

Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television >
Volume 34, 2014 - Issue 2

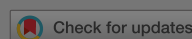
731 Views | 8 CrossRef citations to date | 0 Altmetric

Articles

Hammering out a Deal: The Contractual and Commercial Contexts of *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) and *Dracula* (1958)

Vincent L. Barnett

Pages 231-252 | Published online: 19 Nov 2013

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2013.847650>

Sample our
Humanities
Journals

>> **Sign in here** to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

[Full Article](#) [Figures & data](#) [Citations](#) [Metrics](#) [Reprints & Permissions](#)[Read this article](#)

Abstract

This article takes a business history approach to analysing Hammer's early success in the horror genre by providing a detailed case study of the commercial and contractual aspects of their first two Gothic horror films, *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) and *Dracula* (1958), both of which were international box-office sensations. New data on

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click "Settings". For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All

Essential Only

Settings

View correct

[Erratum](#)

Notes

- 1 Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 1993), 457.
- 2 I would like to thank Marcus Hearn for his generous help in obtaining some unpublished sources from the Hammer archives, Wayne Kinsey and David Pirie for providing some specific information regarding Hammer, and a referee for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this article. Professor James Chapman also raised some perceptive issues.
- 3 As quoted in Peter Hutchings, *Dracula* (London, 2003), 80 and 83.
- 4 John McCarty, *Splatter Movies* (Kent, 1984), 20.
- 5 David Pirie, *A Heritage of Horror* (London, 1973).
- 6 Ephraim Katz, *The Macmillan International Film Encyclopedia* (London, 1994), 584
- 7 For an analysis of a less successful British film production company see the example of Stoll Picture Productions in: Vincent L. Barnett, The commercial effects of the adaptation of novels into films in the United Kingdom, 1910–40, *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, 3(1) (2010), 17–23.
- 8 David Skal, *V is for Vampire* (London, 1996), 118.
- 9 Pam Cook (ed.), *The Cinema Book* (London, 1985), 46.
- 10 McCarty, *Splatter Movies*, 22.
- 11 The F... as the son
- of a Spa...
- 12 San... London, 2002),
- 157.
- 13 Tom J... 126.
- 14 Marc...

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click “Settings”. For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

[Accept All](#)[Essential Only](#)[Settings](#)

- 15 Julian Petley, *The House of Hammer*, in *Filmgoer's Scrapbook* (London, 1984), 829.
- 16 R. Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema* (London, 1992), 162.
- 17 Petley, 'The House of Hammer,' 828.
- 18 Hutchings, *Dracula*, 34.
- 19 Johnson and Vecchio, *Hammer Films*, 122.
- 20 *Variety*, 28 May 1958, 7.
- 21 Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes, *The Hammer Story* (London, 2007), 13.
- 22 James Monaco, *How to Read a Film* (New York, 2000), 250.
- 23 *Harvey Alcott v. Eliot Hyman*, Court of Chancery of Delaware, 22 August 1962.
- 24 Wayne Kinsey, *Hammer Films: the Bray Studio years* (London, 2002), 67. The 50/50 split is repeated in Kevin Heffernan, *Ghouls, Gimmicks and Gold* (NC, 2004), 47, but Heffernan wrongly attributes all of Hammer's investment money to Eady funds. Exchange rates used in this article: 1957, \$2.79=£1; 1958, \$2.81=£1.
- 25 Hearn, *The Hammer Vault*, 14.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 64.
- 27 Denis Meikle, *A History of Horrors* (Lanham, 2001), 38.
- 28 David Pirie, *Hammer: a cinema case study* (London, 1980), Part Two, Item 12.
- 29 *Variety*, 28 August 1957, 12.
- 30 Information from the Hammer Board of Directors' notes on company loan agreements referred to by the company, which were held by Hammer Bros. and the
- 31 *Street* and the

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click "Settings". For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All

Essential Only

Settings

32 NFFC, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended March 31 1957 (London, 1957), Appendix F.

33 Robert Murphy, Realism and Tinsel: cinema and society in Britain, 1939-49 (London, 1992), 197.

34 Denis Meikle, A History of Horrors (Lanham, MD, 2008), 9.

35 Meikle, A History of Horrors (2001), 46.

36 Street, Transatlantic Crossings, 157. Professor Street kindly confirmed to me by email that this information came from the Warner Bros. archive at USC.

37 Pirie, Hammer: A Cinema Case Study, Part Two, Item 18.

38 The term 'net takings' here means the share of box-office gross that remained after subtracting the theatre's cut and then the distributor's cut plus other costs (e.g. taxes).

39 Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, British Cinema of the 1950s (Oxford, 2003), 10.

