



THE ROYAL EXECUTIONER

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Genre: Historical Drama
Director: Peter Soos
Producers: Kornel Sipos, Carlos Alperin
Writer: Marshall Ferrin
Countries: Spain/France/Australia
Duration: 100'
Language: English
Year: 2027
Budget: \$15m
Available: Worldwide
Awards: Screenplay won 12 awards and
18 nominations at international
screenwriting competitions
Locations: Spain/France (Basque country)
Post Production: Australia

Logline

Amid the chaos of Revolutionary France, Charles-Henri Sanson, the reluctant Royal Executioner, grapples with the moral weight of his inherited duty, torn between family loyalty, personal anguish, and the brutal demands of justice during one of history's bloodiest chapters.



Synopsis

In 1756, Versailles, France, Royal Executioner Charles-Baptiste Sanson and his son, Charles-Henri, botch an execution and flee when the crowd turns on them. With Charles-Baptiste gravely ill, Charles-Henri must take over as Royal Executioner to support the family. His first execution is a success, and upon his father's death, he becomes a fourth-generation executioner.

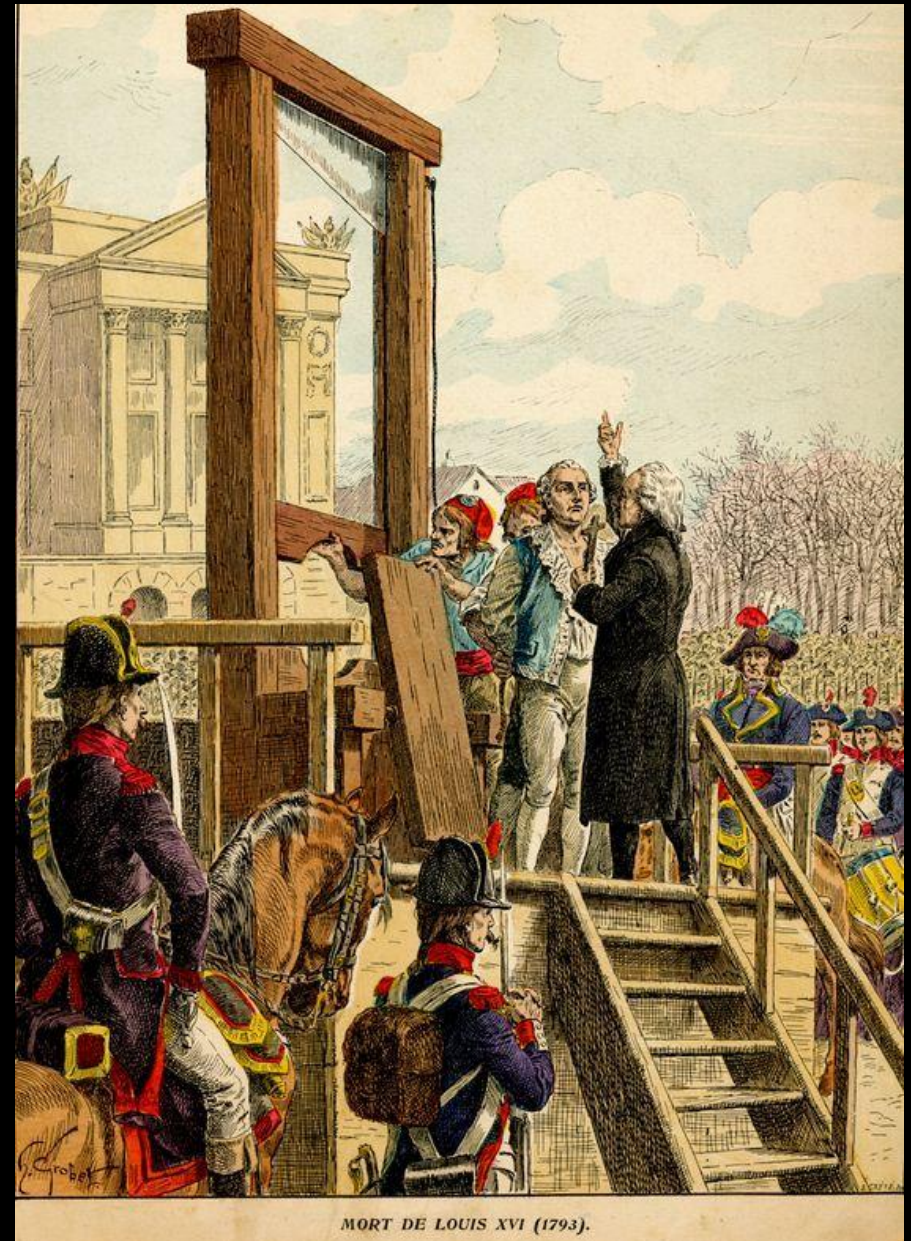
By 1789, Charles-Henri, now in his late 40s, faces turmoil when Revolutionaries invade the Bastille, allowing the Marquis de Sade to escape. Ordered by Robespierre to execute King Louis XVI, Charles-Henri complies, using the newly invented guillotine. As a successful executioner, he grows uneasy about the adulation and fear he inspires, as well as Robespierre's abuse of capital punishment.

