



A TRIBUTE TO ROGER MICHELL

The Duke

+ Q&A with actor Jim Broadbent and producer Nicky Bentham

Based on real events, *The Duke* is set in 1961 when Kempton Bunton (Broadbent), a 60-year-old taxi driver, stole Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London – the first (and only) theft in the gallery's history. Kempton sent ransom notes saying that he'd return the painting if the government provided free TV to the elderly – only 50 years later did the full story emerge. The passing of Roger Michell in September 2021 saw a huge outpouring of grief from the industry, who admired his work in film, TV and theatre; work such as *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *Notting Hill* and *Enduring Love*.

Before the screening we'll be joined by producer Kevin Loader and writer Hanif Kureishi who'll discuss Michell's work and legacy, and post-screening we're joined by those who worked with Michell on *The Duke*.

Production Story

2021 marked the 60th anniversary of the theft of Goya's portrait of The Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London. It is the only painting ever to have been stolen from the National Gallery in its 196-year history.

The Duke is the first film to tell this extraordinary true story. At its heart is Kempton Bunton, one of life's great eccentrics, a man of principle who stood up for what he believed to be right and was determined to live a meaningful life.

The process of bringing the incredible Bunton family history to the screen started with an email to the producer, Nicky Bentham, from Kempton's grandson (Jackie's son), Christopher Bunton. He told her of the story of his grandfather and his interest in turning it into a film.

'It felt too good to be true,' Bentham recalls, 'so I started researching and going deeper into the story. When everything Christopher said checked out, I was astonished that this story hadn't been told before. The family rarely spoke about it themselves, so I felt incredibly privileged when they gave me access to all their archive materials, ranging from copies of Kempton's extraordinary stage plays to the hand-tinted photograph of Marian [*Kempton and Dorothy's oldest child who died in a cycling accident*] which used to have pride of place on the wall of the family home.'

With the rights in the story secured, Bentham started to consider who would be the right partner to bring the story to screen.

'Thinking about the type of story, I knew Pathé would be a great partner,' Bentham explains. 'They were the first phone call I made and were interested immediately. Like me, they couldn't believe this true story hadn't been told already.'

'We have a reputation for quality dramas based on inspiring true stories' says Cameron McCracken, Executive Producer and Managing Director of Pathe UK, 'so I was delighted when Nicky made a beeline to our door. Kempton's belief that we are all connected – that in caring for the weakest, we are also

caring for ourselves – that belief resonated with me when we first started developing the project with Nicky. And of course, that resonance only grew stronger as we found ourselves completing the film in the middle of the COVID crisis.’

Over time, both Ingenious Media and Screen Yorkshire became equally enthused by the story and joined Pathé and Neon as partners on the production.

The celebrated stage play writers, Richard Bean and Clive Coleman, were brought on board to write the script. As research material, Bentham was able to provide them with all of Kempton’s plays:

‘He was always writing about things that were very close to his heart, things that he couldn’t talk about freely at home, so he poured it all into his writing,’ Bentham explains. ‘While none of his plays have ever been published, you can see a lot of his character coming through in the writing. It is something that Richard and Clive used as inspiration to find the right tone for Kempton’s voice: his humour and his humanity.’

As a former barrister and correspondent for the BBC on legal affairs, Coleman was aware of the true story through his admiration for Kempton’s, QC Jeremy Hutchinson. However, as the writers explain further, what attracted them to the project, was not the trial:

‘For us, the real charm of the film lies in Kempton. A character who genuinely believes, in the face of reality telling him otherwise, that he can change the world and change people’s behaviour for the better,’ Coleman explains. ‘He never loses that faith which has been deeply rooted in him since childhood.’

‘Our take on the film is that it is very much a story of a family and the forces that are pulling them apart, rooted in the tragic death of Marian,’ Bean adds. ‘You also have the character of Kempton, one of those fabulous British characters, who is trying to change the world. He is a modern Robin Hood, a Don Quixote, a dreamer in a way.’

When the script was sent to Roger Michell, the director was immediately smitten.

‘Clive and Richard did a marvellous job in finding the equilibrium between fun and fact. The script read like a great Ealing Comedy from the 1960s,’ Michell recalls, ‘the type of films that were being made during the period our story is set; political films about ordinary people telling truth to power and standing up to government. Much like the Ealing Comedies, the script had a wonderful tone, it was light-hearted, but with moments of pathos and drama, as well as being full of laughs. It’s an uplifting film, you’ll leave the cinema with a big smile on your face – I hope!’

