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The Full Picture: Perspectives on an Archaeology of British Screen Advertising Production

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Screen advertising production is a relatively neglected domain of British screen history, largely overlooked in extant studies of the UK's film production sector. *The Guardian*'s 'Points of View' (1986) is one of the more acclaimed works produced by that production sector which continues to attract popular interest. This article conducts an archaeological investigation into the industry through a case study analysis of 'Points of View' and an in-depth interview with its director, Paul Weiland. It explores the role of personal testimony in archaeological methods in media history. Whilst archival sources such as trade press can provide additional sources, they can never verify nor falsify the evidence of personal testimony, nor can they be used to fabricate a harmonious, consistent, or singular narrative of history. The analysis concludes that screen advertising was a hybrid cultural practice articulated during the 1970s to the 1990s as a solution to the problem: we're not invited, please entertain. Remaining hidden from the establishment was favourable to agencies and production companies. It reminds us that means concealed or kept out of sight which invites the question 'concealed from who'? Currently, we have one perspective on the history of screen advertising. We do not yet have the full picture.

Introduction

'Points of View' is a widely celebrated commercial created for *The Guardian* newspaper first broadcast on British television in 1986. Free to view on the History of Advertising Trust (HAT) website, the spot features regularly in lists of the world's best advertisements.[1] It was part of the 'Whole Picture' advertising campaign run by *The Guardian* until 2012. The thirty-second spot shows a skinhead running down an urban street towards the camera whilst a voice-over says, 'an event seen from one point of view gives one impression;' the film fades to black before the same voice-over is heard saying, 'seen from another point of view it gives quite a different impression' as the picture fades up to reveal the same skinhead now seen from a rear view camera position running towards a businessman apparently to steal his briefcase; the film again cuts to black before fading up with a new, third, wide aerial shot over which the voice-over now says, 'but it's only when you get the whole picture you can fully understand what's going on;' the audience is shown the skinhead saving the businessman's life by protecting him from falling bricks from the overhead scaffolding.

'Points of View' was one of hundreds of commercials analysed for a forthcoming book on the hidden history of British screen advertising. Many commercials have been lost to history because of the poor archiving procedures of brands and the lack of funds for cataloguing and restoration at publicly accessible archives such as HAT and the British Film Institute (BFI). The sector that produced them has been described as 'hidden' because it has not been included in accounts of the UK's independent film production sector (Caston 2022); until the publications of Grainge (2011), and Grainge and Johnson (2015), it had been largely overlooked in British film and television studies. In the USA, the sector has received more attention within 'useful film' studies (Vonderau et al. 2017). But the sector is not hidden from the point of view of the industry itself which has been supported since 1955 by the trade association Advertising Producers' Association (APA). The APA lobbies the Government on its members' behalf, runs foreign missions, and training schemes, negotiates and regulates the execution of standard contracts between advertising agencies (through the IPA, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising) and production companies, and works with other trades unions such as BECTU[2] to set standard rates for crew. The APA website carries an official history of the organisation which documents the negotiation of the Blue Contract and the Plitzy One and Plitzy Two agreements.[3]

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[1] 'Points of View' was selected by Campaign as one of the best adverts of the last fifty years and by The Drum as Number 7 in the World's Best Ads Ever (Ormesher 2022).

[2] Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union, since 2017 a sector in the larger union Prospect.

[3] "The Blue Contract" as it became known, was the legal foundation for all engagements between clients, agencies and production companies agreed between the APA, IPA and ISBA until 1987 when it was revised into 1982) revised into the Pliatzky Report and, again, in 1995 into Pliatzky 2. *APA* (2015).

This article examines the concept of an archaeology of British screen advertising production through an interview with the director of 'Points of View,' Paul Weiland. Using additional archives and trade press, it will be argued that Weiland's account of 'Points of View' shows us that remaining hidden from view may have served the industry's purpose. Weiland's *raison d'être* of screen advertising 'we're not invited, so please: *entertain*' is axiomatic in this argument as are the concepts of *discourse* and *archaeological method.*

Archaeological Method and Academic Research on British Screen Advertising History

In 2021, I was awarded a small grant by the British Academy to conduct an 'archaeology' of the British screen advertising production sector.[4] The project was conceptualised as an archaeology to foreground the central goal of identifying the *discourse* – or discourses – of screen advertising production in Britain since 1955. In his 1969 *Archaeology of Knowledge*, first published in English in 1972, Foucault had suggested that through analyses of 'documents' the researcher could begin to understand the discourses, rather than structural cultural totalities, of the past emphasising that a historical practice can have several discourses (2013 reprint of 1972). Earlier research (Caston 2019, 2020, 2023) suggested that a closely related hidden screen industry (music video) was a hybrid cultural form and a type of industry practice functioning with several discursive practices, each with distinct rules and strategies. It was hypothesised then that screen advertising might have materialised around a similarly hybrid interaction of discourses. The rules of each discursive practice can be distinct from each other and not subsumable into some all-encompassing concept such as 'the spirit of the age' or 'screen culture.' The conception that identification of a *common problem* is part of an archaeology inquiry, as proposed by Krarup's publication on the possibility of deducing a clearly definable archaeological *method* from Foucault's writings, moreover, contained potential to theorise the interaction of these discourses. For Krarup 'archaeological methodology consists in searching for the conditions of co-existence of different – especially of mutually contradicting – enunciations, understood in terms of a common "problem" to which no solution appears to be currently available' (2021: 3). This article seeks to identify not just these discourses, but also the common problem.

