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Parting the Iron Curtain: Michael Klinger's attempt to make *A Man and a Half*

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Between 1967 and 1984, Michael Klinger attempted to make a war film *A Man and a Half*. It was to be an international production through which Klinger intended to establish himself as an important independent producer. Although the film was unrealized, its failure is instructive, revealing a great deal about the difficulties Klinger experienced as a British filmmaker during a period of crisis and retrenchment in the UK film industry. His pioneering, if unsuccessful, attempt to work with Eastern European studios sheds light on the little understood history of UK co-productions, especially ones that involved not the obvious Western European partners but the state-controlled industries of the Eastern Bloc. Producers are fertile ground for the study of shadow cinema as their *modus operandi* can be characterized by ever-changing portfolios of projects they hope might work for varied budgets and different markets, and their careers are often littered by an array of unrealized projects alongside the occasional successes. Although my central focus is on the role of the producer as the pivotal point in a highly volatile industry, with their activities encompassing the entire production process from genesis to exhibition, the account that follows also aims to shed light on the work of film agents whose activities have been barely recognized

within film scholarship, let alone scrutinized in any detail. In understanding film production, I suggest we need to attend carefully to power relationships. Producers can often exert a high degree of localized control, but they have to negotiate with much more powerful actors in the shape of financiers, distributors and studio heads. This chapter therefore explores the complex and mutable nature of agency in the production process and of the constant struggle for creative control, contextualized within an understanding of the influence of film policy regimes and more fundamental shifts in cultural or political discourses and ideologies.

This account is based on wide-ranging documentation in the Michael Klinger Papers housed at the University of the West of England, which enables the aborted production process of *A Man and a Half* to be reconstituted in detail. Unfulfilled projects tend to leave extensive material traces because their instigators, as in this example, cherish the dream that one day they might be accomplished; and in this instance I was also fortunate to glean additional insights from an extended conversation with the producer's son, Tony Klinger, who was closely involved in this aborted production and who has gone on to become an award-winning writer and filmmaker in his own right. I should stress that that my purpose is not to try to recreate, from the extant material in the archive, an abandoned masterpiece, or to consider how *A Man and a Half* might have worked as a film – although inevitably that will be part of the analysis – but to use this unrealized production as a way to try to understand the precise nature of the challenges facing UK filmmakers during a turbulent period of British film history.

The independent producer and the property: Michael Klinger and *A Man and a Half*

Klinger's emergence as an independent producer came after a five-year partnership with fellow Jewish entrepreneur, Tony Tenser, running a production-distribution company, Compton-Tekli. Klinger broke with Tenser in 1967 because he had aspirations to make more artistic productions than the sexploitation features, like *That Kind of Girl* (1963), which had characterized Compton's output. Klinger formed a solo production company, Avton Films, through which he exercised personal control over every aspect of filmmaking, including choice of subject (Spicer and McKenna 2013: 11–70). As he remarked in interview, 'If you do a film independently, you are the master of your fate. You can fight for the things you believe in. You do the best deals you can with independent or major distributors, territory by territory' (Falk 1981). Klinger's portfolio of projects reflected

his desire to exploit different markets. The low-budget 'Confessions' series of sex comedies were for indigenous consumption; the expensive action-adventure thrillers such as *Shout at the Devil* (1976), designed to rival the Hollywood studios, for the international marketplace; crime thrillers such as *Get Carter* (1971) that might succeed in both; and a mid-tier of what he referred to as 'unusual films' – made by talented young directors Klinger cultivated – Peter Collinson, *The Penthouse* (1967); Alastair Reid, *Baby Love* (1968) and *Something to Hide* (1972); Mike Hodges, *Pulp* (1972); and Moshé Mizrahi, *Rachel's Man* (1974) – that had no clear generic label. None of these films represented an obvious commercial proposition but they were ones in which Klinger had a high personal investment. As will be discussed, *A Man and a Half* falls partially into the last category.

