

IN DARKNESS

Theatrical release: 16th March 2012

Case study

We positioned In Darkness as an upmarket, intelligent war drama comparable to The Counterfeiters and The Lives of Others, which had similar high production values and mix of war, thriller and drama aspects. It was also nominated as Best Foreign Language Film for the 2012 Academy Awards and this added critical and to some degree consumer interest. In addition to the Oscar nomination, we identified several key selling points to the film; its basis as a true story, the heroism in times of adversity and the ultimately uplifting story of survival and humanity pulling through, along with the high production values.

We considered it vital to the release that the story was not mistakenly believed to be a dark, depressing or grueling experience, which could deter the target market and cross-over audiences. We feel the focus on the positive outcome of the film was the perfect antidote to this and these elements were communicated throughout all aspects of the campaign.

We agreed early on that with funding from the BFI we could properly explore a dual campaign with both Polish and English speaking markets with entirely separate creatives in terms of dual language.

Primary markets – Arthouse cinema goes and broader market/ Polish audiences living in the UK

Secondary markets

- Jewish market
- Fans of WW2 true stories

Summary on BFI activity

The detail of the activity lies ahead in the document but by way of summary these were our findings on the Polish market.

We took the approach that we would look at several forms of media for the Polish market and use exit polling to quantify the results. We also used the award to widen our reach into broader media for the English speaking markets, but the main focus was the Polish population (approx 1m).

There were clear geographical hubs for the population which showed through the booking patterns of previous Polish cinema releases. We worked with a Polish marketing expert (Project London) who had worked with Sara Ltd on previous cinema releases. They were without a doubt conscientious and exceptionally hard working but were opinionated, without necessarily being able to quantify their findings.

So in addition to their plans we also pursued additional media, we felt this was vital to producing a case study – rather than just accepting inherited subjective market information.

We also used a specialist PR agency who had handled the Polish film festival, they worked alongside in-house PR to ensure that all key media was approached with talent interviews and for reviews and through that we were ensured frequency through both PR and ads in key press.

The exit polls were illustrative in terms of what was effective. A traditional arthouse site was polled along with a key Polish site (67% of the audience were Polish)

The 4 major media spends were:

- Cooltura – weekly magazine
- Polish Express – weekly newspaper
- Elondyn – coolturas website
- Londynek – polish UK website

Cooltura proved to be the key channel at 13% awareness, Polish express a long way behind at 3% and the two online sites did not register.

In conclusion we could have spent less on Polish media on a less diverse mix and still achieved the same result if the exit polls in accordance with the exit polls. As a case study it has been informative – also clearly it shows that the Polish market accept information on film from a small range of sources rather than just Polish media per se.

It is also difficult to quantify the value the PR had but it showed as a key driver, additionally the Polish radio ads featured as a 5% driver.

Of course there is a natural confusion at times in terms of what has driven people (people will claim TV ads drove their attendance when there were no TV ads) but for the purposes of this market its clear that Cooltura has a monopoly.

Overall – although the box office was less than anticipated it is still likely to pass Three Colours White (rel 1994 £250k box office) as the most successful Polish film ever released in the UK.

The below the line work was incredibly thorough and Polish contacts confirmed that this was happening, even to the degree of Polish Priests plugging the film during mass. It is harder to quantify the value of this – but by using key Polish retail outlets we can reach sections of the market that media does not.

SALES

In Darkness opened in 46 cinemas nationwide, with a fairly even spread across the UK, but particularly clustered around Polish communities. The opening cinemas for In Darkness were: (yellow denotes digital)

London / West End
Odeon Covent Garden
Curzon Mayfair
Cineworld Haymarket
Barbican
Everyman Belsize Park
Clapham Picturehouse
Picturehouse Greenwich
Vue Fulham
The Tricycle
Phoenix East Finchley
Everyman Maida Vale
HMV Curzon Wimbledon
Arts Picturehouse Cambridge
Vue Finchley North
Cineworld Wandsworth
Cineworld Hammersmith
Cineworld Wood Green
Vue Shepherds Bush
Coronet Notting Hill
Central
Broadway Nottingham
Cineworld Nottingham
Cineworld Birmingham Broad Street
Phoenix Oxford
Stratford Picturehouse

