



# THE ROYAL EXECUTIONER

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**Genre:** Historical Drama  
**Director:** Peter Soos  
**Producers:** Carlos Alperin, Kornel Sipos  
**Writer:** Marshall Ferrin  
**Countries:** Australia/France/Hungary  
**Duration:** 100'  
**Language:** English  
**Year:** 2025  
**Budget:** \$20m  
**Available:** Worldwide  
**Awards:** Screenplay won 10 awards and  
15 nominations at international  
competitions  
**Locations:** Hungary, France  
**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.

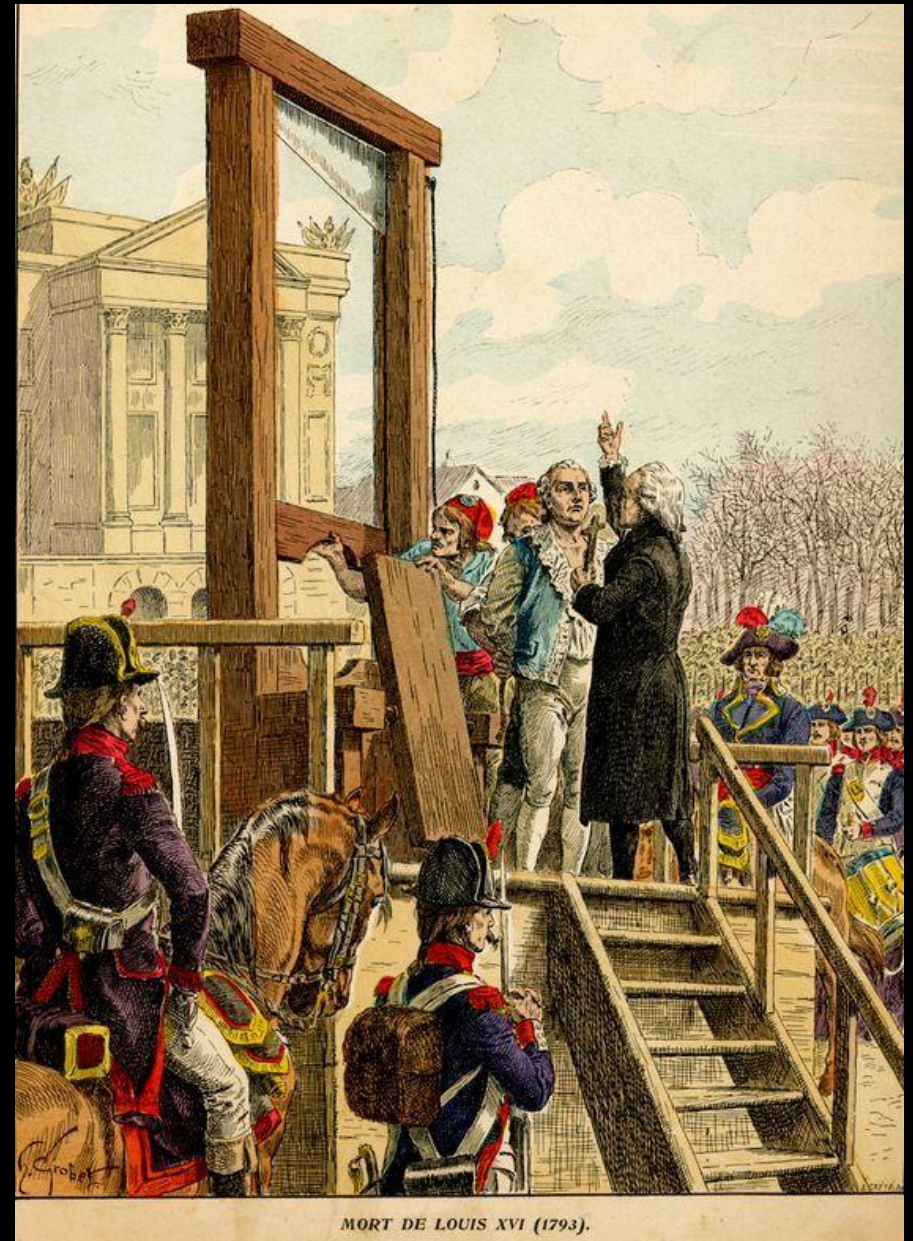
By 1789, Charles-Henri, now in his late 40s, faces turmoil when Revolutionaries invade the Bastille, allowing the Marquis de Sade to escape. Ordered by Robespierre to execute King Louis XVI, Charles-Henri complies, using the newly invented guillotine. As a successful executioner, he grows uneasy about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



MORT DE LOUIS XVI (1793).

