

Mongrel Media

Presents

SENNA



A Film by Asif Kapadia
(104 min., UK, 2011)

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INTRODUCTION

It was June 1984, a Sunday at the Monaco Grand Prix. As the heavens unleashed a torrential downpour, one of the greatest line-ups in motor racing history took to the track. No fewer than six current or future World Champions vied for the race that day, including recent World Champion Keke Rosberg; a stoic, fearless Englishman called Nigel Mansell; Austrian double World Champion Niki Lauda; the flamboyant double World Champion Nelson Piquet; and the man dubbed 'The Professor', Frenchman Alain Prost, who was on the cusp of being regarded by many at the time as the most complete driver ever. In 13th position on the grid meanwhile, attracting little interest in his un-fancied Toleman car, was a wiry, fiery young driver in just his sixth Formula 1 race.

As the engines fired and the drivers tore through the city streets, the man that started in 13th place ripped through the field, demonstrating virtuoso technique and jaw-dropping courage as he passed every car in front of him, taking Prost on line of the 32nd lap. That man was Ayrton Senna, announcing his arrival to the world of F1 with a spectacular drive.

As it transpired, Senna did not win the race; he lost out on a technicality and the first-place passed to Prost. At the time Senna was not bitter, it was still his first podium finish, although what happened that day would set the tone for the young Brazilian's future career; he would frequently win on the track, but would find himself defeated off the track, struggling against what he perceived as injustices in a highly politicised sport. Still, he overcame obstacles placed in his path, won three World Championships — his years at McLaren forging a fierce rivalry with team member and rival Prost — and achieved superstar status across the globe. With the international press he proved a charming and dashing champion; to his native Brazilian media he was a humble and deeply religious man.

At the peak of his powers however, while tackling the Imola track in San Marino, disaster struck. It was the third race of the 1994 season and

during qualifying Senna's protégé Rubens Barrichello crashed and hurt himself. A day later Austrian driver Roland Ratzenberger slammed into a wall at 200mph, dying instantly. Senna was shaken and wondered whether to continue racing. His great friend and F1 doctor Professor Sid Watkins advised Senna not to race on the Sunday. But Senna's pride, his sense of responsibility to his team and sport, and his absolute need to conquer his fear, propelled him on.

On the Sunday of the race, Senna managed just two laps after the safety car pitted, before crashing on the high-speed Tamburello corner, his car hitting a concrete wall at more than 130mph. In 1987, Nelson Piquet had crashed at the same corner and emerged with a mild concussion; in 1989 Gerhard Berger came off at Tamburello and exploded in a ball of flames. He was hurt but survived. In 1994, when Senna crashed, his car hit the wall at such an angle that part of the suspension flew back and punctured his helmet, causing fatal skull fractures. Medics found an Austrian flag in his car: he had planned to honour Ratzenberger when he finished the race.

Senna's remarkable story, charting his physical and spiritual achievements on the track and off, his quest for perfection, and the mythical status he has since attained, is the subject of SENNA, a documentary feature that spans the racing legend's years as an F1 driver, from his opening season in 1984 to his untimely death a decade later. Far more than a film for F1 fans, SENNA unfolds a remarkable story in a remarkable manner, eschewing many standard documentary techniques in favour of a more cinematic approach that makes full use of astounding footage, much of which is drawn from F1 archives and is previously unseen.

Universal Pictures presents SENNA in association with StudioCanal. A Working Title Production in association with Midfield Films, the film is directed by Asif Kapadia, written by Manish Pandey and produced by James Gay Rees, Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner. The executive producers are Kevin Macdonald, Manish Pandey, Debra Hayward and Liza Chasin.

SENNA is made with the full co-operation of Ayrton Senna's family, who have given permission for this to be the first documentary feature film about his life; Formula One, who gave permission to use previously unseen footage; and the Ayrton Senna Institute, the charitable foundation established after his death, which provides educational opportunities to millions of deprived Brazilian children.

