"An intelligent and effective use of the rival screen":

Re-discovering Early British Television Trailers

ABSTRACT

Keywords: trailer, 1950s television, Britain, advertising

Su Holmes, in her investigation of cinema programmes on 1950s British television, argues that

> British film culture permeated early British television … in the medium's developing years … television was involved in constructing a discursive identity for the very features which were forging a different exchange value for film. (Holmes "Infant Medium" 379-80)

The complex relationship between the film and television industries in Britain in the 1950s is still being redefined through work across both disciplines of film and television studies, necessarily complicating the earlier concept of antagonistic competition. The academic focus on the 1950s has largely been on how institutions dealt with television (see, for example, Balio; Anderson; Marling; Holmes), the debates around selling films to television or, in the case of the British cinema programme, the BBC's desire to avoid accusations of offering free publicity for new film releases. Holmes argues, persuasively, that much more needs to be done to expand this "partial picture" of the "complex early interaction," but her work relies heavily on how British television companies interpreted (or circumvented) the needs

of the British film industry. (Holmes "Infant Medium" 379) My interest in this article is to reverse that perspective, to look at a moment of "early interaction" between film and television overlooked by existing media histories, and to argue that this represents an attempt by the film industry to reach out to this new medium. The moment in question is the creation of the first British television trailers, when the film industry tried to use contemporary television advertising to control publicity of their forthcoming releases on the rival screen. I argue that these television trailers are a unique cross-media text, existing at a crucial intersection of media history where the 'new' medium of television becomes a new dissemination technology, a challenge to existing trailer aesthetics and an agent of change within the film and trailer industries.

The trailer has been passed over in traditional histories, despite being a complex source of historical, industrial and cultural information. Having weathered the technological changes of synchronised sound and colour film, the trailer became a potent promotional tool that allowed studios to educate audiences in new stars, genres and forthcoming releases. The popularity of the trailer format was, however, based on its ability to advertise to audiences who were already at the cinema. With the decline in film audiences through the late 1940s and into the 50s, the trailer continued to trumpet new developments in cinema screen magic (Cinerama, 3-D, CinemaScope) but to a diminishing number of viewers. The rise of television offered a new screen for trailers to conquer, but (as with later technologies such as video and the Internet) film companies were initially unsure over how to use this new rival, reluctant to buy time on this competitor screen, and uncertain over what a television trailer should look like. Lisa Kernan has claimed that trailers are "created for the purpose of projecting in theatres to promote a film's theatrical release," (Kernan 1) but this article will argue that television trailers are an equally integral part of media history,

helping to reassess the complex interaction between film and television. While there were American experiments in television trailer production as early as 1950, the article will explore the response and attitudes within the British film industry, and the discourse around the first attempts to transfer the film trailer aesthetic onto commercial television in July and August 1956. It is important to note, however, that the focus of this article is on the reporting and reception of these television trailers within film industry discourse: not the response of television audiences themselves.[1] The interest lies in unpacking one example of the larger industrial relationship between the film and television industries in this time period, with particular attention on how film trade papers and industry figures talked about the creation of television trailers, and the advertising opportunities the rival screen offered in 1956.

One of the key debates that built up around the 1950s television trailer was the role of excerpted film footage. As the first British television trailers for *Jacqueline* (1956) *Smiley* (1956) and *Away All Boats* (1956) demonstrate, the ability to use existing film sequences was often shaped by the restrictions of time and television technology. Analysis of these early television spots depicts their experimental nature: not a smooth chronological development or natural evolution, but a period of trial-and-error where missteps and mistakes expose the attitudes of the time and the available aesthetic options. These television trailers were created to sell 1950s feature films, in a period dominated by colour and widescreen technology, fuelling the debate on whether television trailers (or excepts) could display the full theatrical experience. That is not to say that this move from panoramic Technicolor film trailers to small black and white announcements should be seen as a retrograde step; rather, that these TV spots are a potent combination of silent and early-sound era trailer formats and contemporary television programming and advertising aesthetics. Alongside these

aesthetic influences, television trailers demonstrate unique structural conventions that are imposed and inspired by the technology that underpins them. In the process, television trailers create new rules that are at once similar, yet distinct, from the cinema preview.