# Screenplay: Wins & Nominations



# 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.

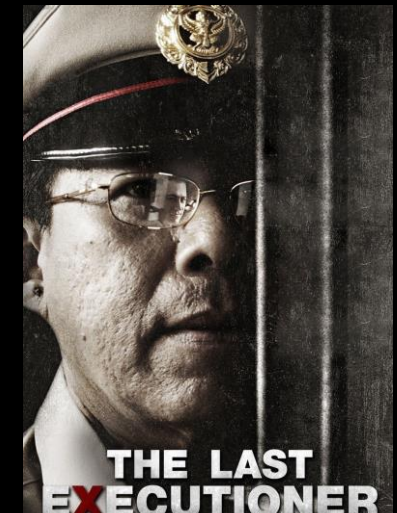
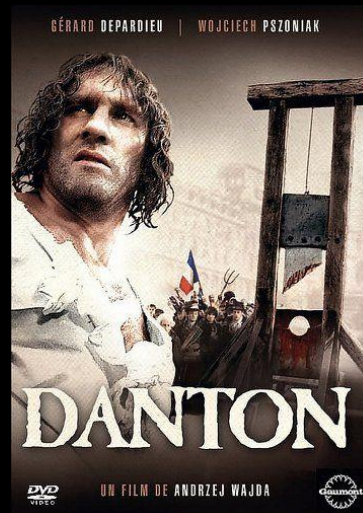
**Personal and Political Conflict:** Balancing personal redemption with the political upheaval of the time, the film presents a compelling dual narrative that appeals to both character-driven and historically-inclined audiences.

## 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.



# Liam Neeson

(Wishlist)

Charles-Henri Sanson exhibited a profound internal conflict throughout his career. Initially averse to the family trade, his father's paralysis forced him into the role of executioner. This sense of duty to support his family was a driving force, highlighting his deep familial loyalty and sense of responsibility, even when it conflicted with his personal morals.

Over time, the sheer number of executions—2,918, including that of King Louis XVI—likely led to a degree of desensitization. This desensitization was necessary for him to maintain his professionalism and perform his duties without succumbing to the psychological burden of taking so many lives. His ability to compartmentalize his emotions was crucial to his mental stability.

Despite his professional detachment, Charles-Henri faced significant moral dilemmas, particularly during the French Revolution when he executed numerous individuals, some potentially innocent. To reconcile his actions, he might have relied on justifications such as the belief in the necessity of his role for societal order and justice, or the notion that he was merely an instrument of the law, not the arbiter of justice.

Charles-Henri's role in the introduction of the guillotine reflects a pragmatic and innovative mindset. The guillotine was promoted as a more humane method of execution, designed to be swift and less painful. His support for this innovation indicates a degree of empathy and a desire to minimize suffering, even within the confines of his grim duties.

As "Monsieur de Paris," Charles-Henri's identity was closely tied to his role as an executioner. This public persona might have been a double-edged sword, providing a sense of purpose and belonging, while also isolating him from those who viewed his profession with fear or disdain. This duality likely contributed to a complex self-image, balancing pride in his professional skill with the psychological weight of his actions.

Charles-Henri's long tenure suggests significant mental resilience. Coping mechanisms may have included strict routines, emotional detachment, and perhaps a strong belief in fate or destiny. His ability to continue performing his duties despite the psychological toll is indicative of a robust, albeit strained, mental fortitude.



**Charles-Henri Sanson**

# Liam Neeson & Michael Richardson (Neeson)

(Wishlist)



## Charles-Henri & Henri Sanson

Charles-Henri Sanson was the royal executioner of France during the reign of King Louis XVI. He initially had a strong aversion to the family business, but his father's paralysis led him to assume the role of executioner to support his family, becoming known as "Monsieur de Paris."

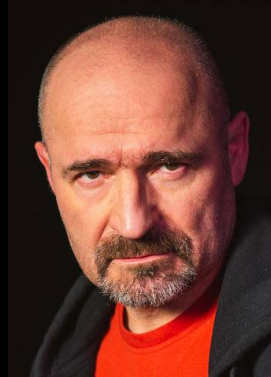
In 1757, Charles-Henri performed the gruesome execution of Robert-François Damiens, for the attempted assassination of Louis XV. Charles-Henri was the first to use the guillotine, executing Nicolas Jacques Pelletier on 25 April 1792. He performed 2,918 executions, including that of King Louis XVI on 21 January 1793. His son Henri assisted him throughout his career and succeeded him in 1795, executing Marie Antoinette and many revolutionaries. Charles-Henri was instrumental in adopting the guillotine as the standard form of execution, arguing its efficiency.