Foucault's 1969 approach pivots around the analyses of 'documents,' referred to in this article also as artefacts. The documents available for identification and analysis of discourse were films and metadata, trade press, paper archive collections of corporations

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and agencies, biographies, autobiographies and miscellaneous personal testimonies. For this analysis of 'Points of View' the documents included the archives of *Campaign*, a history commissioned by the APA itself (2015), the digitised and catalogued advertising films curated by the BFI's Curator for Advertising and Publicity films (Foxon 2023) and the digitised collections of HAT. However, the principal method is an interview. The interview with Weiland was one of fifteen in-depth qualitative interviews conducted for the British Academy project. These were not conventional oral histories to be deposited in archives for open access (Ritchie 2014), but semi-structured interviews focused on the careers of producers, directors and CEOs selected for the expert and influential role they occupied within 'industry discourse' in the practices of screen advertising production from 1955 onwards. Weiland's interview took place at his private residence over a period of four hours. Prior to the interview, I read archival trade press about Weiland and watched those of his commercials available on YouTube. After the interview, and during the transcription, I used additional sources such as Companies House data, further trade press, and other secondary sources to identify connections rather than, simply, corroborations.

What role might interviews have in an archaeological method? Interviews and oral histories do not feature in the types of documents discussed by Foucault in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*. The role of 'oral memory' and the use of oral histories as a method nevertheless has a long tradition in archaeology (Jones and Russell 2012). 'Perhaps one of the most frequent criticisms of oral interviewing is its subjectivity. How can we trust the narrative account of a single individual, with its attendant biases? How are we to reconcile the presence of the interviewer? Underpinning this claim is the lingering presumption that "pure" history is compiled from traditional *print* sources: diaries, letters, autobiographies, census polls, church records, and the like' (Lucas and Strain 2010: 60). These challenges are addressed at the end of this paper in a broader discussion of the role of interviews as 'documents' in an archaeological method.

Existing historical publications tackle some of the cultural questions in advertising but do not adopt this archaeological paradigm. Secondary historical works on British advertising by Nevett (1982), and Fletcher (2008) are useful and comprehensive introductions to the earlier periods and to the larger international, political and economic debates within which London's advertising agencies operated but focus on all media rather than screen media alone. In a section dedicated to television, Nixon analyses the JWT's early television collections within the discourse of USA's advertising practices and a British political agenda centred around the nuclear family (2013) but focuses on the agencies, not the production companies. Gable (1980) Farmer (2016),

Sargeant (2010), and Spittle (2009b) on the 1960s offered more detailed case studies of film and television commercials after 1955, but not on the production industry.

Since the publication of Elsaesser's paper (2004) on the new film history as media archaeology, scholars have begun looking at the historic discursive intersections between screen media, paving the way for this new kind of archaeological excavation. Of huge importance is Gurevitch's (2009) study of narrative and spectacle in early advertising and cinema in a special issue on advertising and narrative edited by Spittle (2009a). The studies of the early Lever advertising films by Sargeant (2011) and Strickland (2024) mine deeper into the narrative and cinematic solutions found by brands to the common problem that screen advertisements were an unwanted intrusion. Groskopf's (2013) account of the exclusion of screen advertising from cinemas by producers, distributors and exhibitors to elevate the cultural and economic status of film in early twentieth-century USA invites the question of whether the same occurred in Britain; evidence suggests not only that it did, but that this continued into the first decade of television (Sargeant 2018 Garrett 1986). Strickland (2024) and Sargeant (2010) both highlight a discourse of legitimisation for interruptive advertising based around the concepts of entertainment and advertising patronage as a form of Medici-style film sponsorship, particularly in the work of the Shell Film Unit; Sergeant (2012) and Payne (2017) identify evidence that early television advertising agencies employed producers from the documentary and industrial film sectors, confirmed more broadly in publications on industrial film (see Russell 2011, Russell and Taylor 2010). Ellis (2011) proposes a theoretical approach for analysing television commercials further developed in a history of the compressed narrative of the sixty-second commercial (Caston 2023) which hints towards the identification of Krarup's common problem on which this project is based. Although little of this literature draws explicitly on an archaeological paradigm, it constitutes a valuable contribution to a new scholarship.

Notes on The Career of Paul Weiland

Paul Weiland (b. 1953), the director of 'Points of View,' was one of the UK's most award-winning directors of the 1980s and 1990s, directing campaigns for Hamlet, Heineken, and Walkers' Crisps (1995–2003). Having begun his career as a runner at advertising agency Horniblow Cox Freeman, then at Royds as a copywriter, Weiland worked under Peter Marle at BBDP before moving to work as a copywriter under Frank Lowe at Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP). At CDP, Weiland conceived, wrote and selected music for many of the acclaimed commercials of that period. He was, furthermore, one of the co-founders of the BBC's *Comic Relief,* the British television charity founded in 1985 that runs annual television fundraising programming. He directed two comedy

series, *Alas Smith and Jones* (BBC 1989–1992) and *Mr Bean* (ITV 1991–1992). His feature film credits include *Blackadder: Back & Forth* (BBC 1999) for which he received a BAFTA television award nomination. A significant contributor to British film and television comedy culture, in 2015 Weiland was awarded an OBE for his services to the creative industries.[5]

I asked Weiland how advertising differed from film in the 1970s.

When I started, advertising was the only industry where you could come from absolutely nothing. I came in when they were still taking Oxbridge graduates in the running room. I'd left school at sixteen. I was the start of a new generation who didn't have to have a degree or education. We just got put in the despatch department along with the graduates. We'd wait for a job in the creative department to come up. When a job came up as proof router, the graduates didn't want it. But I was so soaked from running in the rain that I just wanted a job indoors. So I took the proof router job. When I went into every department to get an ad approved, I'd say 'I've got another line that would work better.' They'd never seen anyone like that.

