OCEAN CONSERVATION FILMS:

CONNECTING THE VIEWER

by

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ABSTRACT

Documentaries about ocean conservation have relied on the model of conventional environmental science documentaries with their use of expository film techniques. Ocean conservation films of this kind follow traditions of objectivity, authority, pressure for change, and placing the audience in the uncomfortable role of acting as an antagonist to aquatic life. By examining a new model for ocean conservation films in which audiences feel connected to the ocean instead of alienated from it, we can create more profound stories as well as emotional connections with the viewer. My film, “The Crab Man of Kodiak” (2020), utilizes a localized portrait film format to engage the viewer in a discourse about ocean conservation without vilifying them, creating a balance between advocacy, science, and emotion.

ECO-DOCS AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF OCEAN DOCUMENTARIES

In recent years there has been a shift in documentary filmmaking. Social networking has created activist communities, and the change in environmental documentaries has reflected these transformations in networking. Different interest groups are able to use the social networking potential of the internet to produce community activism (Christensen). The focus has shifted from the pristine wilderness and untouched seas; instead, both audiences and filmmakers are more focused on environmental justice issues (Hughes 3).

Eco-docs, also known as "eco-films" and "ecocinema," have been defined as "any film that can be interpreted as addressing ecological or environmental issues" (Ingram 1). Admittedly a broad definition, the term was first coined in 2004 by Scott Macdonald. Macdonald argued that these films presented more biocentric and eco-centric viewpoints rather than anthropocentric (Macdonald 108).

Elliott Doran Kennerson wrote in his thesis *Ocean Pictures: The Construction of the Ocean on Film* that underwater films have constructed the ocean as "a place either friendly, desirable, and open to human presence or wild, dangerous, and inhospitable to people." He refers to these two tropes as "ocean-as-Eden" and "ocean-as-wilderness" (3). The idea of the ocean as paradise or a dangerous place has put envirionmental science films about the sea at a crossroads. How do we, as science and natural history filmmakers, connect the aquatic to the human?

Kennerson points out that to arrive at any understanding of the ocean, one needs technology. Diving suits, boats, submarines, something extra is needed if humans want to

acquire any information about the sea. The development of these technologies is linked with ocean filmography. In 1942, Jacques Cousteau and Émile Gagna invented the Aqua-Lung, a regulator that could be attached to gas tanks. This allowed for more robust and reliable air tanks as well as an extension of diving duration. Despite great leaps in technology, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as of 2020, 95 percent of the ocean remains unexplored ("Oceans & Coasts").

With these advancements in diving technology, crafting filmatic stories from beneath the ocean waves became safer as well. The first full-length, full-color underwater documentary was *The Silent World (1954),* directed by the same Jacques Cousteau who invented the Aqua-Lung. *The Silent World* included the tagline "Space Men of the Sea!", enforcing the view of the ocean as a separate world from ours. Humans require special equipment to even visit such a place.

Cousteau crafted his films with himself as the master and steward. Despite the risks, Cousteau paints the ocean life as something else humans can subjugate. As Kennerson states, "Empowered by a well-armed boat and equipped with a state-of-the-art life-support system, Cousteau has complete run of the underwater world. (11)" The crew rides on turtles and kill sharks for eating a dead baby whale. Cousteau turns completely away from the ocean-as-dangerous trope, instead enforcing the ocean-as-Eden idea. There is never any true sense of danger for the humans in his films.

As diving and underwater filming technology continued to improve, ocean films began to move even further towards the pristine ocean imagery. Wildlife centered blue-chip films such as *The Blue Planet (2001)* mastered the technology of underwater filming

to create fantastic imagery celebrating the natural world and enforcing the ocean as paradise trope. Hugely successful, the short series took over five years to make. The film sparked a blue-chip renaissance primarily dominated by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The series later received criticism for failing to show the impact of human activity on the ocean and its wildlife (Monbiot).