SENNA: THE BEGINNINGS

Producer James Gay-Rees had been inspired by stories his father told of Senna from a young age when he was working for John Player Special, the tobacco company that sponsored Senna's black Lotus in 1985, and got to know him. "My dad would come back from these various races and say that there was something really 'other' about this young guy. 'He was very unusual. He was not like the other young motor racing drivers. He was very sure of himself. He'd got very strong beliefs. He was very different and very intense.' And so began his journey towards making a documentary on the legendary racing driver.

A pivotal date on this journey was March 2006 when Gay-Rees and writer and executive producer Manish Pandey had finally secured a meeting with Ayrton Senna's family to bid for permission to make a film about their son. "My wife told me not to cry, because I get quite emotional, especially if I'm passionate about something, like I am with this project," Pandey begins. "She said to me, 'You have got to be very professional, or they will think you are an idiot!'" Taking these sage notes on board Pandey ran through his 40-minute presentation, a mixture of sounds, footage and stills, while keeping himself together. "Thankfully, I didn't cry but everyone else in the room did," he smiles. "For 40 minutes, Ayrton's sister, Viviane, and the rest of the family, were just crying their eyes out. At the end, Viviane stood up and gave me a hug and whispered in my ear,

'You really knew my brother.' We had never met but I think she got what we were trying to do."

Buoyed by their successful pitch, they returned to the UK. "It was unbelievable. The only other feature project they had approved was a \$100 million Antonio Banderas film in 1995 which never happened." And yet with Pandey and Gay-Rees, it was different. "The Senna family got in touch and said, 'We really want to do it with you and James. We just loved what you brought to this and we think it is going to work.' It took us two years to do the deal with them but while I think other people who pitched to the Sennas would dress it all up, the family could see that their projects would be just about the death of Ayrton. We said from the outset that this would not be the case with our film."

The filmmakers' pitch had won over the family. "It's all about trust," offers Gay-Rees, "and making sure that everyone knows you are going to do the right thing." That right thing was showcased in the presentation Pandey delivered to the family, which was entitled 'The Life And Death of Ayrton Senna'. The producers did not want to focus solely on Senna's tragic death; they wanted to explore his extraordinary, multi-faceted life. Senna's story is no rags-to-riches tale – he was born into an affluent family in Sao Paulo — but it is a dazzling tale, marked by his singular approach to life, his genius behind the wheel, and his own deeply entrenched spiritual beliefs.

"It is this spiritual thing that grabs a lot of people," continues Gay-Rees, "because great sportsmen do operate in a zone that is slightly above that of mere mortals, and it is almost like they are channelling something when they are at the peak of their power."

Pandey agrees, recalling that race at Monaco in 1984 in the teeming rain, where Senna drove such a staggering race. "In that car he should have been going like a skateboard around a bath. But what he did that day was just extraordinary, and it was the spiritual side of him coming through. It

felt as though he wasn't actually driving on a track. When he was driving, he was on some very spiritual plane.

"For Senna it was not just about winning the race and getting a few steps ahead. He was trying to take himself and the car to a place that he could only really understand. I think Roger Federer said this three years ago; he had just blasted someone off the court and had said when he was playing that game he was 'outside himself'; it was as if he was watching himself play. I think Senna reached those zones very, very regularly. That's why he did it." Senna's drive, allied to his intense skill, makes him an engaging subject.

TELLING THE STORY

For producer Eric Fellner, co-chairman of Working, SENNA proved a true labour of love and added a new dimension to the company by being the first documentary it would make.

"I used to be a fan like a lot of people and then lapsed, but from this period in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, I was absolutely fascinated and intrigued by Formula One," he says. "We had tried to develop a film about Hesketh and we spent a lot of time and money on it but couldn't make it work. I just really wanted to make a film about that world and had met with Bernie Ecclestone to try to find a way in and couldn't. We have never done a documentary before but this seemed the best medium to make a film about Formula One.