The ability to explore this historical moment of 1956 and the discursive network of influences that existed alongside television trailer production, is predicated on reconstructing absent texts that no longer exist in any audio-visual format. This follows Jason Jacobs' work on "ghost texts" that exist "as shadows, dispersed and refracted amongst buried files, bad memories, a flotsam of fragments." (Jacobs 14) With no audio-visual record of 1950s television trailers any analysis of these TV spots must rely on contextual evidence of production and reception to provide a sense of what they contained, what they looked and sounded like. However, while Jacobs' work was largely concerned with understanding the visual aesthetics of these ghost texts, analysis of these television trailers will move beyond a consideration of stylistic qualities into an analysis of the contemporary discourses around the structure, positioning and content of these first television trailers. The archival written fragments used to reconstruct these absent texts cannot capture every visual element of the trailer text but the analysis of contemporary fragments, information and attitude remains the only way to explore and open out this lost era of inter-industry cooperation and cross-media aesthetic influences. Most of the information available on these early television trailers comes not from the trailer production companies who made them, but the contemporary trade journals that reported on them. These film industry periodicals were written for the distribution and exhibition trade, and cannot be considered impartial witnesses in the ongoing film and television debates of the mid to late '50s. Even when there are trailer scripts or descriptions available, these do

not offer unmediated access to the aesthetic choices made in these television trailers – there is often no sense of the text's *mise-en-scene*, its editing patterns, quality of image, the style of title work or the performance of the voiceover. However, while it may be impossible to capture every detail of the trailer text, these reconstructions do illuminate what would otherwise be an unknown area of film and television history.

July 1956: *Jacqueline* and *Smiley*

> I watched sad radiomen trying to turn it into illustrated radio …
> disappointed men from films despairing at limitations of time and
> space … The favourite bet was on Intimacy. "It's a small screen, so it
> stands to reason you have to get in close." (Kneale 86)

The film industry did not have an overnight epiphany regarding television advertising (in trailer or other formats). The period explored in this article is more accurately seen as a moment of experimentation that led down numerous aesthetic cul-de-sacs and structural dead ends. Nigel Kneale's comment on television drama echoes the transition trailers made in this time period, as they moved from the cinema to the television screen. Nascent television trailer aesthetics adapted certain cinema trailer conventions, but they also borrowed extensively from other commercial formats: filmed press advertisements with still images and voiceover; personal appearances from celebrity figures and established presenters (from radio and television); basic animation featuring lettering or cartoon characters; and long dialogue scenes with no editing. The basic technology of broadcast transmission and reception also introduced aesthetic and structural constraints: initially, cathode-ray tubes could only be manufactured to a certain size, limiting the dimensions of the television set's viewing

screen and increasing the preference for close-up images; the television signal was black-and-white, at a time when colour film production was growing; and mono sound transmissions were often clearer than the visuals they accompanied, amplifying the reliance on voice and music over visual information. Analysis of these first British television trailers will explore how producers relied on and developed these approaches, and what they reveal about the interaction between the contemporary film and television industries.

By July 1956, when the first TV spots appeared on British television screens, viewers were already used to seeing programmes that featured information on new and forthcoming cinema releases, star personalities and film premieres. These were not promotional 'paid-for' appearances, but the film industry taking advantage of new television genres: particularly the cinema programme and the chat show. Most of these programmes were furnished with extracts from the feature film the studio wanted to promote (extracts that were also referred to initially as trailers), but the studio had little or not control over how the extracts were used, and they could not add a specific sales message to the extracted footage. The launch of commercial television in Britain in 1955 expanded the possibilities for film companies to purchase specific advertising time through 'spot' commercials. This development was welcomed by Universal International president, Alfred E. Daff, who had previously dismissed the effectiveness of excerpts: "We don't ask audiences to make up their minds whether or not to see a film by just showing them three or five minutes of disjointed scenes – we sell it to them … We would rather pay for time on TV and do the job our way than get it for nothing and do it their way!" ("Return to basic showmanship" 8) This belief was mirrored in other British production companies, and the earliest attempt to sell films on the "rival screen" debuted on July 16th 1956.