This criticism came as the academic discourse over global climate change moved further into the public arena. In a 2007-2008 survey issued by Gallup, 41% of adults in the world saw global warming as a threat to themselves and their family (Pugliese and Ray). The carbon economy, in which the basis of energy generation is carbon, began to be addressed on international platforms. Environmental films began to follow suit, and more more eco-docs began to address the carbon economy problem. The genre came to the spotlight with films such as *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006).

Ocean conservation films adopted the format of these films, separating humans from ocean-ecology and highlighting the negative aspects of the relationship. Scientists are kept as emotionless as possible and sprawling global stories dominate these films. There is no central protagonist, but rather a series of experts with an omniscient narrator to tie the film together, lecturing the audience about humanity's sins. The Ocean-as-Eden trope is actively promoted in beautiful imagery, and humanity, like Adam and Eve, need to be banished from paradise.

This separation and barrage of negativity can be seen very clearly in films such as *The End of the Line*. Other films such as *The Cove (2009)* have rejected this philosophy of separation, paving the way for more emotional narratives and tapping more profoundly

into the collective human emotion. I propose a new model for ocean conservation films based on the models presented in the *The Cove* and *Chasing Coral (2017)* that is more able to tap into the collective human emotion of the audience and connect them with ocean-ecology rather then banish them from the ocean biosphere.

CASE STUDIES

THE END OF THE LINE

The environmental documentary, *The End of the Line*, applies very traditional environmental documentary tropes such as the omniscient narrator to the string of scientific experts. Directed by Rupert Murray, the film is the first major documentary to examine overfishing and the impact on the world's oceans (Levitt & Thomas). In ocean conservation film history, the film will stand as one of the first times fishing science and biodiversity were brought together. Despite this, the film had a very modest impact in mainstream culture.

The End of the Line had limited success in theaters, with less then 10,000 people seeing it in the cinema. finding more viewers on TV screens. The film's impact was largely made in the United Kindom, where it eventually reached an audience of 4.7 million people. UK supermarket Sauinsburys reported an increase in sales of seafood fished sustainably, while Marks & Spencer, another UK supermarket, announced it would no longer sell endangered fish species (Levitt & Thomas). It should be noted that the film was not cited as the reason for the changes, and it is possible the timing was coincidental.

The End of the Line follows the traditional environmental documentary format. There is an omniscient narrator, numerous experts interviewed about the issue, a series of stories from around the world highlighting the problem, and, finally, a slightly hopeful message telling the viewer that, if they can change, things will change. The film jumps around the world in support of the argument of overfishing. Expert scientists and other characters weave in and out of the stories depicted. The audience is never allowed to stay

in one place with one character, creating shallow emotional connections. There is no one character or story that the audience can resonate with. The viewer is taken around the world and shown many problems related to overfishing, but the film rarely spends more then a few minutes on one story. The film opens by presenting us with the author of the book the film was based on, Charles Clover. He introduces the main concepts of the film to the audience, but as a character he is quickly lost as the film continues. There is no anchor for the viewer, simply an overarching idea that overfishing is bad.

The audience is further disconnected from the message when the film quickly presents the viewer as one of the antagonists of the story. The narrator of the film, celebrity Ted Danson, refers to humans as, “The most efficient predator the oceans have ever known.” The following sequence is a bloody montage that is a stark contrast to the previous beautiful imagery of the ocean paradise. Tight close-ups illustrate the disgusting nature of humanity as we consume seafood and stab various types of fish. The ocean becomes the ultimate paradise lost. The grotesque imagery of red blood-filled water and close-ups of mouths biting into seafood is repeated throughout the film, forcing the audience to watch again and again. The film does utlize beautiful imagery, the ocean-as-Eden trope. This imagery contrasts with the horrific, further pushing the point that humans are destroying paradise.

