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The Precariousness of Production: Michael Klinger and the Role of the Film Producer in the British Film Industry of the 1970s

Michael Klinger was a key figure in the British film industry of the 1960s and 1970s, yet he has joined the legions of the lost in British cinema history, with no more than a passing mention in standard accounts, a depressing testimony to the marginalization of the film producer in Film Studies. In addition to the famous *Get Carter* (1971) customarily regarded as Mike Hodges' directorial triumph Klinger produced other innovative and challenging thrillers that included *Penthouse* (1967), *Pulp* (1972), *Something to Hide* (1972) and *Tomorrow Never Comes* (1978). His major energies, however, went into international action-adventure films *Gold* (1974) and *Shout at the Devil* (1976) which made him, at that time, the only financially successful independent British film producer, his income supplemented by the *Confessions of...* series (1974-77) for which he was executive producer. In attempting to restore Klinger to his rightful place in British cinema history and to make the case for the importance of the producer's role, this paper will argue that his volatile career offers a key focus through which the difficulties of the British film industry in this decade can be understood. It will draw on Klinger's papers, unpublished material held at the University of the West of England, which afford detailed insights into the process of production of these films, together with that of several unrealized projects whose failure is equally illuminating about the precariousness of the British film industry in this period.