The first film to be advertised on British television using a specially produced television trailer was *Jacqueline*, a family film from the Rank Organisation. *The Daily Film Renter* reported the campaign would use "a series of six 15-second peak hour spots," split between the weekday London station, Associated Rediffusion, and the weekend licensee, ATV. The trailer was described as mostly "letterpress supported by a spoken commentary" and "simple printed messages announcing the title of the film, its stars and the fact that it would be in Odeon and other theatres this week." (Charman "Commentary" (b) 2) This description seems to tie the trailer in with other contemporary television advertising techniques. Tim Bell claims that the aesthetics of early British television advertising often resembled "press ads merely "done again" for television" (Bell 438); while David Bernstein describes the first Gibbs SR and Crosse & Blackwell adverts as commercials adapted straight from written images and still photographs. (Bernstein 254) Although the *Jacqueline* TV trailer does fit within this concept of static, early television advertising, it also has a cinematic heritage from the silent and early sound era. In the 1920s, trailer company National Screen Services offered what they called a 'Short' trailer, where simple messages were built up using basic animation, images and inter-titles with little or no use of excerpted film footage. One such silent trailer, for *Orphan of Paris* (1925), was twenty seconds long, and used three slides to convey star and narrative information through title work: a not entirely dissimilar description to the 1956 *Jacqueline* TV spot. Even at this stage of development, the new medium was relying on existing tricks from its cinematic progenitor.

Aesthetically, the *Jacqueline* TV trailer seems to have been limited to the barest of all audio-visual devices – words appearing on screen accompanied by a voiceover. There is no apparent use of star imagery, editing techniques or animation to add

visual flair to the advertisement, while the exact composition of the soundtrack remains vague. In Nigel Kneale's terms, the trailer is illustrated radio. One possible reason for this aesthetic simplicity is Rank's desire to beat 20th Century Fox to be the first film company to advertise on British commercial television. Fox announced their intentions first, but Rank managed to produce a commercial and get it on air almost a week ahead of them. Lionel Barrett, head of Rank publicity, later described the *Jacqueline* TV spot as a "hastily produced trailer" (qtd. in Brook 8), designed to get Rank publicity in the trade press – a piece of evidence which goes some way to explaining the declamatory style of words and narration in the TV trailer.

The campaign Rank was so determined to beat was for the 20th Century Fox British quota film, *Smiley*, whose TV spots debuted on ATV six days later. According to the *Daily Film Renter* and *Kinematograph Weekly*, the *Smiley* TV trailer was a very different style of advertisement from Rank's. Bernard Charman, in the *Daily Film Renter*, noted "The *Smiley* campaign took a more visual form, injecting an entertainment note by using that talented young Australian performer Shirley Abicair. The latter was particularly attractive because the message was purely aural, with never a word appearing on the screen. Instead, the zither-playing star charmingly called attention to the appeal of the youngster in the film." (Charman "Commentary" (b) 2) *Kinematograph Weekly* also described the ad as an "intelligent and effective use of the rival screen. Abicair's [sentences] are refreshingly free of ballyhoo, but clearly make the point that the film is on general release." ("Smiley" 5) The report also notes that the advert uses the film's zither theme tune over the "already famous" photograph of the film's child star, Colin Petersen – an image that was familiar from the film's poster and on bus advertising.

On closer consideration, though, this contemporary praise seems to strike the same note of "illustrated radio" that *Jacqueline* was chastised for. Although the *Daily Film Renter* heralds the *Smiley* ad as a "first class TV commercial" (Charman "Commentary" (c) 2), it may not be that dissimilar in content from the *Jacqueline* ad. Comparing the reports in these journals reveals different aesthetic possibilities for the *Smiley* trailer – Charman says the commercial is "more visual" but the only detail he offers is that it will feature pictures of Colin Peterson. The use of the plural here suggests more than one still image was used, perhaps even excerpted images from the film – yet *Kinematograph Weekly* refers only to an image of the poster, singular. This is the key concept in discerning the aesthetics on display in this trailer – is it as visually simple as the *Jacqueline* advert, or does *Smiley*'s commercial construct a visual montage, based around a series of images of the child star? The evidence brings up one of the inherent problems with the concept of constructing these absent trailers: the paucity of information in the surviving written reports cannot explain or illuminate their inconsistencies.