Guy Elmes's screenplay for *A Man and a Half* was commissioned by Klinger in November 1968 based on Elmes's earlier treatment entitled *The Parachute*.[1] Elmes's own career had encompassed conventional generic fare – *Nor the Moon by Night* (1958) – and more 'unusual films' such as *The Stranger's Hand* (1954) and the Grahame Greene adaptation *Across the Bridge* (1957) – as well as adapting Italian screenplays for the British market (Falk 2000: 83). *A Man and a Half* is set in German-occupied Northern Italy towards the end of the Second World War. An American Major, David Stone, is seriously injured while parachuting into the area on a mission to support the partisans. He is found by Angelo, a 10-year-old boy, who lives with his beautiful mother Leda in a remote mountain farmstead where several Germans are billeted. Angelo's father has been executed by the Germans for his part in the Resistance. The boy hides the Major in the barn under the Germans' noses, while his mother contacts the partisans led by Captain Piero to arrange for his rescue. The German soldiers die in a gun battle with the partisans and the Major, Leda and the boy flee to safety on a steam train pursued by the German Army.

Elmes is at pains in his original treatment to emphasize that the 'story is a development of truth. An incident of this nature did actually take place.' Tony Klinger confirmed that his father was always attracted to war stories that had authenticity, notably *Greenbeach*, another long-nurtured but unrealized project (Spicer 2010). *Greenbeach* offered the opportunity to celebrate the role of an unrecognized Jewish war hero in the Dieppe landing, *A Man and a Half* the role of the Resistance in a European setting. Neither is the conventional paean to the courageous officer class that dominated British war films but which had little appeal for Klinger who considered himself an outsider from the British establishment. In his correspondence about the screenplay, Klinger was at pains to emphasize its qualities as a story irrespective of its setting: how Elmes convincingly develops the growing relationship between the boy and the wounded soldier who relies on him that becomes Angelo's *rite de passage* into manhood; the underlying sexual tensions between Leda and the soldiers; and the thrilling denouement

in which the train destroys a partially repaired bridge previously sabotaged by the partisans. Klinger wrote to one potential investor, 'I believe it is a fine story with tension, excitement and, most important, a beautiful relationship between a helpless man and the little boy who saves his life' (Klinger 1968a). In another letter, he described *A Man and a Half* as 'very close to my heart … which … could be made into a beautiful and commercial picture' (Klinger 1969).

Throughout all the protracted efforts to realize this film, Klinger's prime concern was to preserve the integrity and strengths of Elmes's story, even though it is clear from archived correspondence that Elmes had no further involvement once he had submitted the screenplay. Because of its subject matter and treatment, Klinger was convinced that it needed a British or European director who would attend to the subtleties of the relationships as well as the action elements. He considered Alastair Reid who had directed *Baby Love* and *Somewhere to Hide* with imagination and sensitivity to the subtle resonances of the story, and Peter Collinson whose work on *The Penthouse* demonstrated his ability to bring out the darker undercurrents and the explosive tensions that make *A Man and a Half* a distinctive war story. He also looked to European talent, including Robert Enrico, the French writer-director of the celebrated *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1963) whom Klinger had met briefly at the Cannes Film Festival when the film was screened. He told Enrico, 'I have watched your work with great interest' and hoped he might consider directing *A Man and a Half* (Klinger 1968b). Another possibility was Maurizio Lucidi, an editor and writer who had worked with Orson Welles and who had just directed *Si può fare… amigo* (1972) with Jack Palance, which had a boy in one of the leading roles. These possibilities indicate the extent of Klinger's familiarity with European cinema. In interview, Mike Hodges, who collaborated with Klinger closely on both *Get Carter* and *Pulp*, recalled a man who was 'very European … He had some instinct to actually move towards art cinema in many ways, but still concentrate on good storytelling' (Hodges 2010).