South
Duke of York's, Brighton
Harbour Lights Southampton
Harlech
Watershed Bristol
Little Theatre Bath
Cineworld Cardiff
Anglia
City Screen Norwich
Granada
Cornerhouse Manchester
Picturehouse at FACT
Tyne Tees
Tyneside Newcastle
Jersey
Cineworld Jersey
Westward
Picturehouse Exeter (no VPF Week 1) DCP
Yorkshire
Showroom Sheffield
Cineworld Sheffield
Showcase Leeds
Scotland
The Cameo, Edinburgh
Cineworld Edinburgh
Glasgow Film Theatre
Cineworld Glasgow Renfrew St
Cineworld Aberdeen Union Square
Ireland
Irish Film Institute
Cineworld Dublin
Lighthouse Dublin
Kinetiko Festival

The opening weekend screen average was softer than hoped, due in part to the last minute scheduling against us of Kac Wawa – a mainstream Polish film. This was a territorial act of aggression by Sara Ltd who own the key Polish weekly magazine – Cooltura.

They opened on 42 screens with an average of £983 per screen

We opened on 47 screens to an average of £1927 per screen.

Undoubtedly our screen average would have been higher if we had kept a clean date, but they scheduled against us so late we could not move the release.

Two key things affected the longevity of our release. The first is the fact that Cineworld who have exclusively handled Polish film until now condense their bookings into 2 weekends and then end the run, this curtailed our run much more quickly than a standard or arthouse release.

The second issue was the length of the film, the averages were not high enough at enough sites to hold screens past the second week, the key issue was that due to the length most exhibitors could not schedule split shows.

So the long tail was less than expected – however bookings are ongoing with a focus on film societies and smaller venues.

TRAILER

We felt the existing trailer was strong and made only minor amendments by updating the press quotes. This was trailed in cinemas alongside films with a similar, upmarket positioning and broad release.

ARTWORK



For the poster artwork, we wanted to create something in the spirit of the film, which is both tense and fraught but also ultimately uplifting. We felt it was very important that we didn't dwell on the idea that the characters were victims going through a gruelling experience, but instead as a rousing tale of humanity and heroism in times of extreme adversity. We felt this is a much stronger proposition for UK audiences and will help the film break out of purely arthouse circuits. As such, we wanted to create a central campaign image that used strong colours and also a bold and eye-catching graphic element. We decided on using a strong light/dark split to convey that the story takes place both above and below ground level and introduces the central, heroic characters. We also wanted to place the film its WWII setting to provide some context, which we did through a background Nazi banner and a 1940s car. However, we didn't want to push the war element too heavily as this tends not to work well theatrically in the UK.

We also placed quotes to reflect the key words in the campaign, along with two sets of 4 star reviews, and placed the Academy Award nomination line as a central feature in the artwork. These were all

important elements of our campaign. By focusing on the positive aspects of the story the film had cross-appeal and was able to break out to as broad an audience as possible, and not be seen merely as a limited arthouse prospect.

SCREENINGS

We organised several special pre-release screenings for the film, in some instances using a third party to promote these. Our aim was to build fantastic word-of-mouth among the target audience, as well as build awareness (public screenings) and opinion formers (private screenings).

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Times Screening Programme

We joined forces with The Times national newspaper to run the film as one of their Screening Programme movies at 15 cinemas across the UK. This program delivered £80,000 of media value in paper, online and on screen.

Press Ads

In order to reach the upmarket, cinema-going target demographic, we secured press ad bookings across a wide range of daily broadsheets, including Metro, The Guardian, The Independent and The Times in the two weeks to release. Additionally, we secured coverage in London-based daily paper The Evening Standard.

We also worked with the upmarket listings portal Time Out (key for arthouse cinema), in their print edition, but also taking a takeover on their film homepage.

We also ran print ads and online ads in a circulation of UK-based Polish newspapers and online portals, with specific marketing messages in Polish language. These included Cooltura magazine (45,000 circulation) and The Polish Express (60,000).

Online

In addition to media bookings on the websites for the national papers Daily Mail and Guardian, the UK's top film portal LoveFilm and Time Out, we also built the following online portals for the film:

Find Any Film

We built an online portal for In Darkness through Find Any Film, which is one of the UK's leading film search engines. We used this page as a hub to steer people for listings as well as giving them other information of the site and also linking to the Facebook site. The web page was branded with trackable 'book now' codes, it also had a presence on the Find Any Film homepage for 1 week with a 2-day re-skin of the site during the campaign, and created 75,000 RoS ad impressions.

www.findanyfilm/indarkness

Facebook

We also created a Facebook page for the film, which was targeted primarily to Polish audiences with both Polish and English language on the site. We working closely with online PR agency Think Jam to help run this effectively. Information on the film and campaign was available, including positive media reactions, competitions, cinema listings and 'like' to access content to build up a database of fans. We ran a series of targeted ads to Polish film fans and also arthouse film fans and fans of Academy Award movies on Facebook, to drive them to the page.

www.facebook.com/InDarknessUK



Underground

We ran a 4-sheet campaign across 50 sites in the London Underground network showcasing the academy award nomination, strong press quotes and powerful creative.