The soundtrack in the *Smiley* TV spot is considered more advanced because of its "purely aural" mix of sound elements: but from the reports it is simply balancing the theme tune and Abicair's voiceover. This suggests the audio fulfils the same function as the *Jacqueline* voiceover: listing film, star and cinema play dates. The difference between the two trailers may be concerned with visual information, but to consider the *Smiley* TV trailer more stylistically advanced than *Jacqueline* must involve more than the mixing of music and voiceover, an absence of titles and one image of the star. Some assumptions can be made based on the available evidence. The *Smiley* TV spot was four times the length of that for *Jacqueline* (sixty seconds rather than fifteen) – it would seem likely that more than one shot of the child star

was used, no matter how well known the poster image was. Also, if Abicair called attention to the appeal of Petersen, or offered a sense of narrative detail, it would make sense for the visuals to try and illuminate her words with supporting pictures or images. Without these speculative visual additions, the *Smiley* TV spot could resemble the filmed press ads that Bell and Bernstein describe above. The only certain aspect is the trailer's aural aesthetics, mixing the theme tune, and the narration from Shirley Abicair. These may have fulfilled the same function as the voiceover in the *Jacqueline* trailer, but the choice to impart all such information on the soundtrack returns us once again to the alleged intimacy of the television screen, allowing Abicair to talk to the audience, rather than at them.

The discussion of these two experiments in film magazines *The Daily Film Renter, Kinematograph Weekly* and *Today's Cinema* suggests a slow change in attitude towards television from earlier years. Through the first half of the 1950s, these journals regularly featured front page reports on the British exhibition sector, and its negative response to television, televised excerpts and the cinema programme. *The Daily Film Renter* and *Kinematograph Weekly*'s attitude towards these 1956 television trailers was initially neutral, seeing them as "completely experimental … each company [will] … assess the effect on business." (Charman "Commentary" (a) 2) *Today's Cinema* offered a more potent endorsement, but one largely couched in the hope that television advertising might adversely affect the British press and their "irresponsible criticism and persistent attacks" on the film industry. (Onlooker 4) Although not a ringing endorsement of television advertising, or the aesthetic qualities of the trailer, it does show that commercial television was already being regarded as a useful tool for film industry promotion. The television trailers for

Jacqueline and *Smiley* may not have been hailed as saviours, but there remained a grudging appreciation for the benefits such experiments might eventually bring.

August 1956: *Away All Boats*

While all the reports on the *Smiley* television trailers comment on the use of Shirley Abicair and the image (or images) of Colin Petersen, none of them discuss the fact that the feature was filmed in CinemaScope. The addition of widescreen complicated the issues surrounding the transition of feature imagery onto television screens: early American television trailers used re-shot feature footage or specially filmed sales messages from famous actors or celebrities. The TV spots for *Born Yesterday* (George Cukor, 1950) were filmed on set during production, but using close-ups in order to fill the smaller screen. These trailers have not survived, but a report on their production stressed the need for specially filmed footage, in close-up, and using sepia tones for the 'best video screen quality.' (Ames 6X) This focus onto reformatting feature footage for the television screen is echoed in press books and American TV trailer scripts for other films of the early 1950s, including *Abbot & Costello Go to Mars* (Charles Lamont, 1953) and *The Benny Goodman Story* (Valentine Davies, 1955). The first British television trailer to use feature excerpts didn't debut until August 1956, but to understand this structural difference from *Jacqueline* and *Smiley*, it is important to explore the contemporary American television trailer industry and its influence over British TV spots.