40 Kinsey, Hammer Films: The Bray Studio Years, 67.

41 British Film Institute (BFI) archive, Hammer, Item 1 (b).

42 Variety, 28 August 1957, 12.

43 Ibid., 12.

44 Murphy, Sixties British Cinema, 162.

45 Pirie, Hammer: a cinema case study, Part Two, Item 18.

46 David Pirie, A New Heritage of Horror (London, 2008), 35.

47 Meikle, The Hammer Horror Film: racula
Special,

48 Today

49 Info
dated 13
NFFC or

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click "Settings". For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All

Essential Only

Settings



- 50 Pirie, Hammer: a cinema case study, Part Six, Item 68.
- 51 BFI, Hammer, item 17, JC to EH, 16 August 1957, 1.
- 52 Kinsey, Hammer Films: the Bray Studio years, 92.
- 53 Meikle, A History of Horrors (2001), 76.
- 54 The House That Hammer Built: Dracula Special, May 1998, 5.
- 55 Original document from the Hammer archives headed 'Re: Carreras—Universal deal,' New York, dated 22 August 1958, courtesy of Marcus Hearn.
- 56 NFFC, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended March 31 1958 (London, 1958), 21.
- 57 Harper and Porter, British Cinema of the 1950s, 32. The NFFC also provided loans for the following Hammer films around this time: The Steel Bayonet, The Abominable Snowman, A Clean Sweep, Danger List, The Camp on Blood Island, The Snorkel, Man with a Dog, The Revenge of Frankenstein, The Mummy, and The Man Who Could Cheat Death.
- 58 Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons, vol. 591, 15 July 1958, 1198.
- 59 Johnson and Vecchio, Hammer Films, 139.
- 60 NFFC, Annual Report 1958, 14.
- 61 Kinsey, Hammer Films: the Bray Studio years, 98.
- 62 Jonathan Rigby, Christopher Lee (London, 2001), 60.
- 63 Boxoffice. 19 May 1958.

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click "Settings". For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All

Essential Only

Settings



68 Mark Weinstein, Profit-sharing contracts in Hollywood, *Journal of Legal Studies*, XXVII (January 1998), 86.

69 J.W. Cones, *The Feature Film Distribution Deal* (Carbondale, 1997), 22.

70 Weinstein, Profit-sharing contracts in Hollywood, 86.

71 Although in some other instances, production funds from financiers have been transferred to film production companies before contracts were officially signed, this most likely did not happen in the case of Hammer’s *Dracula*; Carreras was clear about the film’s in-house origins.

72 *Today’s Cinema*, 13 August 1957.

73 Ruth Towse (ed.), *A Handbook of Cultural Economics* (Cheltenham, 2003), 308.

74 R.E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 11.

75 *The British Film Industry* (London, 1952), 257.

76 Michael Wakelin, *J. Arthur Rank* (Oxford, 1996), 129.

77 Kinsey, *Hammer Films: The Bray Studio Years*, 86; Pirie, *Hammer: a cinema case study*, ‘Copyright Problems’ (main text). This issue is still unclear.

78 Once the negative cost had been accounted for in the summed receipts of the different regions, it would be regarded as discharged.

79 Meikle, *A History of Horrors* (2008), 69.

80 Arthur de Vany, *Hollywood Economics* (London, 2004), 26

81 Johnson and Vecchio, *Hammer Films*, 139.

82 The H

83 B.F. D

Dracula

84 Rigby

85 John

2005), 194.

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click “Settings”. For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All

Essential Only

Settings



or Built:

London,

86 This is only an estimate of what was due to be paid to Cadogan as per the contract, not what was actually paid (currently unknown).

87 Tino Balio (ed.), *The American Film Industry* (Wisconsin, 1976), 463.

88 One source gives \$300,000 as the minimum distribution cost of a average picture of a major Hollywood studio in 1950, but given that Universal was not one of the ‘big five’ studios at this time, this would seem too high for them. See Balio (ed.), *The American Film Industry*, 352.

89 NFFC, *Annual Report 1958*, 3.

90 *Ibid.*, 1.

91 David Mann, *Hammer Films’ post-war BBC crime series and serial adaptations*, *Scope*, (18) (2010), 9.

92 Vincent Barnett, *John Maynard Keynes* (London, 2013), 143–146.

93 See Vincent L. Barnett, *Popular novelists and the British film industry, 1927–32*, *The Journal of European Economic History*, 36(1) (2007), 98.

94 Sarah Street, *British National Cinema* (London, 1997), 16.

95 Towse (ed.), *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, 116.

Additional information

Notes on contributors

Vincent

Vincent

history,


film

incl

Maynar

About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click “Settings”. For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).



Accept All

Essential Only

Settings

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
8

‘The curse of the thing is Technicolor blood: why need vampires be messier feeders than anyone else?’: The BBFC and Hammer’s Colour Films, 1957–1962’ >

Paul Frith
Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television
Published online: 1 Nov 2018



Information for

- Authors
- R&D professionals
- Editors
- Librarians
- Societies

Opportunities

- Reprints and e-prints
- Advertising solutions
- Accelerated publication
- Corporate access solutions

Open access


- Overview
- Open journals
- Open Select
- Dove Medical Press
- F1000Research

Help and information

- Help and contact
- Newsroom
- All journals
- Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

 Sign me up



About Cookies On This Site

We and our partners use cookies to enhance your website experience, learn how our site is used, offer personalised features, measure the effectiveness of our services, and tailor content and ads to your interests while you navigate on the web or interact with us across devices. You can choose to accept all of these cookies or only essential cookies. To learn more or manage your preferences, click “Settings”. For further information about the data we collect from you, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept All 

Essential Only

Settings

or & Francis Group
orma business