When the producers brought director Asif Kapadia on board, they knew they were hiring a talented filmmaker. The director of BAFTA winning feature 'The Warrior' and the thriller 'Far North', Kapadia is a graduate of the Royal College of Art, and has an eye for exquisite composition.

"The most obvious way to tell a Senna story is to do 'Three days in Imola', the race where Senna died, and that would have been a compelling

movie, but a pretty obvious movie,” Pandey says. “You would do Friday, Saturday and Sunday and would probably flash back to establish why the character is there. You would do it with cut-in interviews and you would definitely have a very powerful film, but maybe a film that misses the point of him. And that’s when Asif walked in. We interviewed a lot of directors for this. There was a lot of interest to do this but when he walked in he got it.”

Kapadia, while a sports fan, was not an F1 enthusiast and proved to have a completely dispassionate approach to the producers’ subject matter. “Before the film I had never read a book on Senna, never looked at one website and never read a book on Formula One,” begins the director. “I had never been to a race. So that’s where I came in to it. I felt very much the outsider at the beginning of the process. What I find exciting is the journey, learning about the subject through the research and interviews. Having a fresh set of eyes on the material.

“I could see that Senna was an amazing driver and had this deep spiritual side, which was really fascinating, and it became all about paring the film down to the bare minimum so that somebody who doesn’t like Formula One, or a person who has never heard of Senna, will get the film, understand the character and actually be moved by his story.” He smiles. “It’s all about the character; we were trying to make a film about racing. I was directing a feature film with non professional actors.”

Kapadia points to Senna’s rivalry with Prost, and his struggle against the racing authorities. “I am never really interested in people who are just ‘the good guys’,” continues the director. “There’s always something about Senna that is a bit grey, there’s something about him also that I noticed when we started to spend more time researching the film; the outsider coming in. In my films there’s always something about outsiders and I can see a relevance here of ‘the outsider from Brazil’. Even though he is not a poor kid, he is coming into the European world, taking on the dominant drivers and administration that seemed to favour Prost.”

In 1988, Senna joined his French adversary at McLaren; Prost was the reigning World Champion and the two became fierce competitors. "If Senna thinks he can just walk into Prost's team and become champion," Keke Rosenber, whom Prost had destroyed in 1986, said at the time, "he has a shock coming." As it turned out, it was Prost that had the shock. At the start of the 1988 season, commentators reckoned that while Senna would regularly be the fastest driver, Prost would win the title, and the early season results suggested their predictions would come true. At Monaco once more, however, four years after his dazzling drive in the rain, Senna went 1.5 seconds faster than Prost in qualifying, a vast margin in F1, and at a subsequent press conference bared his soul to the world's media.

"Suddenly, I realised that I was no longer driving the car consciously," said Senna at the time. "I was in a different dimension. It was like I was in a tunnel... I was way over the limit but I was still able to find more." His words conveyed just how he considered the driving experience being so close to the edge: it was a spiritual journey. And yet Senna was still fallible and he lost the Monaco race.

Going into the Japanese Grand Prix in 1988, Prost and Senna were still battling for the championship and if Senna won that race he would win the championship. As the lights turned green, however, Senna's engine stalled and 13 cars, including Prost's sped by. Once his car finally moved off, Senna drove like a man possessed, scything through the field with a series of audacious, wondrous manoeuvres until only Prost remained in front. Senna hounded him lap after lap and as the heavens opened once more, he sped by. He was World Champion, and had beaten Prost in a McLaren car specifically designed for the French driver.

The following season things heated up. Senna appeared at the start of the 1989 season in high spirits with his superstar girlfriend Xuxa Meneghel, and at the Japan circuit, the Brazilian driver arrived for the penultimate race of the season, needing to win the race to keep his 1989 championship hopes alive. Senna watched from pole position as Prost

sped by, but hounded his rival for lap after lap. So long as Prost finished the race ahead of Senna, the Frenchman would win the title. Senna spotted the point on the track where he could overtake Prost, a blind left-hander, but the latter drove a clever line, keeping Senna at bay. Then, on lap 46, Senna made his move. The two cars entered the turn at 160mph and Senna lunged down the inside as they both slowed for the chicane. But then, as they crawled around the corner, Prost coolly turned in on Senna as the latter made his move, nudging his car and causing them both to crash out.

