate values and messages which, at best, pose an invigorating challenge and an opportunity for some form of, circumscribed, creativity.

The implications of the relationship within corporate film, mean that the film-maker is in the service of the interests of the client. Their traditional medium of expression becomes the client’s medium. The corporate film medium then, is the message. It is dedicated – by dint of creativity as tradable commodity, and the notion of a partnership – to serving their viewpoint. The art of the film-maker, under these conditions, is to turn the clients medium into a vehicle for their own expression.

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APPENDICES I

APPENDICES I I