When Weiland first entered it in the early 1970s, the screen advertising production industry was departing from its documentary production culture. The first decade of television commercials, 1955 to 1965, had largely been produced within the discourse of documentary film production. Until 1955, advertising producers were represented by the Association of Specialised Film Producers (ASFP) which represented the documentary producers. The initial members of the Advertising Film Producers' Association (AFPA), as it was first called, were subsidiaries of more established documentary companies such as Guild Television, (an offshoot of the Film Producers' Guild). Many of the first directors, producers, editors and camera crew were hired from experienced backgrounds working at the GPO (General Post Office), EMB (Empire Marketing Board), and Crown Film Unit (Sargeant 2010, Garrett 1986). Two of the most significant were the producers Leon Clore (1918–1992), who had previously worked at the Crown Film Unit and had won an Academy Award for the documentary film *The Conquest of Everest* (British Lion 1953), and James Garrett (1928–2023) who had previously worked at British Transport Films and Pearl & Dean Productions in 1956 before he joined production company TV Advertising and then launched his own production company in 1963 (*Campaign* 2023).

The feature film industry did not support the new advertising producers. Garrett (1986) reports hostilities from the film laboratories and the studios which only subsided

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[5] Officer of the Order of the British Empire, awarded by the Monarch.

when the feature film industry went into recession in the 1970s. Whilst, from 1955, the AFPA was run as an 'adjunct' of the trade association representing feature film producers, the British Film Producers' Association (BFPA), it was due to the BFPA's lack of support that Garrett, Clore and Mike Luckwell later launched the AFPA as an entirely separate trade association. Despite this, the Association of Cinematograph Technicians (ACT, later the ACTT), decided that advertising screen production should be put on the feature film contract (requiring twelve crew members, designed for shooting on 35 mm), not the documentary contract (requiring four crew members, designed for shooting on 16 mm). By the late 1960s, a new supply chain had fallen into place organised around a new generation of specialist advertising production companies such as Garretts (founded in 1963), Ridley Scott Associates (founded in 1968) and Alan Parker Films (founded in 1976). From the mid-1960s onwards rising numbers of advertising directors based in London were simultaneously directing feature films such as Nicolas Roeg, Richard Lester, Adrian Lyne, Hugh Hudson, Alan Parker and Ridley Scott.

Weiland began his creative work in advertising as a copywriter. 'Figaro' for Fiat Strada (1979) was written by Weiland while he was working with art director Dave Horry at CDP, then home to Alan Parker (1944–2020) and David Puttnam (b. 1941). The spot broke with a number of conventions. Whilst it was not the first two-minute commercial to air on British TV, Weiland recalls, it was the first commercial to book out the entire two-minute advertising break in ITV's *News at Ten*. *Campaign* confirms this, going further to state that the spot was never broadcast again: it ran just once (Temple 2018). Brands had already established a convention of event advertising for Christmas, but this was the first time event advertising had been scheduled outside a routine British holiday. Thirty-second commercials were the television standard. Secondly, whilst it was not the first to foreground classical music as a narrative device in a commercial (the use of Jacques Loussier's recording of Bach's *Air on a G String* in the Hamlet commercials earlier in the 1960s are generally credited with that), the synchronisation of the new arrangement of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* to the visual narrative was unprecedented in a television commercial. Weiland had chosen the Figaro music, inspired by the car's original name of 'Ritmo' (translated as rhythm).

'Figaro' articulated the documentary tradition: the film contained no commentary, no voice-over, no diegetic audio, nor did it follow the story of an individuated human character: the narrative was constituted by documentary-style footage of robots making cars inside the factory. According to Weiland, it was filmed at Fiat's factory in Turin whilst Fiat workers were protesting outside the gates about the displacement of human workers by new robot technologies. As a test, Weiland cut an edition of the popular science television series *Tomorrow's World* (BBC 1965–2003) about robots

together with the Figaro music. In the last few seconds of the finished commercial, the viewer sees the text 'The Strada' followed by the line, 'Handbuilt by Robots', then the 'Fiat' logo. It had been directed by Hugh Hudson (1936–2023) through Hudson Film.

Weiland began to direct commercials when Alan Parker invited him to join the Alan Parker Film Company. Since the success of *Bugsy Malone* (Paramount 1976), Parker had taken increasing time away in Hollywood. One of the first spots Weiland directed was 'Bunker' for Hamlet (CDP, 1979).

> When I first started directing, my visual skill was in the toilet. I built the bunker for Hamlet front lit. Even though the commercial won loads of awards, I was accused after that of having a' tin eye.' I learned so much from that: I should have built it so that when the sun came down the smoke was backlit, but I didn't know that.

Weiland went on to direct 'Beach Telescope' (CDP 1980), and 'Baboons' (CDP 1990) for Hamlet. With his spot for Birds Eye Pizza (CDP, 1979), Weiland developed his skills selling products to audiences through easily remembered straplines. The commercial showed pizzas materialising from nowhere to drop onto the table of a pizzeria with the strapline, 'That's handy, Harry … Stick it in the oven.' It was one of the many advertising straplines that became catchphrases of the 1970s. Away filming *Fame* (1980) in the USA, Parker was unable to continue directing the Birds Eye Beefburgers campaign. Weiland took over and shot both 'Cheeky Monkey' (1979) and 'Dentist' (1979) for the brand. In 1980, Parker handed his company to Weiland in order to concentrate on films. Weiland took over the management of Parker's employees, retained the lease at Hudson House (where Hugh Hudson's production company was now based), and renamed the company the Paul Weiland Film Company.