The issue of using feature excerpts on American television (for programmes and trailers) had led to a basic form of panning-and-scanning, used to reformat or reduce wider images for the rival screen – but it also seems to have allowed the television trailer to flourish. The growth in television spots promoting cinema technology

suggests a gap in our understanding of inter-industry (and cross-media) relations at this point in time. Television commercials could not show colour excerpts, play stereo sound, demonstrate the depth photography of 3-D or fit the 2.55:1 CinemaScope image onto a 1.33:1 screen. Despite this, feature excerpts dominate American television trailer production from 1953 on: whether to acknowledge the television trailer's lack of technological display (thus positioning the cinema screen as a superior visual venue) or to ignore the lack and use existing TV spot conventions (audio address, screen filling titles) to structure the technology-centric sales messages.

British commercial television's first exposure to an excerpted scene trailer style was the campaign for the Universal-International film *Away All Boats*. Given Alfred E. Daff's earlier statements about paying for time on television and "selling" the picture, it seems likely that the success of American television trailers was fuelling the move towards a more montage-style advertisement in Britain. *Away All Boats* returned to shorter spot lengths (fifteen seconds) but offered a more complex structure based on elements of the theatrical coming attraction. Universal produced two separate 'specially-prepared trailer-type films' that were shown twelve times in the weekend before the film's release. ("Third Renter Uses Plugs" 3) While the term 'trailer-type' could have a variety of meanings, it would normally suggest the film trailer combination of excerpted footage, titles, and voiceover. In the case of *Away All Boats*, however, it is possible to expand out from the available trade press reports to consider the original TV spot scripts from the Universal trailer script archive.

The Universal archive contains eleven television trailer scripts for *Away All Boats* that reflect the success Universal had seen in American television campaigns for films such as *Creature From the Black Lagoon* (Jack Arnold, 1954). The scripts

are structured round traditional film trailer aesthetics – quickly cutting between shots of warfare, explosions, close-ups of the stars, images of a book jacket, voiceover, and screen-filling titles that sell star, title and technology. The newer television trailer aesthetics are also present – the scripts repeat the need to use the 'closest images', a need for repetition of voiceover information, and a suggestion that an additional spot be filmed that featured star Julie Adams talking to camera (in character). Of the eleven scripts in the archive, there is no definitive sign which two were chosen for use in the British television campaign. The comment in *Today's Cinema* that the two spots were 'specially-prepared trailer-type films' would suggest the montage-based aesthetic, but some contemporary film trailers of the 1940s and 50s also featured known film stars or television presenters talking directly to audiences (see, for example, Ed Sullivan and Gene Kelly in the 1955 trailer for *High Society*).

Both options raise the issue of how footage was used within this style of television trailer. The trailer scripts stress the need for close images, with comments like 'close angle [on] boats," "book jacket zooms to full screen," "montage of close shots of men on deck," and "beach assault, close." (*Away All Boats* TV scripts) Any wide shots, of the navy fleet or of explosions, are used as background, behind the screen-filling titles. The film was shot in VistaVision and Technicolor, and the trailer scripts retain these brand names as key sales messages, despite being unable to display either technological attribute. The focus on close-up images, fast becoming a staple aesthetic of the television trailer, also suggests that wider screen images were reduced for the television screen. One 1953 American television trailer 1953 had used animation to visually demonstrate the difference between normal and widescreen ratios ("Wide Vision and Stereophonic Sound" TV trailer), but the introduction of actual widescreen footage into these spots engages with issues around pan-and-scan,

or 'letterboxing', that often surround discussions of the film and television relationship in this time period.

The television trailer, both in Britain and America, appears to be at the centre of this debate – whether to mask off areas of the television screen and reproduce feature visuals in full, or to crop the image, optically reduce the widescreen visuals to the television screen ratio. To advertise *Black Widow* (1954) 20th Century Fox used "the new reduction method" (*Black Widow* press book 8), a process that involved "cutting off the sides of the pictures … [both] top and bottom reach the frame without any distorting." (Onlooker 4) The reduction method (what would eventually be called pan-and-scan) appears to have been created to deal with this issue of presenting feature excerpts, in television trailers on within other programmes. Like colour, stereophonic sound, and 3-D, the technological visuals of widescreen was secondary to using the screen to promulgate awareness of the forthcoming film, its stars and, if possible, its technological process.