Senna raised his hands in disgust. Prost climbed out of his car knowing that he had won the championship. Senna, however, was not done. He urged the Japanese marshals to push start his car and he rattled into the pits for a new wing, and then went on to take the chequered flag against all odds. But then, just moments before he was due to take his place on the podium, Jean Marie Balestre, the French head of F1's governing body, declared a technical infringement, stripping Senna of victory. Prost was declared champion and Senna was suspended. The Brazilian regarded this as a terrible injustice.

"His story is amazing and we have this great three-act structure to work with," says Kapadia. "You have his rise, his success, and then the challenges he faces when he gets to the top. There is the 'comedy bad guy', Balestre, the rival with four world titles, Prost, and then there's Senna's personal side, his family, his girlfriends, the relationship he has with Brazil, and there's tension, drama, tragedy. It is absolutely what films should be, and it is all real."

The story took yet another turn in the 1990 season. At the Japan circuit, the roles were reversed from the previous year. As long as Senna finished ahead of Prost, he would be crowned champion. Senna had pole position although knew that the second place on the grid was actually a better starting point as it was the cleaner side of the track. He raised the point with officials who agreed to swap the positions over and Senna took pole position in qualifying. Before the race, however, Senna was convinced

that Balestre had reversed the decision and Senna had to start from the dirtier side of the track. The driver was incensed and 11 seconds into the race, on the first turn of the circuit, Senna barrelled into Prost at 150mph, causing both men to spin off. This time it was Senna's turn to walk away safe in the knowledge that he had won the title.

"If you had written this story as fiction, you would say that it is a clever piece of writing," smiles the director. "One year Prost crashes into Senna at the slowest point of the track, in such a way that his own car was not even damaged. The following year, Senna crashes into Prost at one of the fastest points of the track, saying, 'I don't care what happens, I am going for it.' It is very interesting how you are what you do and Senna and Prost's characters are revealed by these two accidents."

Balestre was livid but could not punish Senna because there was no proof that he had caused the accident intentionally. The F1 community, however, censured Senna, complaining about his high-speed manoeuvre and many drivers claimed that Senna's 'dark side' was a true reflection of his personality. Prost even claimed that Senna's faith in God made him a dangerous driver. It was a stinging attack that simplified Senna's spirituality, but the Brazilian kept his own counsel.

"I think Senna was shades of grey," offers Pandey. "He was not purely white. When he took Prost off at 150mph, Senna could have waited until the end of the lap and done him on the same chicane that Prost had done him, at a slow and safe speed. But that's why I love him: because it is not cold blooded. It is so hot blooded with him, always. Everyone has kicked a dustbin or slammed a door at some point in their life. Well, that is how they kicked dustbins, and slam the doors, in these sports. Some might call the film a partisan treatment but this film is not 'Ayrton Alain, Nigel and Nelson'. This film is Ayrton Senna."

Indeed, with his remarkable rise, his crowning achievements as World Champion — he is widely perceived as the finest racer ever to sit behind the wheel of an F1 car — his battle with Prost and Balestre and then his

own untimely death, Senna is a remarkable story. "We set up our character, we had ascendancy and then we had a turning point, which is him winning the championship," explains Pandey, "and you think the film is over but then you realise that politics come into it. And then for the next act, the whole of the second act is Senna overcoming; no matter what you achieve it comes and hits you back in the face. And that is life."

Just as Senna reached the top, the technology in cars changed and the 1992 and 1993 titles went to Williams-Renault cars driven by Mansell and Prost. In 1994, however, with Prost and Mansell no longer racing in F1, Senna secured the Williams drive and people predicted the easiest championship ever. But a young driver called Michael Schumacher had arrived on the scene in a Benetton car that seemed to have an unfair advantage.