BELOW THE LINE ACTIVITY

Online

In addition to the Facebook activity, the film's trailer was posted on Metrodome's YouTube channel and linked through to the Facebook page.

Postcards/A3 posters

Using the theatrical poster as the basis of all our campaign artwork, we produced over ten thousand postcards and A3 posters and distributed them throughout Polish and Jewish communities in the UK, as well as cinemas and key outlets and institutions.

Most of the postcards and outreach work was targeted towards the Polish community with Polish language messages. These were distributed using a specialist outreach company, 2 weeks prior to release.

Cinema site activity

In addition to the usual posters and trailers we sent standees and flyers to all sites and worked closely with Odeon on online marketing.

We also worked directly with cinemas in order to cross-promote the release of the film, placing DVD giveaways of previous Metrodome releases and also signed copies of the poster. These competitions were promoted in cinema newsletters that reached their customer database and also through their social networking sites Facebook and Twitter.

POLISH OUTREACH

In order to effectively reach the UK's Polish community, we worked closely with a Polish PR specialist with a successful track record of delivering Polish film campaigns in the UK. He worked closely with Polish media, on both national and regional level, Polish institutions, community centres, charities.

Competitions

We set up an exclusive London-based preview screening the day before release, for which tickets were circulated as competition prizes. This activity was targeted towards the Polish audiences and promoted through Polish media, particularly through Polish radio. Seats were also made available to members of the Metrodome Preview Screening Club, promoted through our newsletter and the In Darkness Facebook page.

For Polish audiences outside of London, we have teamed up with Cineworld to provide free tickets on the weekend of release to giveaway through local Polish media outlets.

Church Initiative

Our Polish PR specialist worked closely with 10 of the largest Polish churches in the UK, in order to generate awareness of the film by reaching 25,000 Polish church-audience on the Sunday before release. The activity included flyering and also a public announcement delivered at the end of each mass. As the film is a Polish product, it was recommended that we pitch the film as a patriotic duty on behalf of the Polish community to support this release.

Jewish Outreach

To target the Jewish community, we promoted the film through various charities, schools and Universities, with flyers and competitions to win preview tickets.

PRESS CAMPAIGN

We positioned the film as a strong award-worthy thought-provoking real-life story. With that in mind our primary audience was high brow audiences who favour intelligent and commercial world cinema. We looked at the campaigns of *The Counterfeiters* and *The Lives of Others* as comparative films. We have ensured we reach daily and weekend broadsheets with interviews with the director, real life stories and think pieces. In addition, film magazines also covered the film.

The beginning of the year is a notoriously congested time for releasing films in the UK. We therefore intend to capitalise on the release date (in the same way respected foreign language releases, *I am Love*, *The Lives of Others* and *The Class* achieved) by holding back key publicity breaks for following the awards season. We also plan to enter the film into BAFTA 2012/2013 awards season.

We saw the Polish population as a key social group to target; therefore we programmed the film into film festivals in cities with a high Polish population. The film featured in The Dublin Film Festival with Agnieszka Holland in attendance completing press interviews and taking part in a post screening Q&A. The film also screened at The Glasgow Film Festival and will finally launch the festival to London audiences at The Kinotaka Polish Film Festival a week before the release of the film.

We saw the UK Jewish population as a primary group to target; we ensured we receive significant coverage in the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish News* and *The Jewish Telegraph*. We also targeted wide reaching targeted media such as North London Newspapers (syndicated newspaper coverage across all areas) and have approached high profile Jewish columnists and writers.

TALENT ACTIVITY:

Agnieszka Holland

Agnieszka Holland travelled to the UK for a long-lead press day at the end of January. She has also completed long-lead and online interviews either via phone.