Weiland's analysis of the 'That's handy, Harry' strapline illustrated the importance he attached to advertising as a sales activity:

> I saw myself more as a barrow boy. Selling has always been in my blood. Every Saturday as a young boy, I used to help my dad on the market stall outside his gro-cery shop in the East End. But I think a lot of people weren't interested in sales. They just had a vision and sometimes that vision would work and stand out. But did that really sell? Who knows?

Talking about Alan Parker, Ridley Scott, and his own career in film and television outside advertising Weiland said:

They were the forerunners. We were the next generation of advertising directors to get into features. I did a film with David Puttnam. That led to me directing scripts for Anthony Minghella with Jim Henson's television company for the Storytellers TV series in the late '80s which won two BAFTAs, and then an episode of Henson's MuppeTelevision series, 'Living with Dinosaurs', which won an Emmy. Then I started working with Mr Bean, I started making the TV stories stronger and longer, it was a really beautiful period. The problem was that telly wasn't that valued then, you wanted to be on the big screen in the cinema.

These comments showed that Weiland retained a very strong sense of his working-class identity during his career and a distinctive sense of a cultural hierarchy in the screen industries. They also revealed a point of view analysed by Chris Powell's record of working with the Labour Party (2000) at BMP, in which Weiland was one of many on the left who did not object morally or politically, to capitalist advertising, which I discuss further below. Weiland described a disruptive anti-establishment banter in which he and colleagues sought to 'get one over' on the middle classes involved in regulation and censorship. Talking about the 'Water in Majorca' spot he directed for Heineken (1985, Lowe Howard-Spink), Weiland explained how a line intended to entertain working-class audiences was deliberately written into the script to see if it would be vetted by the middle-class censors:

Get your laughing gear around that girl' was a line I added in. On the street it meant 'blow job.' The censors didn't spot that. We loved that game, because they just didn't know what slang was. I loved to layer things like that because, again, how many times are people going to watch it?

A pastiche on *My Fair Lady* (Warner Bros 1956), 'Water in Majorca' depicted a man trying to teach a Sloane Ranger how to talk Cockney. There was much discussion in the popular press about class in the early 1980s. Stereotypes about social class abounded in comedy commercials such 'Luton Airport' starring Loraine Chase (1976/8), Ridley Scott's 'Wooster's Suit' staring Jeremy Irons for Croft Original (Young & Rubicam, 1978) and Tony Scott's 45 second spot for Robinson's, originated at CDP. Holmes and Weiland had planned to use 'The Rain in Spain' music and lyrics but because the rights to use that proved impossibly expensive, 'The Water in Majorca doesn't taste like wot it oughta' was created.

Weiland talked several times about rewriting the agency script in pre-production with Adrian Holmes. He said 'We cut out all the bits of the different types of people going in' from the script. 'I remember getting her to revert back "Oh gosh" that wasn't in the

script. I added that. Adrian Holmes wrote it. We added the School of Street Credibility.' In the edit, he dropped some of the rushes: 'I had her wiping her mouth with her arm, but we cut that out.' Reflecting further, Weiland said, 'We were jesting about class. I don't think we talk about class anymore. There's no such thing as class-icism'.

I asked Weiland if he felt advertising was undervalued culturally. I explained that some art critics and scholars believed the advertising films of individual directors such as Tony Kaye should be considered art (Gibbons, 2011) and the brands understood as modern-day Medici's; this was a discourse identified by Sargeant in the 1930s (2010).

> I personally don't think I was making art. I was making tiny moments, 30, 45 and 60-second moments. I just wanted them to be funny, entertaining, informative, and stand out. But is that art? I don't know. Art is what you put a frame around in a gallery. I suppose you do put a frame around it in advertising, but it's a different kind of frame. I never saw myself as being an artist. I saw myself as being an entertainer … We are selling something. Commercials are in your face. If you haven't been invited, and if you're going to be in someone's face, please *entertain*.

Weiland's 'Points of View' begins to articulate or enunciate not only the problem of advertising but the solution and the discourse of 'entertainment'.

The Campaign: 'Points of View' (1986)

'Points of View' was widely interpreted as a critique of the right-wing press that had successfully campaigned for Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party to take power in the UK's 1979 General Election. Since then Thatcher's Government had introduced structural economic reforms seen to have caused rapidly rising unacceptable levels of youth unemployment. From 5.8% at the beginning of 1980, unemployment had risen to 11.5% at the beginning of 1985 and remained at 11.3 or 11.4% through 1986, roughly three million of the UK's working population (ONS 2024). 'Points of View' suggested that the false, negative, stereotypes of working-class youth perpetuated by the right-wing tabloid press were failing to consider all perspectives on 'the whole picture;' only *The Guardian*, a newspaper long recognised as supporting The Labour Party, could be trusted to give the British electorate the whole picture. The commercial was created by John Webster and Frank Budgen at the advertising agency BMP (Boase Massimi Pollitt). Weiland explained that it was one of three spots in the BMP's television campaign for *The Guardian* that year. The two other spots, according to HAT were 'Axe' (Frank Budgen, 1986) and 'Puppet' (Aardman Animation, 1986). All three were finished in

black and white because, says Weiland, it was common at that time to master press commercials in the 'reportage' style (Dye 2017).