Charles-Henri meets and advises 20-year-old Charlotte Corday in a cutlery shop, charmed by her naivete. Later, he witnesses her trial and execution for the murder of Marat, which breaks his heart.

Attempting to resign, he is threatened by Robespierre with death for his family. Pleading his case with Danton, he is offered safe passage to Switzerland, but Danton is arrested before they can escape.

Robespierre orders Charles-Henri to execute Danton. Shortly after, Robespierre is arrested by his own people, and Charles-Henri is forced to execute him as well. This act serves as his revenge against the brutal leader who abused his power.

In 1806, a broken Charles-Henri dies while tending to his garden. By 1847, his son Henri ends the family's six-generation legacy of executioners, having only daughters.



Screenplay: Wins & Nominations



A Screenplay of Moral Dilemmas

Marshall Ferrin's screenplay for "The Royal Executioner" has garnered notable acclaim, securing ten awards and fifteen nominations for Best Screenplay across esteemed international festivals. Bringing this screenplay to life as a film holds profound importance for several compelling reasons:

- **Exploration of Moral Dilemmas:** The story delves into the moral dilemmas faced by Charles-Henri Sanson, the royal executioner soldiers in war. Bringing these internal conflicts to the screen can provoke thoughtful discussions about duty, morality, and humanity.
- **Historical Insight:** Set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, the film offers a unique historical perspective, shedding light on the lives of executioners and their roles in society.
- **Universal Themes:** Addressing themes of justice, power, and humanity, the film resonates across cultures and eras, making it relevant to a global audience.
- **Character Study:** Charles-Henri Sanson's complex journey from reluctant executioner to a pivotal revolutionary figure provides rich material for a character-driven drama.
- **Cinematic Potential:** The screenplay's vivid and dramatic events lend themselves to powerful visual storytelling, captivating audiences with emotional depth and historical intrigue.
- **Cultural Reflection:** Examining execution methods and societal justice, the film can prompt viewers to reflect on how these issues have evolved and what they reveal about human nature.
- **Award-Winning Quality:** The screenplay's success in international festivals attests to its quality and compelling nature. Producing it as a film can bring this remarkable narrative to a wider audience.
- **Moral Reflection:** The film can lead viewers to reflect on their own moral beliefs and the difficult choices individuals must make in extreme circumstances, fostering a deeper understanding of empathy and ethical responsibility.

"The Royal Executioner" offers a rich historical context, complex characters, and profound moral questions, making its production as a film both meaningful and impactful.

Spin Offs

If the film achieves success, film distributors, TV broadcasters, and VOD platforms could be highly interested in expanding the story through a prequel, a sequel, and/or a series for streaming or TV, offering further opportunities to explore the rich historical and personal narratives introduced in the film.

Prequel Possibilities

A compelling prequel could explore the origins of Charles-Henri's family as executioners, delving into the moral complexities and societal pressures that led to six generations taking up the profession. Film distributors, streamers, and TV broadcasters could be particularly interested in this aspect, as it expands the lore and historical context, offering a deep dive into how the family's legacy intertwined with French history and political shifts.

The prequel could begin with the first family member to take up the role during an earlier period—perhaps the reign of Louis XIV—gradually building toward the onset of the French Revolution. With rich character studies and an exploration of how public executions evolved as tools of political power, this could draw significant interest for episodic storytelling.

Sequel Possibilities

A sequel could follow Charles-Henri's son as he grapples with the aftermath of his father's death and the crumbling legacy of the family. Set during the turbulent years after the Reign of Terror, the story could focus on how the son, determined to break the executioner's curse, navigates the unstable political climate of post-revolutionary France. With the country shifting from revolution to Napoleonic rule, this sequel could explore whether the son is pulled back into the violent cycle or if he can forge a more peaceful path. Broadcasters and VOD platforms could be keen to invest in this sequel, particularly if the original film successfully connects with audiences, allowing the story to explore personal redemption within a historical framework.