However, choice of subject matter, treatment and director were all aspects of what I have labelled localized control in which the producer is sovereign. *A Man and a Half*, this 'beautiful and commercial picture', straddles the permeable divide between one of Klinger's 'unusual films' in which character development is pre-eminent and a more straightforwardly commercial picture, an exciting war film, where the action elements dominate. Klinger understood that *A Man and a Half* would be an expensive production as it had to be filmed on location in the winter in remote areas where snow could be guaranteed throughout the shoot. Steam trains and a large number of extras were required for the explosive finale, as well as the construction of models of the bridge. He therefore needed a major studio to invest in the production or seek out alternative sources of money wherever they could be found. It is the search for production finance that often dominates a

producer's activities and is frequently the locus of a protracted struggle for creative control in which the producer is no longer the most powerful agent. In the following sections I will trace those struggles – with the Hollywood majors, Eastern European studios and potential Italian co-producers – but they have been separated for analytical clarity. It is important to keep in mind that these negotiations took place concurrently, a testament to Klinger's extraordinary energy and charisma as well as his industry nous.

Raising production finance I: The Hollywood studios

The obvious source of finance for British producers was the American majors, which were the principal investors in British films in the 1960s (Walker [1975] 1986). Elmes's screenplay had an American lead and it was through casting a major international star in the role of Major Stone that Klinger hoped to secure studio interest. Charlton Heston, Lee Marvin, Anthony Quinn and Rod Steiger were all approached, and Tony Klinger, then working in Los Angeles, made direct representations to Richard Dreyfuss. Telly Savalas, whom Klinger had met personally, raised the possibility of investing in the film if it went ahead as an independent production (Klinger 1968c). Klinger's choice for the part of Leda, the emotional centre of the film, was Italian stars with an international reputation: Gina Lollabridgida, Claudia Cardinale or Sophia Loren, who was interested in having her own son play Angelo (Klinger 1968d). Klinger was under no illusions that it was a 'talent package' that was the best way to secure Hollywood's interest rather than *A Man and a Half*'s storyline.

Indeed, despite these possible inducements, Elmes's screenplay presented particular problems for American investors. Although various studio readers acknowledged its qualities, the general consensus was that the role of the American Major Stone was too passive and also less important than Angelo and Leda, therefore lacking the scope and substance deemed necessary to attract a major star. One agent opined that he would find it impossible 'to interest a Charlton Heston' (Howard 1969). Crucially, what Klinger considered to be the story's essential quality – a small, intimate narrative that unfolds slowly – became its central weakness for the US market. One reader judged it was more suited to a TV movie than a theatrical one: 'I don't think it would attract a big audience in the cinema, it's not that sort of film' ('A Man and a Half' n.d.). Paramount, which had purchased Klinger's earlier film *The Penthouse* (1967) after completion, did not regard *A Man and a Half* as commercially viable. Michael Flint, Head of Paramount's London office, considered that it needed some more 'powerful ingredients to carry the story', though he failed to suggest what these might be (Flint

1968). To potential American investors, one of the story's major stumbling blocks was its generic status as a war film. Disney's London manager Bill Dover rejected the script because of the sexual threat to the boy's mother and considered that a Second World War incident was 'somewhat dated to be attractive in today's market' ('Bill Dover to Eddie Evans' 1970). Klinger tried his best to argue otherwise – 'Why do people think this is a World War II film? It is really a film about a man and a boy that happens to be set in World War II' (Klinger 1970a) – but to little effect.

Raising production finance II: Opening up the Eastern Front

At the same time as he tried to solicit American finance, Klinger explored the possibilities of European investment. This was a highly unusual and imaginative move as the principal orientation of most British producers, with some exceptions such as Simon Perry, has been towards North America: 'British cinema has always been facing the US, while its back, so to speak, was turned to Europe' (Elsaesser 2005: 62). This reluctance to engage with Europe is partly the result of a Eurosceptic UK film policy that has consistently urged British producers to think of America as the 'prime market' and almost never actively encouraged European co-productions (Higson 2015; Spicer 2018). However, as a diasporic Jewish entrepreneur and Europhile, Klinger saw Europe as both a marketplace and a potential alternative source of finance to Hollywood, particularly given the subject matter and setting of *A Man and a Half*. At Compton, Klinger and Tenser had built up an extensive network of foreign distributors, exhibitors and sales agents, and Klinger was an assiduous attendee of European film festivals at which he met numerous producers' agents looking for business. These agents, who represented a number of clients including the Eastern European state-run film studios, were an important and little understood aspect of the way the European film industry operated during this period.