‘It’s a feel-good film and I hope audiences will feel uplifted,’ Coleman agrees. ‘It’s about the kind of person you would want to be around. In a world that often does feel so bleak, there are people who genuinely have hope and genuinely believe that they can change things for the better. If there were more people like Kempton Bunton, the world would be a happier place.’

Production notes

THE DUKE

Directed by: Roger Michell
©: Pathé Productions Limited
A Neon Films production
For: Pathé, Great Bison Productions, Screen Yorkshire
Executive Producers: Cameron McCracken, Jenny Borgars, Andrea Scarso, Hugo Heppell, Peter Scarf, Christopher Bunton
Produced by: Nicky Bentham
Co-producer: Michael Constable
Production Manager: Filiz-Theres Erel
Production Co-ordinator: Cecily Colahan
Location Manager (Yorkshire): Matt Bowden
Location Manager (London): James Player
Post-production Supervisor: Louise Seymour
1st Assistant Director: Simon Hedges
2nd Assistant Director: Gemma Nunn
Casting by: Fiona Weir
Written by: Richard Bean, Clive Coleman
Director of Photography: Mike Eley
1st Assistant Camera: Oliver Driscoll
2nd Assistant Camera: Ben Jones
Gaffer: Paul McGeachan
Key Grip: Sergio Bernuzzi
Visual Effects by: Automatik VFX Ltd
Additional Visual Effects by: Invisible Arts Collective
Special Effects Supervisor: Rob Rowley
Film Editor: Kristina Hetherington
1st Assistant Editor: Andrew Jadavji
Production Designer: Kristian Milsted
Supervising Art Director: Adam Tomlinson
Art Director: Liz Simpson
Prop Master: P.R. Smith
Construction Manager: Robert Charlton
Costume Designer: Dinah Collin
Costume Supervisor: Filipa Fabrica
Hair & Make-up Designer: Karen Hartley Thomas
Hair & Make-up Artists: Amy Riley, Emma Rigby, Natalie Young
Music by: George Fenton
Sound Supervisor: Danny Sheehan
Production Sound Mixer: Martin Beresford
Re-recording Mixers: Paul Carter, Jamie Roden
Sound Editing by: Phaze UK
Sound Editors: Rob Prynne, Rob Turner
Dialogue Editor: Matt Davies
Dialect Coaches: Jill McCullough, Helen Jane Simmons

Cast

Jim Broadbent (*Kempton Bunton*)
Helen Mirren (*Dorothy Bunton*)
Fionn Whitehead (*Jackie Bunton*)
Anna Maxwell Martin (*Mrs Gowling*)
Matthew Goode (*Jeremy Hutchinson QC*)
Jack Bandeira (*Kenny Bunton*)
Aimée Kelly (*Irene Boslover*)
Charlotte Spencer (*Pammy*)
Heather Craney (*Debbie, clerk of the court*)
Stephen Rashbrook (*foreman*)
James Wilby (*Judge Aarvold*)
John Heffernan (*Neddie Cussen*)
Alice Stokoe (*woman with babe*)
Sarah Annett (*post office clerk*)
Charlie Richmond (*PO official 1*)
Matt Sutton (*PO official 2*)
Michael Hodgson (*Barry Spence*)
Richard McCabe (*Rab Butler*)
Andrew Havill (*Sir Philip Hendy*)
Sarah Beck Mather (*press woman*)
Cliff Burnett (*Wilf*)
Val McLane (*Freda*)
Will Graham (*office worker*)
Claire Lams (*BBC receptionist*)
Matthew Steer (*passing BBC manager*)
Sarah Cotton (*Express receptionist*)
Michael Gould (*Express editor*)
Charles Edwards (*Sir Joseph Simpson*)
Sparrow Michell (*Agnes Gowling*)
Sian Clifford (*Dr Unsworth*)
Sam Swainsbury (*DI Brompton*)
Dorian Lough (*DI Macpherson*)
Joseph Bowler (*factory worker*)
Ashley Kumar (*Javid Akram*)
Craig Conway (*Mr Walker*)
Austin Haynes (*scruffy little boy*)
Michael Mather (*Eddie*)
Sammy T. Dobson (*bakery assistant*)
Michael Adams (*PC Inverdale*)
Simon Hubbard (*PC Myton*)
Andy Parker (*Goya*)
Darren Charman (*Duke of Wellington*)
Sharon Facinelli (*bar lady*)
Neal Barry (*gallery security guard*)
Joshua McGuire (*Eric Crowther*)
Steve Giles (*Mr Edbury*)

UK 2020©

95 mins

Courtesy of Pathé

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Sat 5 Mar 12:00

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Mon 7 Mar 18:10

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