The period was dominated by advertisements for print newspapers such as *The Sun* and *The Sunday Times*. Indeed, the same year that *The Guardian* broadcast 'Points of View' 1986, a new broadsheet was launched as a direct competitor to the paper: *The Independent*. Saatchi and Saatchi created a poster advertisement of two seemingly identical peas in a pod and a television commercial which featured a line of sheep following one another into a butcher's lorry; both ended with the tagline '*The Independent*. It is. Are you?' (Durrani 2010, *Creative Review*). Earlier that year, Rupert Murdoch had initiated a tense dispute with the print unions which lasted fifty-four weeks by moving his newspaper business overnight to Wapping. Saatchi and Saatchi held the accounts of *The Sunday Times* and *The Times* which Murdoch owned and had created the Conservative Party's successful 1978 'Labour isn't Working' poster campaign. Shortly after being elected, television advertising became a controversial tool of the Conservative Party's ideologically contested social and economic privatisation policies. A 1984 television campaign explained how to buy shares in British Telecom.[6] Young and Rubican's 1986 campaign encouraged British viewers to purchase shares in British Gas when it was floated in December 1986; the tagline was 'If you see Sid, tell him.'

BMP had a strong relationship with the Labour Party dating from the early 1970s when it had placed press advertisements for the Trades Union Congress (TUC) against the then-Conservative Government's Industrial Relations legislation (Powell 2000), shortly after being launched in 1969. The agency ran the Labour Party's 1974, 1979, and 1983 general election campaigns and was preparing to run the Party's 1987 campaign (Grice 2000). The relationship between the two organisations is often attributed to Chris Powell, BMP's managing director from 1975, although according to Powell most of BMP's staff were committed Labour supporters. In his book, *How the Left Learned to Love Advertising* (2000), Powell discusses the difficulties of working with so many Labour candidates and MPs who were hostile towards the dark, capitalist art of advertising (see also Freedman 1999).

John Webster (1934–2006), the creative director of *The Guardian* 'Points of View' is one of the most celebrated characters in the history of British screen advertising (Fletcher 2008) and was part of a major political shift in British advertising. Like Weiland, Webster was working class. He had entered advertising relatively late in his career, after attending Hornsey School of Art (Fletcher 2006). Webster had helped to found BMP in 1969 and supported the agency's political and charity work. Webster was

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[6] 'Countdown' BT Shares Commercial. 1985. BSB Dorland (HAT).

skilled in communicating with audiences and at working with stereotypes in simple narratives. He created most of BMP's most successful campaigns: Cadbury's 'Smash Martians' (1970–74), Sugar Puffs 'Honey Monster' (1976-), the 'Bear' for Hofmeister and 'Arkwright' for John Smith's Bitter (both from the 1980s). Weiland said of the script that Webster sent him: 'Points of View was intelligent, it was heads and shoulders above the rest. It used a stereotype to tell the story. But it had the timing and the rhythm too.' Weiland's reference to stereotyping was significant; by the mid 1980s, a broader shift was taking Britain away from the inimical hue of CDP's social stereotypes towards a more nuanced, diverse style of representation influenced by New York's Doyle Dane Berbach, partly through the figure of Dave Trott, a young working class advertising creative from London who joined BMP in 1971 as a junior copywriter having trained in New York's multi-racial advertising scene witnessing such poster campaigns as Doyle Dane Berbach's 'You Don't Have to Be Jewish to Love Levy's' (1967).

The Film: 'Points of View'

The film was directed by Paul Weiland during a single day in Southwark. Three cameras had been rented; Weiland spent the morning trying to set up each camera in a position that enabled it to cover the action from the desired angle without appearing in the frame of the other two cameras. This was because, Weiland recalls, 'John, in his dictatorial prescriptive way, had said, "I want you to shoot this all at once with three different cameras".' Webster wanted the action filmed on synchronous cameras in order to fulfil the voice-over 'an event seen from one point of view gives one impression; seen from another point of view it gives quite a different impression, but it's only when you get the whole picture you can fully understand what's going on.' Weiland recalls that Webster had been adamant about this, and that he himself had agreed during the pitch meeting at BMP to ensure that the action was shot in synch on three cameras. A row ensued on set when Weiland could not find positions that would keep the cameras out of shot without losing the dramatic perspective; 'the shot would have been too wide' said Weiland, 'and I knew that we had to get in close to show the drama– by then I had a lot of experience as a storytelling director and I knew what worked.' The problem was compounded by the early state of VFX: 'in those days I couldn't paint the cameras out. I tried for half a day to make it work. I couldn't. I tried to persuade him that no one would know.' Weiland said that when the local school kids came out and began throwing the art department's rubber bricks at the crew and actors, the police were called, and it became quite tense. 'I said John, look no-one's going to know if you shoot those perspectives in different takes because you've got to put an edit in there anyway.'

In an interview with Dave Dye, Weiland had said that the concept was based on a photograph taken by British photojournalist Don McCullin (b. 1935) of a soldier running down the street in Ireland. Dye tells Weiland that Budgen and Webster had seen the photo in a book called *Pictures on A Page*. The photo, reported Dye, had been cropped in three different ways to show that distinct crops invited different meanings. *Pictures on a Page* was a book written and curated by Harold Evans, the editor of *The Sunday Times* from 1967 to 1981, first published in 1978 by William Heinemann, and reprinted in 1982 as the fourth in a series published by the National Council of Journalists. In the introduction, Evans wrote that television had not rendered the still news photograph obsolete. On the contrary, 'Television pays its tribute: imaginative directors of documentaries will use a still image in preference to film when they can exploit the singularity of the still by dwelling on a detail or pulling back for dramatic revelation' (Evans 1997, n.p. Introduction). Weiland confirmed in our interview that, in their meetings, Webster referenced the monochromatic look of a McCullin photo on the wall of his office.