"And then the third act is pivotal because just when Senna has overcome everything, he finally comes up against the thing he can't do, which is this modern world," offers Pandey. "It really is the death of the hero by machine. There is a car out there that hasn't had the same restrictions and it is cheating and you know he is outraged. Senna knows by this time his sense of fairness and justice is going to be outraged but there's nothing he can do. He will never share that injustice publicly with the press because he understands that he will always lose. He was a very shrewd man."

Gay-Rees concludes: "The great thing about this movie is the structure. You could not ask for a better structure. The rise and fall. Ultimately, it is the only possible outcome you could have."

THE VISION FOR SENNA

An aspect particular to this documentary is the fact there are no talking heads. Many interviews were conducted but they run over the footage in voice-over form rather than being seen. Eric Fellner recalls that Asif had always resisted the idea of the audience seeing the subjects and to his credit stuck to his guns.

"I think it gives it a slightly unique feel because most documentaries don't have that. Yes, we had to cheat with some voice over but you never cut away from the period and you get a lot of Ayrton Senna," Fellner smiles. "You feel like Ayrton is telling you the story all the way through and that was Asif's big thing and I think that helps the thrust a lot."

Kapadia explains: "Early on, Manish and I cut a ten minute short just from some YouTube footage and even from doing that we knew that this approach would work. I knew there was a brilliant film here, with a very powerful ending, very shocking and moving and a tragic ending. And then you have got his journey and then his rivalry, a beginning a middle and an end. What do we need talking heads for?"

The interviews with other drivers — despite his rivalry with Senna, Prost was a pallbearer at the funeral and gave the filmmakers generous amounts of time — and commentators on the sport, along with the family, play out over the carefully selected footage.

"Everyone that we interviewed was brilliant and lovely but you look at the material, and it is Senna's passion and tension that shines through," Kapadia continues. "It wasn't easy to persuade people to drop the talking heads, it's the starting point for many documentary films," he laughs. "I must say, there were a lot of very experienced people who were involved in the film and that was a difficult argument, but my gut was always saying we should just let the images do the work. The more I looked at the footage, the more I realised that it tells you the story."

Fellner laughs, "I was on Asif all the time saying, 'When We Were Kings, When We Were Kings.'" The famous 1996 documentary telling the story of the Rumble in the Jungle fight between Ali and Foreman featured a fantastic performance by Norman Mahler at the opening, which drew those unfamiliar with boxing into the story. Fellner wanted something similar with SENNA. "But Asif resisted and I think he was right. The footage and the way it is put together in the film is fantastic."

Within three weeks of meeting with Senna's family, Manish Pandey and James Gay-Rees were sitting in front of F1 head honcho Bernie Ecclestone. Even at the outset, when the filmmakers originally planned to inter-cut their footage with talking head interviews, they would need access to the F1 archive at Biggin Hill, which would require Bernie Ecclestone's assistance. Ecclestone owns every image shot on camera at a F1 meeting during the period covered in the film.

"Our first meeting at Bernie Ecclestone's office saw Bernie come in and he didn't even sit for the meeting," recalls Pandey. "His lawyer beat us up for forty minutes, and then he stood for a 17-minute meeting, told us that he thought the project was great, shook hands and we knew we had the deal. Then it was a question of paperwork, which took 18 months. But we got the deal. Bernie just grinned and said, 'Give us all you can and we will see what we can do.'"

The filmmakers' access to the F1 archive was unprecedented. "Thanks to Ecclestone, we got unlimited access to everything," says Fellner. And so the monumental task began of patiently looking through all the material. "We said that we should go back to the original material and keep looking, keep looking, do all of our research, sift through hours and hours of material," explains Kapadia, "because I don't know the story inside out and I am looking at it with a fresh eye, as an outsider to the material and, saying, 'Well, this is really interesting even though it is not in any of the books' and, 'This is in every book, and actually it is not that great'."