Scientists, with their credentials presented in the lower third of the screen, discuss research about fishing populations and worse-case scenarios of overfishing throughout the film. We never stay with one character long enough to get any personality or backstory. They are interchangeable and forgettable. In one interesting exchange, one

scientist claims another is “totally wrong” in his study, but that the overall science still says the same thing. In this case, the film undermines its core in an attempt to present the pure scientific facts. Showing discord in the scientific community creates a dispute in the message that the viewer is receiving. Without any personal connection with any one scientist the audience is left without knowing who to trust or why we want to believe them. It creates mistrust in the communication between the viewer and the filmmakers as they seemingly present conflicting sides of an argument. There is debate surrounding overfishing, and worse it seems unsettled.

The film ends the second act by re-presenting the antagonist in the overfishing story, consumers. One street interview features a woman saying to the camera, “I love to eat fish. Fish are food to me.” The film intends for the viewer to see themselves in these average citizens. These are the first characters that the audience can connect with, and they are villains, effectively placing the viewer on the wrong side of the line. No one likes feeling like the villain all the time.

Film reviewer Andrew Schenker condemned *The End of the Line*, arguing, “The picture fails to build a rigorous enough argument to sustain [its] indignant tone.” He went on to explain the film was not effective stating, “if overfishing is to take its place among the growing catalogue of woes already assaulting the American conscience. . . it will certainly take a far more cogent polemicist than [director] Robert Murray to make it stick.” (Schenker) Without establishing any emotional connection to overfishing, the audience has little reason to continue thinking about overfishing once the film has ended.

The only positive story that *The End of the Line* touches upon is that of Alaska fishing regulations. Alaska's conservation methods such as a 200-mile fishing limit, controlling the number of fishing boats, and quotas on fishing levels are all lauded as part of the answer. Yet the film has set humans up as such antagonists that these efforts feel almost super-heroic, untouchable by the average consumer. The message of hope is lost, with the audience left disconnected from the ocean conservation message.

The End of the Line follows very traditional eco-doc approaches. It takes the world view, introduces many character-experts, and takes pains to present the science as objectively as possible. The film spends the majority of its time trying to present the audience with the argument that overfishing is happening. The amount of information, characters, and places is overwhelming and audience engagement suffers. Humans destroying paradise is a powerful idea, but without making the viewer care about paradise, there is little incentive to stop it from being destroyed.

THE COVE

Winning the 2010 Academy Award for Best Documentary, *The Cove* takes a much different approach to the environmental film about the ocean. The film explores the killing of dolphins in the small Japanese town of Taiji. The filmmakers and dolphin activist Richard "Ric" O'Barry takes the viewers on a thrilling journey that is more akin to a heist film than an environmental film. *The Cove* uses similar graphical images as *The End of the Line.* Both feature extreme close-ups of mouths eating fish, designed to make the audience feel uncomfortable and disgusted. The major difference is that director Louie Psihoyos rejects the idea of traditional environmental film format with its philosophy of separation and negativity. The audience is not treated as the antagonist, and the film explores the personalities and strengths of its characters.

Unlike *The End of the Line*, *The Cove* focuses on one place and centers around one main character: Richard "Ric" O'Barry. Ric O'Barry is a man looking for redemption. He captured dolphins and trained them for the TV show *Flipper* (1964-68). When one of his dolphins refused to come up for air and died in front of him, he realized that he had trapped the dolphins in a captive life. Once instrumental in creating the industry that revolves around dolphin captivity, O'Barry now fights to destroy it.

Whether you agree with O'Barry on his views of places where creatures of the ocean are kept in captivity, his passion for dolphins cannot be denied. It is through him that we learn about the intelligence of the animal and their sentience (ability to feel pleasure and pain). His life is dedicated to not only stopping the slaughter of the dolphins but educating the world on the suffering they endure in captivity. The Taiji fishermen are

his target. They not only viciously hunt dolphins, they also sell them into captivity. The supporting characters of the film, including director Psihoyos, are drawn to O'Barry's passion and his story, as is the audience.

O'Barry is an older man in the film, physically unable to participate in all the filming of the slaughter of the dolphins. Psihoyos and his documentary crew take over the narrative with an "espionage thriller," but O'Barry and his story are never forgotten. O'Barry is brought back again and again as the emotional center of the film, tethering the audience to the heart of the story.