Series for Streaming or TV

The narrative could also be expanded into a streaming series that chronicles key moments across France's revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. Streamers and TV broadcasters would likely be interested in a series format, where the focus could shift between different characters—executioners, revolutionaries, political leaders, and everyday citizens. The series could delve into complex ethical dilemmas, personal sacrifices, and the betrayals faced by individuals living through one of history's most violent upheavals. Each episode or season could build upon the political and personal ramifications of the revolutionary period, offering nuanced storytelling that appeals to a global audience.

This episodic format would provide distributors and platforms with a versatile, long-form storytelling opportunity, appealing to viewers interested in rich historical dramas. Charles-Henri's legacy could serve as the backbone for the broader exploration of how society's evolving views on justice, punishment, and power unfolded during this transformative time.

Target Demographic and Marketing Strategy

Target Demographic:

Age Group: The primary target demographic for this film would likely be adults aged 25-54. This age group tends to have a strong interest in historical dramas, particularly those set in the tumultuous times of the French Revolution.

Gender: The film may appeal slightly more to males due to its focus on historical events, political intrigue, and dramatic executions. However, the emotional and personal aspects of Charles-Henri's story can also attract a significant female audience.

Interests: The film's exploration of themes such as duty, family legacy, and personal conflict amid historical upheaval will resonate with viewers who appreciate complex narratives.

Marketing Strategy:

Trailers and Teasers: High-quality trailers and teasers will be essential in capturing the attention of the target audience. These should highlight the film's dramatic moments, historical accuracy, and the moral struggles of the protagonist.

Social Media Campaigns: Utilize social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach a broader audience. Historical and behind-the-scenes content can be shared to generate interest and engagement.

Film Festivals: Premiering the film at major international film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, or Venice can help build buzz and attract attention from distributors and audiences alike.

Influencer Endorsements: Engage influencers and historians with significant followings on platforms like YouTube and Instagram to review and discuss the film. Their endorsement can lend credibility and attract their fan base.

Traditional Media: Utilize traditional media outlets, including TV appearances, radio interviews, and print advertisements in historical and cultural magazines to reach an older demographic that may not be as active on social media.

Distribution Deals and Partnerships: Securing pre-sale agreements with major distributors in key markets (e.g., North America, Europe, and Asia) can ensure a wide release. Distributors like Netflix, Amazon Prime, or HBO may be interested in acquiring streaming rights.

International Distributors: Partnering with international distributors who have experience with historical dramas can guarantee that the film reaches audiences in various regions. Companies like Focus Features, StudioCanal, or Lionsgate could be potential partners.

Similar Films

Differentiation from Other Historical Dramas:

Unique Historical Perspective: "The Royal Executioner" delves deeply into the psychological and moral struggles of an executioner tasked with carrying out the brutal will of the Revolution.

Character-Driven Narrative: The film centers on Charles-Henri's internal conflict and emotional journey, offering a poignant exploration of guilt, redemption, and the human spirit.

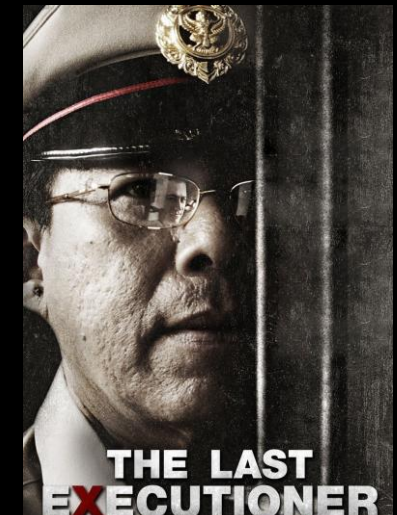
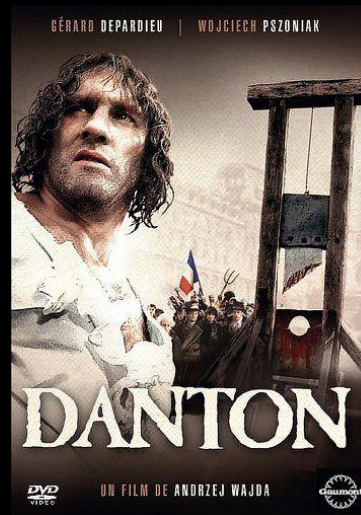
Personal and Political Conflict: Balancing personal redemption with the political upheaval of the time, the film presents a compelling dual narrative that appeals to both character-driven and historically-inclined audiences.

Recent Successes in Historical Drama:

"Gladiator 2" (2024): The anticipated sequel to the iconic "Gladiator," this film continues to captivate audiences with its dramatic storytelling and high production values, demonstrating the enduring appeal of historical epics.