My copy of the book contains three photos taken by Don McCullin, only one of which fits Weiland's description of a soldier running down the street. It is not, as Weiland recalls, set in Ireland, but in Cyprus. Evans has captioned the shot 'A news shot of a Turkish gunman in Cyprus. The photographer, Don McCullin, ***worried that it looked like a feature film frame'*** (my emphasis). Now held in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Scotland, the photograph is said to have been taken in 1964 by McCullin for *The Observer* newspaper on his first international assignment, to cover the civil war in Cyprus. The National Gallery tells us that, 'Taken in Limassol in the middle of a gun battle, it depicts a Turkish gunman emerging from the side of a cinema, gun poised, ready for attack.'[7] The photo is not reproduced in three different cropped versions, as Dye suggested.

Pictures on a Page contains other multiple examples of photo alterations in a configuration of three, however. Under the caption 'A Composite Lie, a Single Truth', Evans presents three different photographs of a single incident in which '[a] Jordanian policeman conciliates Israeli border guards over the right of an Arab and his family to cross the bridge' (1997: 283.) Captioned 'The decisive moment – or the best picture?' the reader is shown three alternative photos 'taken by different photographers – from the race in 1954 between Roger Bannister of England and Australia's John Landy '(1997: 115). In 'Case History: Eyes on the Prisoner', Evans presents three photographs, each taken from a different angle using strikingly dissimilar compositions of exactly the

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7 National Galleries of Scotland.

same action, rendering the power dynamics between the guards and prisoner more or less effective (1997: 104). In 'Viewpoints', Evans presents three photos from different perspectives of 'Babe Ruth at the Yankee stadium on the day he stood by the Homeplate to acknowledge the crowd's tribute' (1997: 42). In a section titled 'Every Angle', Evans presents three photographs and a diagrammatic graphic showing the positioning of three different cameras (two 35 mm one 70 mm) operated by a remote control to take synchronised photographs of a boxing match (1997: 32) to illustrate contrasting power dynamics of the fight. The point of all of Evans' iterations of three is to show how perspective, frame, angle and composition change the story. The underlying point of the book is to show how press editors determined the stories told by the photographs printed in their newspapers by selecting and editing from the photographs and prints submitted by freelance photographers.

The last few words of the caption title of Don McCullin's Cyprus photo indicating that McCullin 'worried that it looked like a feature film frame' are significant. Sadly, both Frank Budgen and John Webster are dead, so it is not possible to ask them to confirm that this was the photograph that inspired 'Points of View.' It could be argued that, unless one is a literal adherent of an outdated archaeological method in which the archaeologist would seek to identify the materials from which an artefact was made, it is irrelevant. But if it was the inspiration, it helps to explain the discourses within which 'Points of View' was produced and if the examples of iterations of three perspectives also inspired it, this might explain the reported determination of Webster to ensure that the action was photographed simultaneously on three cameras, the intensity of the row that occurred between Webster and Weiland that day, and the problem on which the various discourses of which screen advertising culture sit. It is plausible to translate Evans' caption 'worried that it looked like a feature film frame' into 'worried that it looks staged,' i.e., not real, not true.

Weiland's use of Kathy Burke illustrates the director's imperative to tightly control audience perspective and focus. Burke is today recognised in Britain as a well-known and successful comedian, presenter and actress. Her role in the script was to rescue a child from danger on the street. Burke's action was shot, but it was removed from the edit because it disrupted the central narrative. Her frame can still be seen in the doorway of the finished commercial. Weiland explained that,

> Not many people were able to work in thirty-second or forty-second formats. Actors often couldn't do it. It's a different language. Advertising lavished so much money per second. Nothing else was like that. Each commercial had to be watched hundreds

of times, so it needed to be perfect. We were literally perfectionists. It was as if we were making tapestries, doing really precise needlework.

Weiland felt he was an 'odd choice' as a director because 'Points of View' sourced documentary and newsreel film style. By 1986, Weiland was celebrated as amongst the UK's top comedy commercial directors and therefore an unlikely candidate for a serious dramatic newsreel piece. He felt he had, furthermore, possibly annoyed Webster by declining a job offer earlier in his career. However, Weiland had already directed several serious dramatic charity films for BMP: 'Doors' (BMP, Greater London Fire Prevention, 1986), and 'Welfare Rights' (BMP, Derbyshire City Council, 1987). BMP undertook advertising work for charities on a reduced or pro bono basis. Production companies did the same. Charities could not otherwise afford advertising studio and crew rates. Weiland reported that he 'did a lot of charity films:' 'I'd do a Birds Eye commercial and then in the evening I'd quickly do a child abuse charity commercial,' using the crew and film studio paid for by Birds Eye until the close of business so the charity would have to pay only overtime costs, far cheaper than a full day's shoot. After the interview, I researched this charitable domain of Weiland's work further, and identified an article for *Campaign* about a dramatic narrative film 'Magpies' Weiland had directed in 1984 for the COI (Central Office of Information). 'It was through BMP,' wrote *Campaign*, 'that Weiland established his reputation for versatility by directing films like the COI's Magpies.' (Delaney n.d.). He was, however, regarded by his peers as a strong storyteller. 'Interestingly, after that commercial ['Points of View'], I never got offered any more serious work,' reflected Weiland.