Critics of the reduction process, such as John Belton, believe this desire for the smaller television image killed the widescreen revolution of the 1950s:

> Films which exploited widescreen technology in an attempt to provide
> an experience attainable only in a theatre were now suddenly asked to
> adapt themselves to the demands not just of a different but of an
> opposed technology – narrow-screen television … [this was] another
> stage in the dismantling of the widescreen revolution and the demise
> of widescreen cinema. (Belton 218)

Belton links panning and scanning to the first television screening of *How to Marry A Millionaire* (1953) in 1961, but it seems certain the process was tested as early as 1954, on feature excerpts for television trailers and programmes. Yet the notion that television was an 'opposed technology' runs counter to the evidence found in the contemporary British and American TV spots. Rather than dismantling the widescreen revolution, these television trailers are selling the wider screen. *The Black Shield of Falworth* (1954) is 'even more spectacular in the wonder of CinemaScope at your theatre!' (*Black Shield* "TV Spot #1 (60 sec)") *Captain Lightfoot* (1955) is 'even GREATER in CINEMASCOPE,' (*Captain Lightfoot* "Trailer #1-A") and *Sign of the Pagan* (1954) is 'CinemaScope's greatest excitement.' (*Sign of the Pagan* "TV Trailer #1") These television trailers are caught in a dichotomy: the spots use television to sell cinema-specific technologies, but they cannot offer any proof of those technological marvels; and while other elements of the film industry were dismissing the television screen as inadequate and inferior, these trailers rely on that screen to get their message across. Unlike Belton's dismissal of television, it is possible to see the television trailer as bridging the gap between the film and television industries: these trailers did not dismantle the widescreen revolution of the 1950s: rather, they attempted to propagate it.[2]

In the case of *Away All Boats*, the cropped excerpts may not fully capture the spectacular elements of the VistaVision cinema screen, but the use of quick montage and short bursts of action suggest TV spots that, according to U-I president Alfred E. Duff, were "more dramatic than an excerpt twelve times as long." ("Return to basic showmanship" 3) Certainly, they appear more dramatic than the television trailers that preceded them on British commercial television. The central structuring principle of the *Away All Boats* TV trailers was to create pace and excitement through editing

of key visual themes – an aesthetic borrowed from the film trailer, but pushed to its extremes due to the shortened length of TV advertising. Creating drama in this kind of TV spot involved strong visuals and quick editing, although as with *Smiley* and *Jacqueline*, there was always a voiceover narrating and guiding audience response to the images.

After August 1956

Maurice Gorham once noted that the home television audience would 'demand a different tempo and a different feeling… it is hard to imagine the typical film trailer, all explosions and superlatives, raising anything but a laugh in the home.' (qtd. in Buscombe 198) The traditional view of the film and television industries of the 1950s may be one of panorama versus intimacy, epic spectacle against small scale drama, but the first three television trailers of 1956 suggest that Gorham may have been wrong about how film trailer conventions would adapt to their new environment, and that 'explosions and superlatives' would fit just as well on the television screen as the cinema.

The reports on the *Away All Boats* campaign all comment on the use of a film trailer structure (likely due to a Universal press release that described it as such), with Bernard Charman heralding it as the "most ambitious" television experiment to date. (Charman "Commentary" (d) 2) The use of a film trailer structure seems to have impressed the trade press, which adopted a more positive tone towards television trailers: a suggestion of an underlying preference for the film industry to colonise the rival screen on its own terms, rather than trying to create a medium-specific trailer style. Within weeks of the *Away All Boats* trailers, 20th Century Fox followed up their *Smiley* experiment with a sixty-second trailer for the Hollywood drama¸ *The Man in*