With such a wealth of footage at their disposal, the filmmakers could afford to be highly selective. Kapadia cites a famous lap at Donington

Park at the 1993 European Grand Prix. "It is amazing when you look at his driving how he wins in such an inferior car," he says, "but it is grey, it is pissing down with rain and no one is there. The camera work is awful too, even though they are driving at 190mph, it all looks so slow, so I chose not to make it a key sequence in the film. Visually, it was not good enough."

And yet there are other moments, away from the track that proved absolutely riveting, including footage of the drivers' briefings, and a particularly feisty episode involving Senna and Balestre. "To me, with those drivers' meetings, it felt like having a Ken Loach dialogue scene in the middle of an action film, where people are having an argument in a room about something complex and you just follow them. It is just real and that was the bottom line, that whatever happens, it is real."

"Some of the footage we use is from YouTube, we have super 8 footage and some of it was shot on 35mm. That's the range of our movie. For me it was always going to be a mosaic that we all put together. You look up close and you aren't sure what you see, our film will never look technically perfect. You take a step back and it is beautiful like a piece of Gaudi architecture. I always approached it as a fiction film, a film with real life drama, real people. Documentaries are constructed, they have always used fictional techniques. Fiction films try all the time to be real. I wanted to find a new space or genre somewhere in the middle."

As the movie progresses chronologically, the TV coverage of the races is noticeably more complex and sophisticated. During the 1980s, Western governments imposed stricter laws on Tobacco advertising and F1 received a massive injection of cash, as the tobacco manufacturers poured billions into sponsorship deals with the leading teams. As a result, the number of cameras increased, and the quality of the camerawork improved.

Fellner explains, "With the basic races that have been televised, what we tried to do was to find angles. It sounds a bit nerdy, but we always tried to find the angle that hadn't been broadcast. And then a lot of the stuff in

the garage with Senna, and the brilliant sequences of the drivers' conferences, no one has ever seen that. Fantastic."

"By Imola at the end of the movie," Kapadia explains, "Senna has pretty much got 40 cameras on him everywhere he goes, so it became like cutting a drama. We could literally have a mid shot, a reverse, a two-shot profile and a high-angled helicopter shot if we wanted."

When recalling their rare footage, both Fellner and Gay-Rees cite a moment that captures Senna in the garage at Imola, the weekend leading up to his fatal crash. "It is amazing," says Fellner, "in the garage he is being shot from multiple angles and we were actually able, in real time, to cut from one angle to another. There are very few documentaries where you ever find that kind of coverage, which allows the viewer to feel like they are watching a film because the events are unfolding in a filmic way." Gay-Rees agrees. "The stuff that I think is pretty incredible is him in the garage on the last weekend when he gets more and more freaked out about what is going on. That's pretty sensational."

Along with the footage from the F1 archive, the filmmakers could employ the wealth of material recorded by Brazilian television. "It was following his every move from very early on, and he knew he needed his press to become successful," says Kapadia, who also used early footage supplied by the family along with several scenes from Brazilian TV channels.

"It is something that made this film doable the way we have done it," concludes the director. "Very few people in the world have an amazing talent but on top of that everywhere Senna went someone was filming him. He became huge in Japan, and the Japanese loved their cameras, so there was always someone somewhere. And then with F1, we got lucky that these amazing French cameramen were working at the time — most of the good camera work was shot by them — and they just happened to have a great eye."

The spectre of Imola, of course, looms through the latter stages of the film, and the interviews and footage that relate to the story of Senna's tragic demise are very poignant. As the film shows, Senna became increasingly concerned about his safety and his own sense of foreboding comes through. "Unfortunately, there was loads and loads of really good footage that we couldn't put in the movie," says Gay-Rees. "For example, we have footage of Senna standing at the corner at Imola a month before he died, during testing, and he is saying, 'Somebody is going to die at this corner this year.' But the point remains that people do like tragedy, under the right circumstances."