Three Discourses, One Truth and One Problem

In oral history, Portelli reminds us, 'there are no 'false' oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of philological criticism and factual verification which are required by all types of sources anyway, the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'wrong' statements are still psychologically 'true' and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts' (Portelli 2015: 53). Weiland talked much of the significance of 'Points of View' in his career. 'It is my best commercial because it's the one everyone goes on about.' His sons studied it for their A Level curriculum at school, and he was told that it had been used in police training. This is confusing because '[i]t didn't win the gold award that year. It was one of the best awards ever done in advertising, but it didn't win. You could probably find out who was on the jury at D&AD that year. It was always BMP versus CDP.' The Design and Art Direction Awards were founded in 1962 and, during the 1980s, were the most

prestigious of the screen advertising awards directors could win.[8] In 2002, Weiland was awarded the President's Award.

> When I won the President's Award, the President of D&AD, Peter Souter, wrote about 'Points of View' and said that it screwed up D&AD for many many years, because they'd say well if 'Points of View' didn't get a black pencil, why should anything else?

In what sense, then, does 'Points of View' help us to understand why the screen advertising production industry and its trade association, the APA, remained hidden from view to academics and policymakers for so long? Interviews and oral histories lend themselves to research on hidden economies where there is a lack of official, publicly available, data and there are political reasons associated with the lack of value attributed to those economic activities (Thomson 2011). Few of those who recall and admire the 'Points of View' commercial will know that it was made by BMP, Frank Budgen, John Webster and Paul Weiland; few will have heard these names. This shows us that it may also be because it serves their purpose to remain hidden. Unlike the feature film industry in which a film commences with the directors' name often so prominent that one could be forgiven for thinking the movie was a promotional tool for advertising different brands of auteurs, screen advertising production exists to sell the product. It's hidden because it's chosen to hide itself: it promotes brands, not auteurs. 'People don't ask to see us', said Weiland. 'We interfere with what they are doing in their life.'

> You need to build a relationship with your customer. If you make them like you, then they are going to say, 'yeah, I like that, I like how that makes me feel about myself, I'm going to try that product.'

'Points of View' participates in three discourses: the feature film discourse of production through which it was staged on the ACTT's twelve crew member contract, shot on 35 mm, with actors. It participates in the discourse of photojournalism through its reference to a photograph by Don McCullin and a book on photojournalism demonstrating the role of perspective and camera angles on story meaning. It participated in the discourse of documentary because it was shot on location rather than in a film studio. The documentary impulse came from the entrenchment of John Webster and BMP's work with the Labour Party, trades unions, a commitment to 'the truth' and to challenging conservative orthodoxies and stereotypes in the media. It could be argued that it is ironic

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[8] The others were Cannes Lions, the British Television Advertising Awards, the Craft Awards (both merged later to form the British Arrows), Creative Circle and the APA Awards.

that this arose from advertising. But as Chris Powell argues in his book on BMP's work with the Labour Party from the 1970s to the 1990s, that is only because of a widespread lack of understanding of the work agencies undertook for political parties, campaign groups and charities.

Such granular detail was given of Harold Evan's book partly to experiment with archaeological methodology in relation to conventional history methodologies. A conventional historical approach would suggest the need to triangulate research, checking interviews against other archival sources to verify facts. For conventional historians, potentially unreliable personal testimonies must be 'verified' by other sources. However, within an archaeological paradigm, the objective is not necessarily to verify an interview but to analyse interviews as *sui generis* evidence of a factually effective discourse, the very object of the study; inconsistency between artefacts is not inherently problematic. Weiland's interview illustrated Foucault's arguments about the problematic concepts of 'author' and 'oeuvre'. Weiland raised puzzles and gaps in his narration. He remained perplexed as to why Webster hired him and indignant about the placement of the cameras. More than consistency, the interview with Weiland revealed puzzles, inconsistencies, omissions, unpredictable occurrences, conflicting discourses of genres and, within the 'hidden' screen industry of advertising, further hidden industries of 'charitable film' (shot on the budgets of commercials) and political film.

What is the role of interviews such as this in archaeologies of media history? The closest that Foucault comes in *Archaeology of Knowledge* to a discussion of interviews is in his section on using statements from nineteenth-century doctors as evidence in history, and elucidates some of the challenges in using oral history within archaeology:

> First question: who is speaking? Who, among the totality of speaking individuals, is accorded the right to use this sort of language (langage)? Who is qualified to do so? Who derives from it his own special quality, his prestige, and from whom, in return, does he receive if not the assurance, at least the presumption that what he says is true? What is the status of the individuals who — alone — have the right, sanctioned by law or tradition, juridically defined or spontaneously accepted, to proffer such a discourse? The status of doctor involves criteria of competence and knowledge; institutions, systems, pedagogic norms; legal conditions that give the right — though not without laying down certain limitations — to practise and to extend one's knowledge (Foucault, 2013: 55).

What renders the personal testimony used here different to those described by Foucault is that both the content of the testimony and the manner of its delivery were

impacted by the behaviour and words of the interviewer. But, like these nineteenth-century statements, Weiland's interview functions as evidence itself of the discourse of screen advertising; having established his 'status' and 'right, sanctioned by law or tradition' to 'proffer such discourse', the *truth* of the interview is, whilst not irrelevant, not the only or primary methodological issue, and cannot be validated by the a priori greater validity of a non-oral source. Weiland, along with the other interviewees for the Archaeology of British Screen Production project chose to narrate his testimony in a linear, chronological timeframe – although occasionally darting back and forth between dates to add details or correct facts. What people 'remember,' writes Thomson, 'they tend to remember because they have already turned it into an emotionally significant story (2011: 24)'. The screen advertising production industry comprised a small working community clustered in the square mile of Soho London until around 2010. The interviewees for the monograph frequently paused to say they might have to contact another industry colleague from those years to corroborate the memory, or cite a disagreement with another colleague about what exactly occurred. As Portelli reminds us, these 'stories are told over and over, or discussed with members of the community' (2015: 53). The discourse(s) is more than the commonly understood shared history of the community of screen advertising producers of the kind analysed by Gabriel (2000) and Perks (2015) within corporations and businesses.