the Grey Flannel Suit (1956). Unlike the three aesthetic options discussed above, this trailer used a personal address from the film's star, Gregory Peck, shot in medium and close-up. ("Trailer Treatment – TV Spot") Following *Away All Boats*, the *Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* TV spot offers another aesthetic approach for British television trailers, but it also returns to existing trailer conventions: the personal address format had been popularised by the first sound trailer, for *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and subsequently used in U.S. television trailers such as *Bedtime for Bonzo* (1950). The simpler style of advertising seen in the trailers for *Jacqueline* and *Smiley* already seemed to be slipping away, allowing existing film trailer aesthetics and structure to take hold. However, while it is tempting to see this as a distinction between American and British aesthetics, the development of film trailers occurred on both sides of the Atlantic (and indeed, elsewhere in the world), making it historically difficult to identify a dominant national style. It may be more appropriate in this instance to see this change as a disjunction between established film and nascent television trailer aesthetics.

After August 1956, the discourse around television trailers in the trade press would largely focus on the effectiveness of the medium, and whether particular styles or content were more appealing. These debates were fuelled by the aesthetic and structural approaches taken by the first three experiments studied here, none of which contain a dominant television trailer aesthetic. Certain traits stand out – the importance of audio, particularly voiceover; standardised time lengths of fifteen-, thirty- and sixty-seconds; the continued use of close images to fill the screen; the use of long shots as background for large graphic titles; a reliance on visuals to suggest genre – but reducing these texts to the components they share ignores what makes them unique. The British television trailers reconstructed here are disparate answers

to the same questions – what does a television trailer look like? What does it do? What can it say? It is possible to see these TV spots as a progression from *Jacqueline*'s simplicity to the more complex montage of *Away All Boats*, but focusing on that evolution blinds us to what makes each trailer a unique experiment in an uncertain time period for both media. The trailers also contribute to the growing discourse around the place of film on television, and how the film industry grapples with the promotional opportunities offered by the rival screen.

After this initial flourish, the last few months of 1956 saw TV spots for British films *The Long Arm* (1956), *Zarak* (1956), *Sailor Beware* (1956) and *Dry Rot* (1956). In early 1957, there were reports of television trailers for *Kismet* (1955), *Interpol* (1956) and *Three Men in a Boat* (1956). In each case, different aesthetic options were explored: *Interpol* used a personal appearance by its star Trevor Howard ("Big Teaser Boost" 10); *The Long Arm, Zarak, Dry Rot* and *Sailor Beware* created a montage of feature excerpts ("Two Way TV Plug" 5; "Something New in Exploitation" 5; Brook 8); while *Kismet* combined a film-specific message with a national competition to sing with Howard Keel. ("Metro's countrywide context" 5) Like *Jacqueline, Smiley* and *Away All Boats*, they represent new approaches, new ideas and new ways for the British film industry to engage, and interact, with the rival screen of television. In 1951, American producer Jerry Wald had stated that film companies had a "duty" to "advertise anywhere the potential customer can be reached." (Ames 6X) These trailers proved that customers could be reached through the television screen, and that television trailers were adapting the stylistic conventions of the film trailer for their own aesthetic purposes.

The discussion of these experiments adds to the larger discourse around the uncertainty and discomfort felt within the British film industry of the 1950s over the

move from the cinema to the television screen. While embracing the television screen they were eager to reject it; use it as a sales tool in order to sell a competitive visual product; pay the price of advertising so they could promote their latest attempt to bankrupt it. After several years of BBC and ITV cinema programmes, the industry was eager to repeat the American experience of television trailers, but still uncertain how to produce such advertisements. Television may have been the rival screen, but this period remains an essential moment in developing relations between old and new media. As this article has argued, exploring the interactions between those media necessarily complicates the traditional view of this period as an intense rivalry between bitter competitors. The evidence of trailer texts for *Jacqueline, Smiley* and *Away All Boats* and the archival evidence available through the trade press and script archives demonstrates that there are still facets to this complex relationship that can be opened up and explored. The combination of film industry discourse and the suggestive nature of these absent texts has thrown new light on the British film and television industries of the 1950s.

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[1] Although not the focus of this article, such work would, of necessity, engage with the Independent Television Authority archives.

[2] That is not to say that these television trailers were necessarily successful in selling the wider screen, but (like the cinema programmes) they presented another avenue for the film industry to educate audiences about such spectacle-led entertainment.