Senna's story is an undeniably tragic tale, but such was his passion, tenacity and own God-granted self-assurance, it is also punctured with light. "He was a real superstar," concludes Kapadia, "and he was clever enough to know this long before other sportsmen. He had his own logo, own theme tune, and own skyscraper. This was a quietly interesting guy who knew how to have an image as a sportsman and to put that image to good use. It is only recently that Federer and Ronaldo have become brands. Senna was doing it back in the 1980s. The man was a sensation and his story is just gripping."

THE FILMMAKERS

ASIF KAPADIA - Director

BAFTA award winning filmmaker Asif Kapadia is known for his visually striking films. He has an interest in exploring the lives of 'outsiders', characters living in timeless, extreme and unforgiving circumstances or landscapes. His films have been awarded and distributed internationally and shown how versatile and expressive British cinema can be.

Born in Hackney, London in 1972, Kapadia studied filmmaking at the Royal College of Art where he first gained recognition with his short film *The Sheep Thief* (1977) telling the story of a gifted streetkid and the family who take him in, made with non professional actors in Rajasthan, India. The film won many awards including Second Prize at the 1998 Cannes International Film Festival (Cinefondation), the Grand Prix at the 1997 European Short Film Festival in Brest and Best Director at the Poitiers Film Festival 1997.

Kapadia's distinct visual style continued with his first feature *The Warrior* shot in the deserts of Rajasthan and the snow capped Himalayas. *The Warrior* was championed in the British Press as 'epic' and 'stunning' and won two BAFTA awards for Outstanding British Film of the Year and The Carl Foreman Award for Special Achievement by a Director in their First Feature.

Far North (2004) premiered at the Venice Film Festival, based on a dark short story by Sara Maitland. Kapadia used the epic and brutal arctic landscape to show how desperation and loneliness drive a woman to harm the person she loves the most.

JAMES GAY-REES - Producer

After graduating from Southampton University with a degree in Economics and Accountancy, James briefly worked at accountancy firm Arthur Andersen. He then moved to New York where he convinced Miramax President Harvey Weinstein to give him an extremely menial job. After a year spent in the company, James joined Orbit Productions on the Paramount lot in LA as Head of Development.

James left Orbit to pursue a career as a producer. He worked with Mel Smith and George Lucas on *Radioland Murders* and line-produced *The Real Howard Spitz* starring Kelsey Grammer amongst others.

James set up Midfield Films in 1998 which has made films for Working Title and Icon. He recently Executive Produced *Exit Through The Giftshop* directed by the underground street artist Banksy.

James lives in London with his partner and two daughters.

TIM BEVAN AND ERIC FELLNER - Producers

Working Title Films, co-chaired by **TIM BEVAN and ERIC FELLNER** (Produced by) since 1992, is one of the world's leading film production companies. **DEBRA HAYWARD** (Executive Producer) serves as head of film and is creatively responsible for the company's slate of motion pictures, in conjunction with her US counterpart, **LIZA CHASIN** (Executive Producer).

Founded in 1983, Working Title has made more than 90 films that have grossed more than \$4.5 billion worldwide. Its films have won six Academy Awards® and 26 BAFTAs. Bevan and Fellner have received the Michael Balcon Award for Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema at the Orange British Academy Film Awards, and both have been honoured with the title of commanders of the Order of the British Empire.

Working Title's extensive and diverse list of credits include:

- Seven films with Joel and Ethan Coen: *Burn After Reading*; *Fargo*; *The Hudsucker Proxy*; *The Big Lebowski*; *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*; *The Man Who Wasn't There*; and *A Serious Man*
- Six collaborations with writer Richard Curtis: *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* and *Notting Hill*, as well as *Love Actually* and *The Boat That Rocked*, both of which Curtis also directed
- *Bean*, directed by Mel Smith; *Mr. Bean's Holiday*, directed by Steve Bendelack; and *Johnny English*, directed by Peter Howitt, all starring Rowan Atkinson.
- *Pride & Prejudice*, *Atonement* and *The Soloist* directed by Joe Wright
- *United 93* and *Green Zone* directed by Paul Greengrass
- *Hot Fuzz* and *Shaun of the Dead*, directed by Edgar Wright
- *About a Boy*, directed by Paul Weitz and Chris Weitz
- *Definitely, Maybe*, directed by Adam Brooks
- *The Interpreter*, directed by Sydney Pollack
- *Dead Man Walking*, directed by Tim Robbins
- *Elizabeth* and *Elizabeth The Golden Age*, directed by Shekhar Kapur
- *Frost/Nixon*, directed by Ron Howard
- *Nanny McPhee*, directed by Kirk Jones and *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang* directed by Susanna White
- *Billy Elliot*, directed by Stephen Daldry. The success of the film has continued on stage with *Billy Elliot the Musical* directed by Stephen Daldry with book and lyrics by Lee Hall and music by Elton John. The production is currently enjoying highly successful runs in London, Chicago and on Broadway where it won 10 Tony Awards in 2009 including Best Musical and Best Director. The show previously played in Sydney and Melbourne, with the next production opening in Seoul, South Korea in August 2010 followed by a US national tour beginning November 2010.

Working Title's next release will be *Paul* reuniting Simon Pegg and Nick Frost in a road movie directed by Greg Mottola. In pre-production are *Johnny English Reborn* directed by Oliver Parker and starring Rowan Atkinson; and *Everybody Loves Whales*, starring Drew Barrymore and John Krasinski directed by Ken Kwapis.

MANISH PANDEY – Writer and Executive Producer

Manish was born in Simla, India, and moved to London aged four. He studied Medicine at Cambridge and pursued a career in Orthopaedic Surgery until his passion for film led to a career in screenwriting. Amongst other projects, he has had several screenplays commissioned by Working Title Films. An avid Formula One fan, and an even more avid Ayrton Senna fan, SENNA was a dream project.

KEVIN MACDONALD – Executive Producer

Kevin Macdonald's first feature, *One Day In September*, won an Oscar for Best Documentary in 2000. His second feature, *Touching The Void*, premiered at Telluride 2003. Awards include a BAFTA for Best British Film and the Evening Standard Award for Best British Film, and it is the highest grossing British documentary in UK box office history. Kevin's first feature-length drama, *The Last King of Scotland*, starring Forest Whitaker, also premiered at Telluride and was released in the UK and the US in 2006. Awards include BAFTAs for Best British Film (Alexander Korda Award) and Best Adapted Screenplay. Forest Whitaker won an Academy Award and a BAFTA for his portrayal of Idi Amin. Kevin co-edited *The Faber Book Documentary* (1997), and wrote *Emeric Pressburger: The Life and Death of A Screenwriter* (1994, winner of BFI film book of the year and shortlisted for the NCR non-fiction prize). His journalism has appeared in numerous publications including the Guardian, Observer and Telegraph. He directed *State of Play* in 2008 starring Russell Crowe and is currently in post-production on *The Eagle*, adapted from Rosemary Sutcliffe's novel by Jeremy Brock starring Channing Tatum, Jamie Bell and Mark Strong.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

The following people contributed to the documentary and their audio interviews appear in the film.

Reginaldo Leme

Formula One journalist for TV Globo in Brazil, having covered motorsport for 30 years

Richard Williams

Chief sports correspondent for The Guardian Newspaper

John Bisignano

Ex-Formula One journalist for American ESPN TV, having covered motorsport for 25 years

Pierre van Vliet

Ex-Formula One journalist for France's TF1, now independent motorsport journalist/editor in Belgium, having covered motorsport for 30 years

Alain Prost

Quadruple Formula One Champion (1985, 86, 89, 93)

Ron Dennis

CEO McLaren Group

Frank Williams

Founder and ex-CEO of Williams Grand Prix Engineering

Neyde Senna

Mother of Ayrton Senna

Viviane Senna

Sister of Ayrton Senna

Professor Sid Watkins

Retired consultant neurosurgeon at The London Hospital and ex-Formula One doctor