There is an ever-present threat of violence in the film. The filmmakers are risking their safety to gather proof of the dolphin slaughters. Crafting the story so the extent of the slaughter is not immediately shown, the filmmakers take pains to engage the audiences' emotions early on. They first utlize audio recordings to begin to shape the horror of what is happening. Divers secretly place microphones underwater, retreaving the audio recording the next day. The dophins are squealing, the sounds almost deafening as nets trap them in the cove to either be sold to aquariums or killed.

The filmmakers and divers reactions hearing this audio for the first time further serve to connect them with the audience. The sounds are horrible, but the audience can see and feel the rage and sadness of the characters in the film. This sequence not only serves to let the audience know what they should be feeling, but amplifies the emotions already present. The footage from a planted, submerged camera reveals the water is becoming completely opaque with dolphin blood.

Pristine ocean images being stained red with dolphin blood serve as powerful images in the film, and one the film does not shy away from showing. The ocean paradise we are so used to seeing in film is stained, a subversion of the ocean-as-Eden trope. O'Barry is quick to point out to the horrified witnesses that there will be more dolphins to replace this slaughtered group. This is something that he has fought against for a long time.

In the final moments of the film, it is not Psihoyos or his crew that present the evidence of the dolphin slaughter to the International Whaling Commission. Instead, we are left with the visual of O'Barry, the old veteran activist, a monitor playing the gruesome footage placd on his chest. O'Barry goes around the room silently protesting until security escorts him out of the meeting. He has waited a long time to have physical evidence of what is happening in the cove in Taiji, this is a triumph for him.

The antagonist of the film is also distinct. Instead of turning the lens towards humanity in general, Psihoyos concentrates on one place, one story, and one group of people. The Japanese fishermen in Taiji are depicted in similar ways as the various humans in *The End of the Line*. There are tight close-up shots on mouths eating and depictions of violence and gore. Once again, the sequences horrify and disgust the audience. Unlike *The End of the Line*, Psihoyos and his crew take pains to separate the audience and general consumer from the grotesque antagonist. We are told shoppers in the Tokyo markets are sold meat under false labels. Instead of passive villains in the dolphin's plight, the average consumer is an unknowing victim.

The Cove was much more effective in its reach. By appealing to the audience's emotions and reasoning, the filmmakers saw results. In 2009, soon after *The Cove* was released, the Taiji dolphin slaughter was suspended. O'Barry himself has seen people flock to his cause, internationally as well as Japanese journalists and local student groups. The following years also saw a decrease in dolphin hunting in Taiji itself (Murray, Heumann). By breaking out of the traditional environmental documentary format, *The Cove* was able to connect audiences to the ocean and conservation more effectively.

Using the film connections to the audience's emotions and reasoning, the filmmakers saw real-world results. In 2009, soon after *The Cove* was released, the Taiji dolphin slaughter was suspended. O'Barry himself has seen people flock to his cause, internationally as well as Japanese journalists and local student groups. The following years also saw a decrease in dolphin hunting in Taiji itself (Murray, Heumann). By breaking out of the traditional environmental documentary format, *The Cove* was able to connect audiences to the ocean and conservation more effectively.

CHASING CORAL

Director Jeff Orlowski found great success in the time-lapse techniques he employed in the film *Chasing Ice (2012).* He employs similar cinematic techniques in the ocean conservation film, *Chasing Coral. Chasing Coral* enjoyed widespread release on Netflix, and, while it has not had the global success that *The Cove* enjoyed, it has been used as a tool for advocacy in small grassroots organizations. It has also been successful on the film festival circuit, premiering at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017 and nominated for the Grand Jury Prize in Documentary. The producer of the film, Exposure Labs, is known for using their films to target one particular group of people or politician and to change that group's or individual's opinion. Utilizing social media groups, this niche approach to marketing has produced results. In places such as Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States, the Mayor's Office committed to 100% clean energy. By connecting with the audience, the film is able to inspire change.