"Napoleon" (2023): Directed by Ridley Scott, this film has gained acclaim for its epic portrayal of Napoleon Bonaparte, highlighting his complex character and military genius. Its success lies in its grand scale and intricate character study.

"The Last Executioner" (2014): Offers an intimate look into the life of an executioner, focusing on his personal and psychological struggles. This film's success lies in its deep character study and emotional storytelling.





France Locations

France: Costume Design

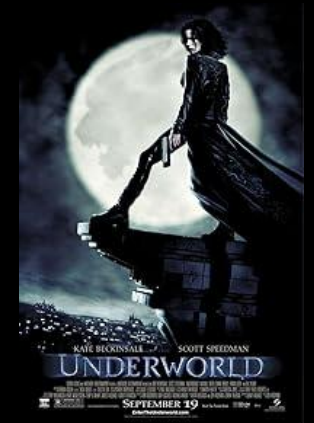
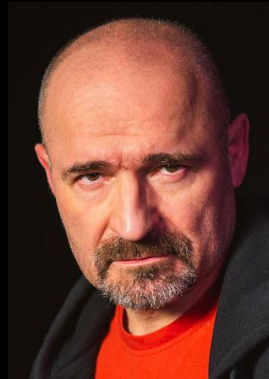


France: Architecture & Interiors



Peter Soos

Director



Péter Soós is a highly accomplished Hungarian filmmaker and academic, renowned for his contributions to both television and cinema. He graduated from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest with a degree in Hungarian history, laying the groundwork for his deep understanding of narrative and cultural context. In 1992, he further honed his storytelling skills, earning a degree in Film and TV Direction from the prestigious College of Theatre and Film Arts, Budapest.

Soós has directed a range of feature films and television productions that have left a lasting mark on Hungarian media. His notable works include “*Budapest Anno*,” “*Blessed State*,” and “*Genius - The Alchemist*.” He is particularly celebrated for his popular TV series, such as “*For Better or Worse*” and “*Hacktion*,” which garnered critical acclaim and a loyal audience in Hungary.

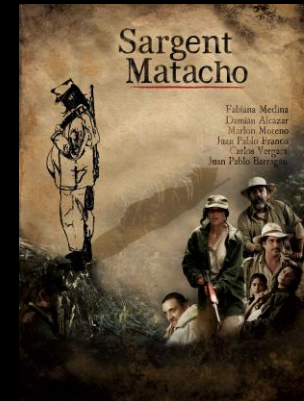
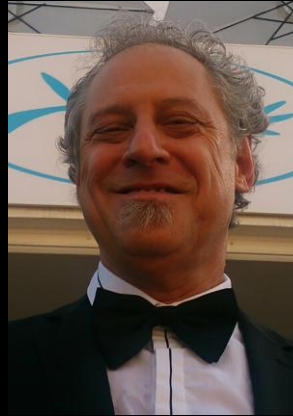
In addition to his on-screen achievements, Soós is a skilled stage director, having directed productions in several Hungarian theatres.

Péter Soós directed “*1242: Gateway to the West*,” a \$13 million historical thriller with Ray Stevenson, Michael Ironside and Eric Roberts that explores a pivotal moment in history. This ambitious project underscores his ability to blend historical depth with cinematic storytelling, further cementing his reputation as a versatile and visionary director.



Carlos Alperin

Producer



Carlos Alperin has 32 years' experience in editing, producing, marketing, financing and selling films internationally. In 2002, Carlos founded the international sales agency Galloping Entertainment. He is responsible for the acquisition and sale of feature films, documentaries and TV series from international producers and for their licensing to international film distributors, TV broadcasters and VOD platforms. Since 1994, Carlos participated at more than 120 film and TV markets, and festivals.

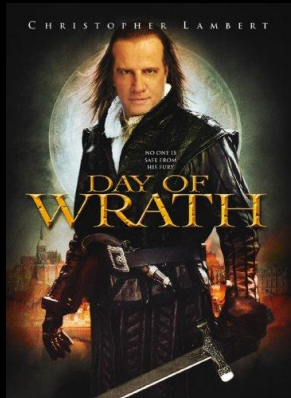
Carlos wrote, directed and produced episodes of the animated TV series "*Cosmo Kids*" (recipient of the AWG Monte Miller Award), "*The Pup Pups*" developed with Scottish TV, and "*Bilby Blastoff*." He wrote and produced the multi-award-winning documentary film "*Raul the Terrible*" directed by David Bradbury, produced the thriller "*ICU*" directed by Aash Aaron, the comedy "*The Cost of Living*" directed by Veronica Craven and the executive produced the multi-award-winning historical drama "*Sargent Matacho*" directed by William Gonzalez.