Although Cold War tensions were rife during this period, Klinger saw the potential of Eastern Europe even though there were no established channels for negotiations, nor could he expect the British government, which was reluctant to support the film industry, to assist his efforts. Thus, it was through the knowledge that Klinger gleaned from sales agents, festivals and the pages of the trade press that he became aware that Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were all interested in attracting Western productions. *Variety* commented that 'Titoland' (Yugoslavia) was relatively liberalized and hospitable to Western trade and noted how the programme of political and economic liberalization initiated by

Alexander Dubček at the beginning of 1968 meant that Czechoslovakia intended to rival Yugoslavia as a centre for foreign film production ('Review of *Pobed* (*The Trek*)' 1968). In contrast to American sensibilities, Eastern European studios could be expected to understand the relevance and audience appeal of a story about the Axis occupation and partisan resistance. 'Partisan films' were a popular genre, particularly in post-war Yugoslavian cinema ('Pula Film Fest Reviews' 1968). Although often derided as formulaic, *Variety*'s reviewer discerned a growing emotional maturity and willingness to 'probe the war in a human light without the posturing and heroics that marked the many partisan Yugoslav pix of yore' (ibid.). *A Man and a Half* shared a similar preoccupation with the 'experiences and suffering of ordinary people caught up in the war, allied with the vital transposition to high tragedy or drama' as well as the 'more robust out-and-out action elements' which *Variety*'s reviewer deemed essential 'for more than mainly local chances' and which was missing from indigenous productions (ibid.).

In addition to ideological compatibility, Klinger, again through conversations with sales agents and his reading of the trade press, was aware of the potential cost advantages: Eastern European studios offered complete 'packages' of below-the-line services and, as *Variety*, reporting on the shooting of the Second World War epic *The Bridge at Remagen* (1968) in Czechoslovakia pointed out, 'a state-run economy can do things that simply would not be permitted in a capitalist society', such as closing a major bridge to traffic for three months while filming took place and providing an abundant supply of military hardware together with cheap extras (Byron 1968). Michael and Tony Klinger had been in Czechoslovakia during the shooting of this film and witnessed at first hand some of the advantages. Klinger's turn eastwards thus made commercial as well as artistic sense and he opened up negotiations with studios in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, all of which responded positively to both the logistical and the aesthetic requirements of the script, producing detailed reports on possible locations, accompanied by photographs and, in one case, a portfolio of sketches ('Report from Boris Rotovnik' 1970).

However, negotiations with Eastern European studios may have been relatively straightforward for a Hollywood studio such as United Artists that produced *The Bridge at Remagen* – though even here production was halted by the Russian Occupation of Czechoslovakia (August–September 1968) – but were far harder for an independent producer. Tony Klinger recalled the endemic corruption that attended every element of the potential package and the abiding sense that they were chasing phantoms, as deals that appeared concluded started to dissolve on closer inspection. Eastern European economies were notoriously bureaucratic and the film industry was ridden by obfuscation and clogged by convoluted channels of communication. Klinger had dispatched Harry Fine, with whom he had

co-produced *The Penthouse*, to explore the possibilities in Bulgaria. Fine found a 'confused situation' in which the Bulgarian state studio, although well equipped, was at a standstill because of a disastrous co-production, *The Viper*, which had 'cost the heads of studio their jobs', their successors not yet having been appointed (Fine 1967). He advised against any deal, concerned by the apparent disarray in the industry and also his suspicions about the *bona fides* of Malcolm Nixon, the producer's agent who was acting as the broker between himself and the authorities (ibid.). The exact role of these agents, the extent of their powers and the strength of their promises is a recurring theme in what follows. In acting as intermediaries, these agents clearly often exceeded their brief and exaggerated their own importance.