In many ways, *Chasing Coral* shares a similar story structure with *The Cove.* Richard Vevers and Zachary Rago serve in a similar capacity as O'Barry in *The Cove*. Vevers is an underwater photographer who started his career in advertising before having the realization that he did not want to continue to market toilet paper. When he moved to Australia and made the switch to underwater photography, he began noticing the depletion of the coral reefs.

The film begins with Vevers as he searches for the scientific answer to what coral is and why it is dying in such a dramatic fashion. The film dedicates a significant amount of time to these scientists and Vevers understanding of coral. Vevers plays the role of the

"everyman" for the audience, but his conversations also help to humanize the scientists. We are privy not only to the science but also to the scientists' heartbreak as they show their photos and findings. There are also not an overwhelming number of scientists interviewed. *Chasing Coral* does not need to have a string of experts confirming how coral reefs work or why they are dying, Vevers, and the audience by extension, quickly accepts the science behind the bleaching event. The information is there for backstory on coral and coral death, and it is not for debate.

Similar to *The Cove*, *Chasing Coral*'s main narrative then turns to the documentary film crew as they try to complete the mission Vevers sets out for them, creating a time-lapse film of a coral bleaching event.

The filmmakers chose to use time-lapse technology not just because it is attractive to the eye to watch time pass quickly, but because it allows the audience to better comprehend what is happeneing. The natural process of coral bleaching takes weeks, sometimes even months. Seeing this event happening in a condensed timeframe enables the audience to properly see the damage. *Chasing Coral* does not need to utilize the grotesque imagery we see in *The Cove* and *The End of the Line.* Instead, the film uses the powerful imagery of slow death to engage with the audience. The pristine ocean so thoroughly destroyed in one powerful sequence. The urgency becomes palpable as the filmmakers' race to capture the events as they are happening. The coral is bleaching so quickly that there is not even time to test the equipment, resulting in several frustratingly blurry time-lapses.

As the story moves away from Vevers and into the technological struggles of underwater filmmaking, Orlowski introduces us to our secondary main character. Rago is part of the camera crew and a self-professed “coral-nerd.” The audience is quickly exposed to Rago’s passion for the coral studies, though he lacks the credentials of the scientists earlier in the film.

Late in the film, we meet one of Rago’s heroes, the aged leading coral expert, Dr. John “Charlie” Veron. Dr. Veron is a supporting character in Rago’s character arc. Whereas Rago serves as the young hopeful voice, Dr. Veron introduces the older generation who first began seeing coral bleaching events. Rago’s excitement at being able to film coral reefs and meeting his idol are quickly lost as he begins the arduous task of the filming of the coral reef bleaching events.

Rago is affected by the dying coral reef that he is filming. Because he is unable to do anything to help the reef, the audience watches him slowly break down over weeks of dives until he admits that he is no longer happy to be there and just wants to get away from the coral reef. He describes watching the coral die as one of the hardest things he has ever had to do as he is unable to take any action, and can only witness the event. The audience feels his emotional journey as we travel to the breaking point with him and are therefore more linked to the story of the coral as a result.

At the end of the film, in a move similar to *The Cove*, both Vevers and Rago present their time-lapse film at a coral reef symposium. The viewer sees the completed time-lapses of the coral dying at the same time as the audience present at the symposium. While Rago is warned by Vevers not to cry, his emotion while presenting the material is

still very apparent. We cannot help but be as affected as the symposium audience is. While the symposium audience watches the presentation by Vevers and Rago, the filmmakers turn the lens onto the audience, making sure to individual shots of men and women wiping their eyes or looking at the time-lapses with heartbreak. The filmmakers make sure to show the viewer that the symposium audience is emotionally affected, and that the viewer is not alone in his or her feelings.

Chasing Coral's primary antagonist is global climate change. Unlike *The End of the Line* and *The Cove*, *Chasing Coral* does not directly depict any direct human action. There are no montages of human impact on the ocean, such as *The End of the Line* does with human consumption of fish. Nor do they depict specific antagonists such as the Japanese fishermen in *The Cove*.