Interview pieces below:

PRINT

- The Guardian: G2 – 24th February
- The Herald (Glasgow) – 15th March
- Sight & Sound – April 2012 Issue
- Jewish Chronicle – 9th March
- Jewish Telegraph (Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Glasgow) – 16th March
- Jewish News Newspaper – Week of release

BROADCAST

- Talking Movies – Tom Brook Interview – 19th February
- BBC Radio Four- The Film Programme
- BBC World Service – The Strand

ONLINE

- This is Fake DIY – Week of release
- Bird's Eye View – Week of release
- The Huffington Post – Week of release
- Telegraph Online – Week of release
- Sky Movies – Week of release
- Cinemart – Week of release

POLISH PRESS

We hired a Polish PR specialist agency to handle the media campaign. We have pushed them to ensure blanket coverage across Polish print, broadcast and online outlets.

- Cooltura – Cover Interview with Agnieszka Holland – 24th February
- Polish Observer – Cover Interview with Agnieszka Holland & Kinoteka round up – Week of release

- Londynek - Interview with Agnieszka Holland – Week of release
- Polish Express online - Interview with Agnieszka Holland – Week of release
- Polish Express - In Darkness release & Kinoteka round up – Week of release
- Nowy Czas - Interview with Agnieszka Holland – Week of release
- Dziennik Polski – Interview with Agnieszka Holland – 24th February

Robert Wieckiewicz

One of Poland's leading award-winning actors of his generation, Robert was pitched to mainstream UK media as well as Polish and Jewish publications. Robert attended the Kinoteka screening of the film and speak to some Polish press both at the event and on a press day before.

- Goniec - Week of release
- Londynek – Week of release
- Polish Express – Week of release
- Dziennik Polski – Week of release
- Nowy Czas – Week of release

FEATURES

We sold in the real life story, pitching Kristina Chigier-Keren who is the only survivor of the original story.

- A first run exclusive feature with The Sunday Times Magazine ran on 11th March 2012.
- The Scotsman Magazine ran a real-life feature which ran on the 18th March.

Furthermore, Kristine also spoke to Stephen Applebaum, a well connected freelance journalist who has placed his interview on The Guardian Online.

We also pitched interview pieces with Henry Marguiles, the son of MundeK and Klara Marguiles. Henry spoke to the following outlets and will attend the Kinoteka screening on the 11th March.

- Daily Mail Weekend – Interview and photo piece – 18th March
- Evening Standard – News piece - 16th Marc
- BBC Radio London – Robert Elms Show - 8th March.

ONLINE

We appointed JAM, a specialist film online PR agency, who started work placing the UK trailer as an exclusive on the Guardian website. Their online specific activity included key talent placements, review placements, competitions and editorial features. The agency also placed EPK material, including video interviews (and transcribed versions where preferred), and approved clips from the film as exclusives and then syndicated out to all outlets.

Exclusive Clips and Images placed on:

- The Huffington Post – 7th March
- Hey U Guys – 2nd March
- Sky Movies – 24th February

JAM have also utilized the film's Facebook page to seed out online placements.

REVIEWS

The long-lead FDA screening was held on 15th December this was screened to long-lead magazines and supplements. We also held a screening as part of UK Cinema Showcase, a press event that takes place twice a year, where each distributor submits a film to screen. The film received very positive feedback.

We organized a screening programme which covered long lead and short lead press, including newspapers, magazines, broadcast, regional and online. The Film Distributor Association allocated our final screening slot – the National Press Show for the key newspaper critics on Tuesday 13th March.

PRINT

- Empire – 4* Review – April Issue
- Time Out – 4* Review – Week of Release
- Total Film – 4* Review – April Release
- Sight & Sound – Positive Review – April Issue
- GQ Magazine – Positive Review – April Issue
- Notion Magazine – Review – April Issue
- New Internationalists – Mention – 27th February
- Easy Living – Review – April Issue
- Clash Magazine – Review – Ben Hopkins

- Word Magazine – Positive review – April issue

BROADCAST

- Film 2012 – Week of Release
- BBC Radio 4 Film Programme – March TBC
- BBC World Service – The Strand – March TBC

EPK MATERIAL

On-set interviews and clips were delivered in for TV, radio and online exploitation.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The film played 2012's Dublin Film Festival and Glasgow Film Festival. Agnieszka travelled to Dublin and took part in interviews with local press. Each film screening hosted a Q&A with Agnieszka which has generated debate and ensured positive word of mouth amongst audiences at the festival.

In addition to reach the UK Polish audience, In Darkness screened at 2012's London Polish Film Festival on 11th March at the Barbican. Robert Wieckiewicz will attend the screening.

REGIONAL

We held regional press shows for the film in Scotland and Ireland to gain regional support.

The film was reviewed in all key cities where it opened, we ensured that Press Association's Damon Smith saw the film and includes it on his bulletin.