At the same time, Klinger engaged directly in negotiations with the much larger Czechoslovakian film industry. At this point, individual Czech studios had a high degree of autonomy within the overall system and therefore Klinger negotiated directly with the Barrandov Studios in Prague, sending a copy of Elmes's script to Antonin Bedřich, who had negotiated the deal for *Remagen*. Klinger assured Bedřich that he was 'discussing this project with a major American company, who are very interested, and it is contemplated the film will be made with an international star cast and that shooting will commence about January 1st, 1969' (Klinger 1968e). Rudolf Wolf, production manager of Barrandov Studios's Foreign Film Production Unit, replied on Bedřich's behalf, pointing out some logistical difficulties and suggested Klinger went to Prague to discuss the production (including script changes), inspect the studio facilities and possible locations (Wolf 1968). Although the trip was apparently cordial and productive, Klinger was disappointed by Barrandov's subsequent written offer in which the price for its services had risen from the figure he thought he had negotiated, $140,000, to $200,000 (Klinger 1968f).

Similar difficulties dogged Klinger's negotiations in Yugoslavia, having been assured by another form of intermediary, Julius Potocsny, the US and UK representative for Central Film Studios Kosutnjak (CFSK) that there were plans to make it 'the motion picture capital of Europe' (Potocsny n.d.). Potocsny considered the screenplay 'an excellent property' and offered to take Klinger to Belgrade to set up a deal (Potocsny 1969a). However, here too costs – considerably higher than the sum quoted by Barrandov – were a major stumbling block. Klinger tried to secure a better deal by negotiating directly with Žika Vojčić, the managing director of CFSK, who came to meet him in London. Following the meeting, Vojčić sent an enthusiastic letter enclosing a rough schedule, budget and the offer of $35,000 towards below the line costs (Vojčić 1970). However, this was far lower than the $80,000 figure Klinger thought he had negotiated, and he urged Vojčić to make a higher offer that would be a 'great inducement to prospective financiers as a gesture of your confidence in the subject' (Klinger 1970b).

Clearly, Klinger was attempting to entice American investment by securing an attractive production package in Eastern Europe. Four years later, in June 1974, Klinger reopened negotiations with CFSK through another producer's agent, Jon Acevski. However, Acevski had unintentionally misled Klinger into anticipating that CFSK was able to finance all the below-the-line costs, whereas it was actually interested in 'financing of part of services in Yugoslavia, up to a maximum of 50%' (Acevski 1974). In the intervening time, Vojčić's attitude to the film seemed to have hardened. He considered that *A Man and a Half*'s subject matter would only be commercial for another two years or so in the international market (Vojčić 1974). Klinger encountered similar problems with other Yugoslav studios. Acevski also advised that Jadran Films in Zagreb was prepared to cover all the Yugoslavian costs of *A Man and a Half* subject to receiving a portion of the worldwide revenue of the film equal to its total investment, this too proved illusory (Klinger 1974). Tony Klinger was dispatched to investigate only to find that, like CFSK, Jadran Film was only prepared to provide 40 per cent of the Yugoslav budget (Peruzovic 1974).

The problem that overshadowed all Klinger's negotiations was his inability to secure American investment. Thus, Branimir Tuma, the head of another Yugoslav company, Triglavfilms, in Ljubljana was also enthusiastic about the screenplay and confident that Yugoslavia could provide all the necessary locations and the 'required amount' of snow, as well as steam engines, which still operated in the country. But he wanted reassurances that Klinger had some financial backing because 'our Bankers [*sic*] are not very enthusiastic about financing film production without some guarantees from distribution or other sources and we should feel obliged by receiving some explanations in this regard' (Tuma 1970a). Klinger was forced to admit that despite funding *Get Carter*, MGM was not prepared to part-finance *A Man and a Half* as part of a three-picture deal (Klinger 1970c). Tuma's reply acknowledged that Klinger's difficulties in obtaining US finance were typical but that it was therefore up to Klinger to finance the film himself, which, of course, was impossible (Tuma 1970b). Ideally he was looking for something more substantial from Eastern Europe than just the provision of services, namely, a co-production (Klinger 1968g). However, this never materialized. The nearest he got to this was an arrangement suggested by Potocsny, 'Cooperative Film Production', which would commit CSFK to leasing one or two of its six large sound stages on an annual basis for $780,000, complete with a fifty-member crew, set designers and builders, all necessary studio and location equipment, transportation, recording, post-synch and dubbing facilities, editing facilities and office space. Producers could take on the lease jointly and could shoot as many films as they could programme in a year (Potocsny 1969b). This was a more ambitious scheme than Klinger could commit to as a sole producer.