Vevers lets the audience off the hook very early on in the film. The problem the coral reefs have is not just one of the water temperatures rising, but one of a lack of visual advertising. This statement serves to reassure the audience that the filmmakers are not condemning them for their own actions or inactions in these events. The filmmakers claim that they believe people simply do not know about the issue. Humans are not willfully destroying coral reefs; it is a byproduct of our actions that we simply have not seen.

The closest the film comes to showing humans in a truly antagonistic light is when Vevers is diving off the side of a floating restaurant. People are dancing and celebrating life, as Vevers shows the coral fluorescing below them in a haunting death

spectacle. The film is careful to reiterate that it is not because these people do not care; it is just that they have no idea what is going on beneath the water.

Chasing Coral uses its two main characters to lead the audience to deep emotions about the dangers to coral reefs as the climate changes. The film ends by stating that now that the audience has seen the damage, activism will follow. The film only shows one reef dying but ends with a montage of divers sending video messages with their own stories from around the globe. The filmmakers' made a choice to concentrate the narrative around one bleaching event rather then try to tell every story from around the world. This approach serves to anchor the audience and encourage more profound emotions as we experience the events unfolding through our two main characters.

"THE CRAB MAN OF KODIAK"

My short film, "The Crab Man of Kodiak," contributes to this discourse through a portrait film of scientist Guy Powell. The film follows the rise and fall of the king crab industry in Kodiak through Guy's recollections and memories as he nears the end of his life. The film traces Guy's research career from the 1950s until the closing of the fisheries in 1982. Through Guy's story, the audience learns about the king crab industry in Kodiak.

King crab fishing was relatively new when Guy arrived in Kodiak. The American fishing industry began harvesting king crab in the Bering Sea in 1947. While Kodiak's fishery started later, it quickly surpassed American catches in the Bering Sea, with catches in 1954 increasing to over 3 million pounds. The Alaska Department of Fisheries, later the Department of Fish and Game, recognized the importance and tremendous growth of the industry and reached out to hire a king crab biologist to research the abundant resource.

Guy Powell had just completed his master's degree in Fisheries from Colorado State University when the Alaska Department of Fisheries contacted him about a biologist position. King crab biology was mostly unknown, and only one other scientist in Japan was studying them. Due to the king crab fishery's incredible growth, in the late 1060's and 70's Guy enjoyed a certain amount of celebrity status. He was interviewed and featured in *National Geographic Magazine* in 1971, was known by name to the Alaska Governor, and dove with Jacques Cousteau when the filmmaker visited Kodiak.

The Kodiak king crab fishery reached the peak in the 1965/1966 season, bringing in over 94 million pounds of crab. Although Guy set limits and prohibitions on tangle nets and trawling, after the peak in 1966, the population of crabs began falling. In the following years, regulations and pot limits rose and fell with irregularity, as Fish and Game experienced increased pressure by the fishermen to keep limits high even as crab numbers began falling. The fishery was eventually permanently closed in 1983. Because of this action, Guy retired as a Fish and Game biologist a year later.

"The Crab Man of Kodiak" follows the events from when Guy was hired by the Alasak Department of Fisheries until his retirement in 1984. The audience meets Guy when he is in the last few months of his life, and suffering from cerebellar ataxia, a disease that occurs when the cerebellum becomes damaged. He is frail, barely able to do simple tasks, and clearly nearing the end of his life. By employing highly intimate shots of Guy, taken in one of the last few months of his life, the viewer is physically close to Guy, a camera strategy which then encourages emotional closeness as well. We get insight into how his present life is as he looks at old books, washes dishes, and, finally, gives directions as he rides as a passenger in a vehicle. He is old, frail, and dying. The udience is able to see his frailness through these simple tasks. These unconventional moments also let the audience see Guy as more of a man rather than placing him solely on a scientist pedestal. Guy is not merely a "scientist" or an "expert"; he becomes human. It is only late into the film that we see his research papers. The audience must see him as a human first, scientist second.

