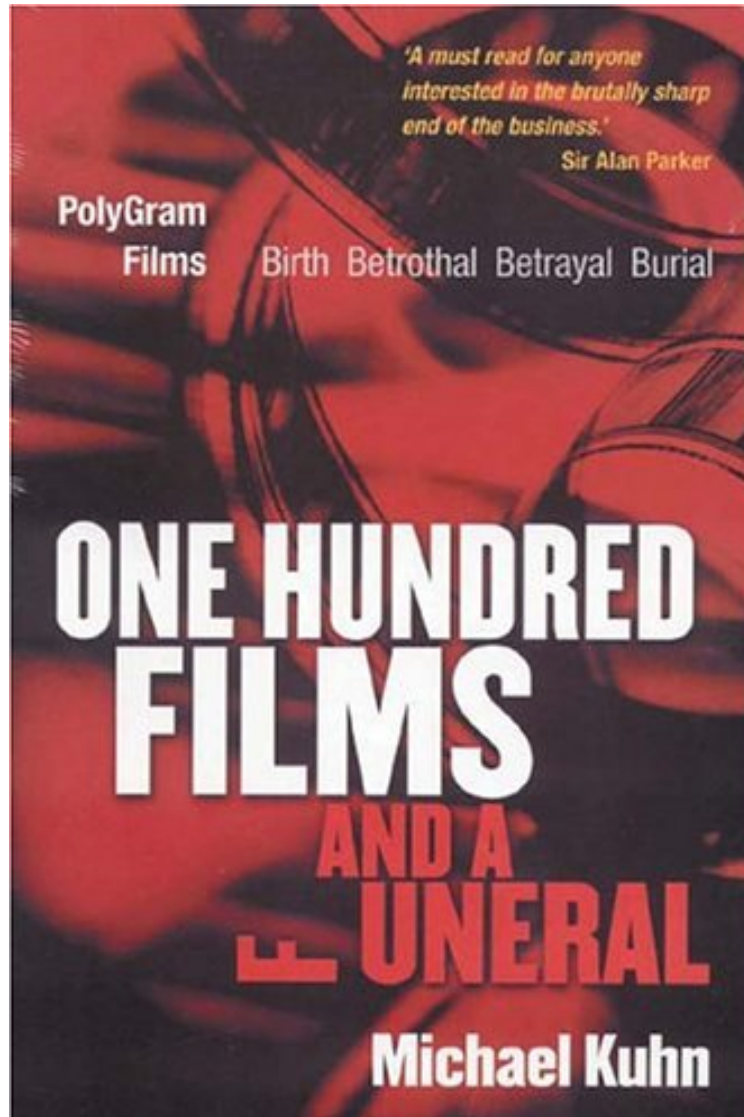


One Hundred Films and a Funeral

Michael Kuhn

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Michael Kuhn : One Hundred Films and a Funeral before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Hundred Films and a Funeral:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Europeans Take on Hollywood By David Lindsay I caught this 2007 documentary by accident and found it fascinating. I had never heard of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment (PFE) and didn't know the story. PFE was apparently formed with the intention of developing a European film studio that could produce and distribute films internationally on a scale to match the major Hollywood studios. 100 Films and a Funeral focuses on Michael Kuhn and the rise and fall of PFE. Kuhn headed the company from 1991 till 1999, until the

company was sold to Seagram, who then stopped film production. PFE's most successful films included *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), *Dead Man Walking* (1995), *Fargo* (1996), *Trainspotting* (1996) and *Notting Hill* (1999). The documentary almost seemed like a replay of what happened to Goldcrest. Goldcrest was a British company that won Oscars making films like *Chariots of Fire*, *Gandhi* and *The Killing Fields*. Goldcrest eventually went bust, proving how difficult it is to compete with Hollywood. Academy award winning scriptwriter William Goldman once claimed that nobody in Hollywood really knows which films will be successful. That said, Hollywood probably makes a lot of action films and romantic comedies for a reason. The documentary focuses on *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in an attempt to justify the company's strategy of US expansion. That film only took 21% of its gross revenues from the US market, and earned \$53 million which was not a huge amount of money. There is an argument for saying that perhaps the Rest of the World should have been the focus for Polygram. *Four Weddings* was in many ways a one-off, it had a brilliant script from Richard Curtis who has rarely recaptured that magic with his subsequent efforts. If you read George Lucas's book *Blockbusting* you notice that even seemingly successful films like *Mission Impossible II* end up losing money. The Dutch owners who abandoned PFE probably made a prudent business decision. The film business is risky and only the Americans seem to have worked out how to make money over the long term. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Treatise on the Business of Filmmaking By Rodney Parnter This is one of the better books about professional filmmaking as a business. The perspective is that of a Hollywood outsider (former European music powerhouse Polygram) trying to break into the domain of the major studios in North America and around the globe. It is a cautionary tale of the successes, setbacks and ultimate failure to sustain a European-based major studio. The book is a fun read as Kuhn describes his many encounters with Hollywood celebrities both performers and moguls. Behind all of the tales, however, lies a great blueprint for any newcomers looking to gain entry into the business.

Many Europeans have dreamed of a film studio able to challenge Hollywood on its own ground. Only one post-war company has come close-- PolyGram Filmed Entertainment. This book is a brilliant account of the life and death of PolyGram Films seen through the eyes of its British President, Michael Kuhn. He describes the beginnings of the company, in London and LA, in the heyday of the '80s and its subsequent meteoric growth throughout the next decade. In the words of Sir Alan Parker, "Michael Kuhn is the visionary who created the most successful global company outside of Hollywood. He achieved this with a most unusual premise: championing original and creative work, coupled with imaginative marketing and distribution, and remarkable honesty and fiscal accountability. He failed, of course, but he very nearly pulled it off. Kuhn's candid first-hand account of PolyGram Films' success and demise is a must read for anyone interested in the brutally sharp end of the business of film, or anyone who ever wondered why the films emanating from the Hollywood machine are mostly crap." Combining critical acclaim and popular success with such films as *Wild at Heart*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Fargo* and *Notting Hill*, PolyGram Films garnered ten Oscars from 1991 until 1998, when its potential was unexpectedly and unaccountably destroyed. This is not only a story of deals won and lost in a ruthless world peopled by titans, sharks, peacocks and all the usual suspects, but a real business adventure that changed the structure of the global film industry. The book includes valuable appendices: The Players; Chronology; Timeline; Film List; Film Credits; Awards; PolyGram Companies; Corporate Structure.

"A must read for anyone interested in the brutally sharp end of the business of film." (Sir Alan Parker) About the Author Michael Kuhn studied Law at Cambridge University before becoming an intellectual property specialist. He joined PolyGram in 1972 and rose to become General Counsel, PolyGram Worldwide. In 1991 he won approval from the Board to establish PolyGram Filmed Entertainment. He relocated to Los Angeles and over the next eight years built up the only worldwide European based film studio, with operations in 14 countries and revenues of \$1 billion. He was responsible for founding the Sundance Channel in the USA, a joint venture with Viacom and Robert Redford, which within three years reached 25m households. He set up PolyGram Television, producing several successful dramas and series, and also founded PolyGram Specialist Video, which became one of the top five sell-through companies in the world. Michael Kuhn is a Board member of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute in the USA. In Europe, he served on Commissioner Oreja's committee on the media industry and its digital future [the report was published in 1998]. He received the 1999 BAFTA Michael Balcon award for Outstanding Services to British Cinema.