Raising production finance III: An Italian job?

Alongside negotiating with the Hollywood majors and Eastern European studios, Klinger opened up a third front: an Anglo-Italian co-production. Given *A Man and a Half*'s setting, Italy was the obvious partner, especially as a film agreement between the two nations had been signed in 1967, which Klinger considered had been woefully underexplored by British producers even though it meant that the possibilities of securing state support and subsidies were doubled. Other producers may well have been deterred by the British Film Producers Association warning against making 'hybrid films' (Barber 2012: 15–16). Klinger negotiated with the Italian producers Carlo and Roberto Bessi and Roberto Haggiag of Dear Film in Rome about the possibility of shooting the film in Domodossola in the Italian Alps, which Klinger had recently visited to look for locations, his overtures brokered by another polyglot intermediary, Leslie Maylath, managing director of the European Film Agency based in Amsterdam. By 30 July 1971, Klinger had prepared a preliminary budget for an Italian shoot which, at $970,552 below-the-line, was markedly higher than the Eastern European figures ('Michael Klinger Productions Limited' 1971). Another film agent, John C. Mather, thought he could arrange a co-production deal with 50 per cent financing if the budget were reduced to $600,000 (Mather 1972). Mather found potential Italian partners, Massimo and Ferruccio Ferrara, and tried to broker a deal on the basis of a reduced budget with 50 per cent provided by Switzerland, 30 per cent by Italy and 20 per cent by the UK ('A Man and A Half' 1972). However, Klinger was again unable to interest the London-based offices of the American majors (that would qualify as UK finance) in providing investment.

Klinger also negotiated with Joe de Blasio of the Italian production company BGA, who worked on *Pulp* that had also been considered as an Italian partnership, though the principal financiers were United Artists (Spicer and McKenna 2013: 84–5). De Blasio thought the script made 'interesting reading, though a bit slow' and advocated that if the Major could be given a definite mission with a time schedule, 'a lot more suspense would be added' (Blasio 1972a). However, in a suggestion which took discussions full circle, he recommended that such a potentially expensive picture should be shot in Bulgaria, with which Italy also had a co-production agreement. De Blasio, unnecessarily as far as Klinger was concerned, emphasized the benefits of working with a state-controlled film industry, 'The government gives all types of co-operation and would make available trains, armored cars etc., a type of co-operation which is very difficult to get from the Italian government' (ibid.). Having learned that there was an Italo-Yugoslav co-production agreement, which was more liberal than the Italo-Bulgarian

one, de Blasio then recommended Klinger consider Yugoslavia rather than Bulgaria, but he emphasized that in either case one of the stipulations was that there could be no outside participants (Blasio 1972b). In view of the film's anticipated costs, this was never a feasible option. It indicates Klinger's difficulties as an independent in dealing with agents who were much more used to negotiating with major companies that had considerable financial resources.