The intimate moments captured visually also had to compensate for viewers being unable to see Guy talking. Cerebellar ataxia caused his speech to become severely impeded, and he was difficult to understand. Drafting the narration involved the use of old archived recordings of Guy. Guy expresses frustration, awe, and joy throughout the voice recordings. Guy speaks only once on camera as the film moves into the last act. His speech, almost painful to listen to, is to emphasize that something is wrong with him. When it is later revealed that he has cerebellar ataxia, there can be no doubt how serious the disease is. He has even lost the ability to be understood.

Unlike *The Cove* and *The End of the Line*, "The Crab Man of Kodiak" does not indulge in the consumer/fisherman-antagonist shots that we see repeated in both films. King crabs are not particularly bloody animals nor do they exhibit the obvious intelligence of dolphins. There are not many emotional connections to be made. Many people, as Guy alludes to in the film, believe they are a creepy creature, but he was always happy when he saw them. At the end of the film, when we see the Guy with the king crab in the aquarium, the audience is able to finally see these two together. The audience can connect more to an animal they might not normally have any feelings towards because of its connection to Guy. This is similar to how *Chasing Coral* uses Rago's emotions in regard to the coral reefs.

Guy's story is linked entirely with the king crabs on Kodiak Island. He arrives at Kodiak just before the boom; his career begins to blossom just as the industry does. He becomes well known as the boom hits. The king crab is famous, and so is Guy. Archival footage and photos are used to demonstrate the height of the industry, and, again, as we

see the slow decline. Guy begins to become more frustrated with regulations as the crabs disappear. It is as they decline that we see the papers of Guy's work, emphasizing the science and his life's work. The audience can further understand how important this research was to him. When the fishery in Kodiak closed after the crabs dissapear, Guy is at his weakest in the film. His speech is impossible to understand, and he is relegated to being only a passenger in the car. This serves as a visual representation of his lack of control as he heads towards the end of his life. We discover his disease, possibly caused by his years of diving for research. We get the sense that his life is over. Just as the king crabs are gone, so will Guy be as well.

While the causes of the decline in the crab population are not overtly addressed, the audience can easily piece together that overfishing and the fishing industry were the cause of the king crabs near extinction in Kodiak. There is no need to debate that the king crab was overfished; this is presented as simple fact. King crab now only exist in tanks on Kodiak Island, not in the ocean. Guy looks at the king crab in the aquarium tank, and we see two relics of an older time and a different Kodiak Island, one that is forever changed by the industry that Guy helped to create.

By linking Guy's personal story with that of the king crab, the audience can feel more a part of the story of Kodiak's king crab fishery. They become invested in how things turn out. "The Crab Man of Kodiak" is not just an historical telling or an environmental portrait film. Building this emotional connection among the viewer, researcher, and ocean life enabled this story also to become a tragedy. A subtle message is that this could happen anywhere, even when the best researchers are warning us that

doom is coming. As a scientist, the audience can see that Guy did everything right. He presented his research and fought for regulations, but, in the end, he was unable to stop the industry from destroying itself. Guy's life creates an advocacy message because of the tragedy that comes through linking his story with the account of king crabs. Science, and the environment, can lose out despite the best of intentions and scientific method.

CONCLUSION

The traditional eco-doc film relies heavily on the conventions of expository elements to promote ocean advocacy. Using emotional techniques illustrated in the documentary *The Cove* and *Chasing Coral*, "The Crab Man of Kodiak" creates a relationship among ocean life, scientists, and viewers. Breaking away from traditional conventions allows these films to create more trusted relationships with audiences. Instead of encouraging negative conections, filmmakers can inspire viewers by forging more authentic emotional connections with their subjects. By creating this more intimate bond, there can be a balance among advocacy, science, and emotion. The ocean-as-Eden and Ocean-as-wilderness tropes should not serve to separate humans from ocean ecology. Eco-films must take the step of involving humans and engaging audiences' emotions through connection.

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