Carlos is one of the producers of the historical thriller "*1242: Gateway to the West*", a \$13m Hungarian/British/Mongolian coproduction; the historical drama "*The Royal Executioner*," a \$15m Spanish/French/Australian coproduction; the period drama/action "*Lafayette*," a \$42m Spanish/Australian coproduction, the thriller "*Tunnel*", a \$2.2m Spanish production; and the sci-fi "*Deep Echo*," a \$15m US production.

Carlos served 3 times as Juror at the *International Emmy Awards* in New York.

Kornel Sipos

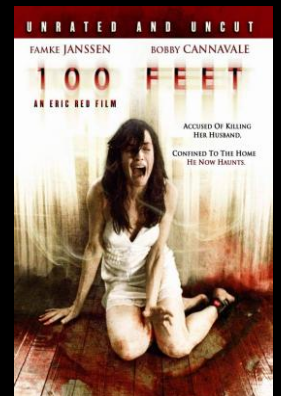
Producer



Kornél Sipos is a Hungarian film producer who has been involved in the film industry since 1991. He started his career as a production manager and executive producer at Focusfilm in 1989. He produced his first feature film, “*Pirouette*,” in 1992. In 1993, he founded Laurin and started developing feature films and producing commercials. He became the CEO of MAFILM Group in 2000 and produced films with his company LAURIN between 2001 and 2012.

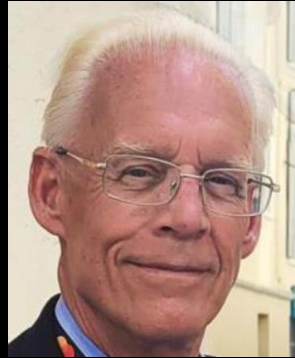
Since 2012, he has been working as Head of Productions and Operations at ORIGO Film Group. Since 2014, he has been the owner and managing director of Mozgo Mozi, a Production and Distribution company. Kornél produced “*White Palms*” (2005), “*Day of Wrath*” (2005), “*Rep Revue Romeo*” (2004), “*Happy Birthday!*” (2003), “*Antisocial*” (2015), “*Aglaia* (2012)”, “*Great Ghost Rescue*” (2011) and “*Kolorado Kid*” (2010). He was an executive producer for “*Three Thousand Numbered Pieces*” (2021) and co-produced “*Two Cities, the Depth of Europe*” (2020), “*Adas*” (2008), and “*Kalandorok*” (2006). Kornél is currently producing “*Live with Love*,” a TV series directed by Andor Szilágyi, and has worked on several other projects in recent years, including “*Lawsuit Against the Nation I*” and II (2020-2021), both directed by Péter Mudry.

Kornél is the lead producer of “*1242: Gateway to the West*,” an historical action film directed by Péter Soós and released in Hungary, Mongolia and soon in the UK. The film includes Ray Stevenson, Eric Roberts, Michael Ironside, Neil Stuke, David Schofield, Jeremy Neumark-Jones and Bold Choimbol.



Marshall Ferrin

Screenwriter



Marshall Ferrin is an award-winning writer whose work is shaped by a sustained exploration of power, morality, and the quiet erosion of ideals under pressure. His stories focus on characters who begin with conviction and purpose, only to find themselves navigating the ambiguities of ambition, duty, and consequence.

This thematic depth is evident across his key projects. “*The Royal Executioner*,” set during the French Revolution, follows a royal executioner struggling with the moral weight of carrying out a family profession that has become entangled with political terror. “*Lafayette*” traces the journey of a French revolutionary whose belief in liberty and equality is gradually reshaped by ambition, power, and the desire for legacy. In “*Reenactment*,” Civil War enthusiasts are thrust into a real battle, forcing them to confront the stark divide between romanticized history and the brutal reality of war. “*Homeland Security*” centers on a dotcom executive who, after losing everything in a terrorist attack, descends into a personal quest for revenge that blurs the line between justice and retribution. In “*Assassins*,” set against the backdrop of the Crusades, a third force of fanatics emerges between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin, exploring the volatile intersection of faith, power, and control.

This body of work has received strong international recognition. “*The Royal Executioner*” has earned 12 awards, along with 5 finalist placements, 5 semi-finalist selections, 3 quarter-finalist mentions, 2 nominations, and 3 honorable mentions. “*Lafayette*” has secured 13 awards and 5 nominations, reinforcing Ferrin’s reputation for crafting stories where ideals are tested and transformed.

Across his writing, Ferrin maintains a clear authorial voice that resists simple moral conclusions. His characters inhabit the space between belief and action, where every decision carries both justification and cost, giving his work a complexity that resonates across historical and contemporary narratives.



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