The conspicuous absence in all the negotiations around *A Man and a Half* are any overtures for finance to major UK film companies – Rank and ABPC – or to the indigenous 'film bank' the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC). This is particularly surprising as the project stuttered on into the 1970s, a decade in which American studios concentrated on producing films in the United States and closed their London offices (Smith 2008). Klinger may have considered that the subject matter and setting – there has only been one British film about partisan resistance, *Undercover* (1943), filmed by Ealing Studios in Wales! – or perhaps because *A Man and a Half* had an American lead, was unlikely to attract indigenous interest. However, he had contemplated rewriting the part of Major Stone for Richard Burton who, he hoped, would also bring in Elizabeth Taylor as Leda (Klinger 1972). The more probable reason for Klinger's reluctance to approach British sources is that he knew very well that, for a production of this magnitude, Rank or the NFFC would have required him to demonstrate that he had an American distribution deal which, if he had secured one, would have rendered their involvement unnecessary (for an account of Klinger's attempts to secure a four-film deal with Rank, see Spicer and McKenna 2013: 151–71). Although Klinger was the most successful independent British producer during this period, he never once secured indigenous funding. In the absence of homegrown sources, Klinger continued to pursue foreign investors, notably ones in Canada where he had been successful with other productions (ibid.: 174–84). He also tried to generate interest in a radical rewrite of the script by his son Tony – originally called *The Earthling* and later renamed *Stone* – that replaced the original war story with a science fiction one in which Stone comes from outer space. By the mid-1980s, Klinger had reverted to the original *A Man and a Half* script and renewed his efforts to interest Eastern European studios or secure an Anglo-Italian co-production, but without success. One of Klinger's Italian correspondents expressed the view that *A Man and a Half*'s moment had passed: 'The story is about a period and topic which has been vastly and repeatedly exploited in Italy over the years. And at such a distance of time since the end of the World War II, I doubt that the Italian audiences would still be interested in it' (Lucisano 1985). Klinger refused to accept this judgement and was still trying to get the film made shortly before his death in 1989.

Conclusion

Although producing *A Man and a Half* was not one of Klinger's most urgent priorities as the 1970s progressed, it nevertheless remained a film that he would have dearly liked to make. However, as I have shown, the key to understanding why it was never made is to explore in detail the asymmetrical power relations that are embedded in the network of relationships that constitute the production process, which often have little to do with the particular qualities of the property itself. Although the character of Major Stone is under-developed as the studio script reviewers diagnosed, that fault could have been corrected had the project proceeded. The reasons it did not get made have much more to do with the varied forces at work in the international film industry during this period over which a UK independent producer could exercise very different degrees or levels of control. Klinger had more or less complete management of the script and choice of director, but this was outweighed by the necessity to raise production finance and the prospect of an international distribution deal, where his ability to exert his influence was severely circumscribed.

Klinger understood that *A Man and a Half* was not a straightforward commercial proposition but a hybrid project, part intricate study of relationships, part action film. It reflected his desire to be an important international producer and his showmanship, but also, as Mike Hodges commented, his aspiration to be part of a European art cinema with its attendant cultural capital. To try to realize this production, Klinger therefore used his extraordinary networks of contacts and boundless energy to pursue a range of options as he negotiated simultaneously with the Hollywood majors, Eastern European studios and potential Italian co-producers in the attempt to create an investment package that would enable him to retain creative control and preserve the integrity of Elmes's story. As has been shown, these relationships were often further complicated by the interventions of a range of intermediaries several of whom did not hold the power and influence they claimed and by the particular difficulties presented by each of these three potential sources of finance. However, at a deeper level his efforts were frustrated by the general withdrawal of American capital that had underpinned British production for a decade, a process which neither he nor any other individual producer could influence. Without securing a deal with a Hollywood studio, the other elements fell away and there was no countervailing support available for British producers in a period when state assistance for filmmakers had been largely abandoned. There were also even deeper processes at work: the fluctuations of Cold War politics and different cultural attitudes to the Second World War. It is by attending to these different levels – economic, political and ideological – that we can appreciate the actual nature of film production. And it is through

archival documentation, often most plentiful for projects that never came to fruition – in this case the voluminous traces that this unrealized film has left in the Klinger Papers – that enable the researcher to understand these processes in all their depth, complexity and precariousness.

Note

1. The Michael Klinger Papers (MKP) (http://michaelklingerpapers.uwe.ac.uk/) contain copies of both treatment and finished screenplay. The details of Elmes's commission are contained in the letter from Sally Shuter, William Morris Agency, to Klinger, 8 December 1967.

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