The declared goal of this article was to identify the common problem of screen advertising from the late 1950s to the 2000s to which these discourses were applied. Weiland's insight, 'we're not invited, so please: *entertain*' has been identified as the common problem. Although the word entertain is emphasised, it's the prior phrase 'We're not invited' that holds longevity in explaining the problem with which advertisers grappled. Screen advertisers were deemed an uninvited public nuisance long before television. By the end of the nineteenth-century projected, street, advertising had already received political condemnation for its unwelcome invasion of public space. Foutch describes advertisers jostling to grab attention using moving image projections on street signs, in shop windows, and in the skies (2016). Nevett (1981) and Greenhalgh (2021) document advertisers routinely battling regulators who would introduce new legislation local and national to clean up the messy overloaded electric urban spaces. In the first decades of the twentieth century dramatic, novel, spectacular, cinematic, narratively engaging filmmaking which engaged and delighted audiences was perceived to be the primary solution to this problem by the Lever Brothers (Sargeant 2010, Strickland 2024), and other early filmmakers (Gurevitch 2009). To please audiences and venue operators, advertising film had to be film first, advertising second. When cinema transitioned from programming to feature film scheduling in the

late 1920s, and cinema commercials transitioned from being *the entertainment* to being *an interruption,* brands like Shell in the 1930s realised that only by telling a 'good story' in a cinematographically accomplished way could they justify the unwanted intrusion (Sargeant 2012).

In the linear television era, entertainment was the solution. The screen advertising production industry from 1955 to the 1980s operated in a politically hostile environment originating in debates that predated the 1954 Television Act about public service broadcasting, the BBC's monopoly and the alleged culturally damaging effect of advertising (see Sendall 1982, 1983, Briggs 1986, Potter 1989, and Nixon 2016). The central problem of screen advertising remained how to capture the attention of a captive audience, retain that attention sufficiently long to convey a message that might persuade the audience to change their behaviour without offending them or breaching the strict regulatory conditions imposed by Government. Early experiments with advertising magazines were stopped by the Pilkington Committee (Hardy 2022, Murdock 2004). The US model of programme sponsorship was not permitted in Britain until the 1990s (Murdock 2004).

One further point is worth noting about the value of interviews to an archaeological approach. Weiland (the narrator) and I entered our interview through an awareness of and discussion about the challenges faced by screen advertising on digital platforms, of the *crisis* in which advertising finds itself today (a crisis of *legitimacy* to use Habermas's term from 1975). Weiland commented negatively on the quality of current digital screen advertising. 'You look at the commercials today, and you think: this is an insult, this is ridiculous,' he said of the storytelling and entertainment standard of many commercials. Foucault wrote often that historical work unavoidably begins from present–day discourse. In *Discipline and Punish*, he writes that the goal is not to create 'a history of the past in terms of the present' but rather that of 'writing a history of the present' (Foucault 1977: 31). As hermeneutics writings by Gadamer (1977) and Ricoeur (1981) remind us, interpretation (of films, texts or interviews) is a fusion of cultural horizons; it is impossible to encounter the past solely on its own terms.

How does this analysis show that remaining hidden from view may have served the industry's purpose? Weiland's account of his career accentuated the role of *perspectives* and, throughout, he posed questions about how we view things, what kinds of frame we put around them, and who had made the first moving image comedy advert for which brand and when. A detailed investigation of the relation between screen advertising producers and Britain's political parties reveals that whilst many politicians derided the advertising industry in public, in private they began to depend on advertising agencies advertising producers within companies such as the COI. Many people are aware of the

working relationship between Saatchi and Saatchi and the Conservative Party, fewer are aware of that between the BMP, Paul Weiland, the Labour Party, and *Comic Relief*. Several of the advertising directors were directing party political broadcasts – the presidential style party broadcast for Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party of 1987, for example, was directed by Hugh Hudson. But the case study of 'Points of View' shows that it is the impact of the storytelling on which advertising focuses, not on the background production story.

Conclusion

Screen advertising was a hybrid mix of discourses from documentary, features, newsreel, and photography submerged within 'entertainment' which overcomes the common problem of screen advertising: it is an uninvited intrusion into private spaces. Although the screen advertising production industry is largely overlooked in academic publications on the history of British screen history, it is not hidden from view for the thousands of workers in the screen production industry themselves. This paper has used *The Guardian*'s Points of View' (1986) to explore the role of personal testimony in an archaeological methodology. Much more could be written on the political discourse(s), and the material presented here is not exhaustive. Archival sources such as trade press can provide additional sources but can never verify nor falsify the evidence of personal testimony, nor can they be used to fabricate a harmonious, consistent, or singular narrative of history, they can only contribute to an understanding of the complex discourses within which creatives worked (and continue to work). The picture this analysis has revealed is of screen advertising as a hybrid cultural practice articulated from the 1960s to the 1990s as a solution to the problem: *we're not invited, please entertain*. Remaining hidden from view may have been particularly favourable in relation to the political campaigning work undertaken by the sector alongside its economic sales activity. This analysis reminds us that 'hidden' means concealed or kept out of sight which invites the question 'concealed from who'? This is as much a question about how the political regime of Britain works as it is about the screen industries. Currently, we have one perspective on the history of screen advertising. We do not yet have the full picture.

Ethics and Consent

This article has been prepared in accordance with the University of West London Research Ethics Guidelines.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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