Leveraging the star power of Liam Neeson and his son Michael Richardson (Neeson), and following their memorable appearance in "Made in Italy" (2020), this project could offer another opportunity to bring their dynamic father-son relationship to the screen. Their roles in "The Royal Executioner" are unique, in that both characters reflect a great deal of empathy, serving in a profession where the average viewer would not so expect it. Perfect for two actors who are known for projecting a combination of strength, determination, strong sense of morality and empathy.

With Michael and Liam Neeson leading the potential cast, "The Royal Executioner" is poised to attract a wide audience, drawing in fans of historical drama, and those who admire the compelling chemistry between this father-son duo.

# 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.

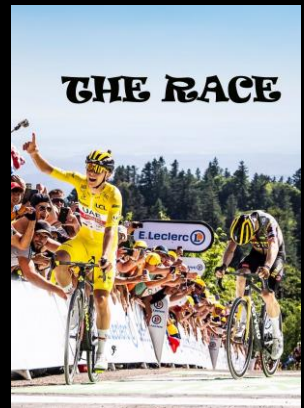
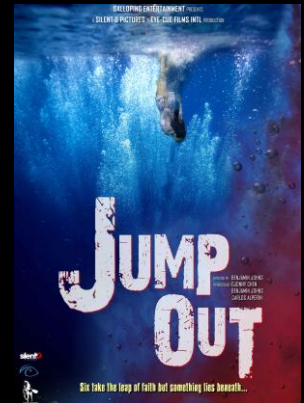
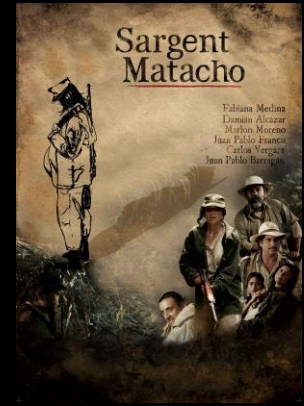
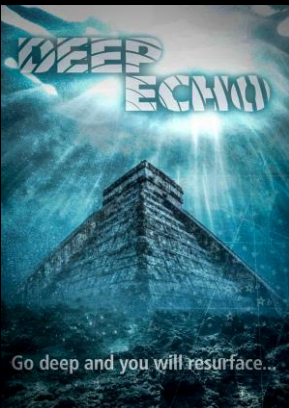
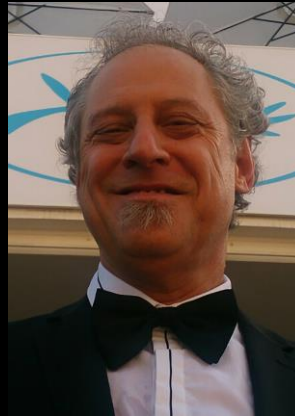
Currently, Péter Soós is in post-production for *1242: Gateway to the West*, a \$14 million historical thriller with Ray Stevenson, Michael Ironside and Eric Roberts that explores a pivotal moment in history. This ambitious project underscores his ability to blend historical depth with cinematic storytelling, further cementing his reputation as a versatile and visionary director.





# Carlos Alperin

Producer



Carlos Alperin has 28 years' experience in 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.

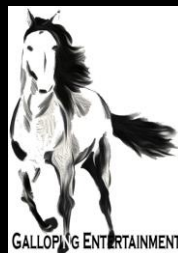
Carlos wrote, directed and produced episodes of the animated TV series "Cosmo Kids" (recipient of the AWG Monte Miller Award), "The Pup Pups" developed with Scottish TV, and "Bilby Blastoff." He wrote and produced the multi-award-winning documentary film "Raul the Terrible" directed by David Bradbury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

Carlos is the producer of the historical thriller "1242: Gateway to the West", a \$13m Hungarian /British/ Australian/Mongolian coproduction; the historical drama "The Royal Executioner," a \$16m Australian/ French coproduction; the supernatural thriller "Jump Out", a 3.8m UK/ Australian coproduction, the comedy "The Cuisine War," a \$5m US/Ireland coproduction, and the sci-fi "Deep Echo," a \$16m US production.

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



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