THE ROLE OF CURATION AND EVIDENCE IN DOCUMENTARY FILM

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mom, Leanore Berent in recognition of her love and support throughout my studies. Her two visits to Montana helped keep me on track and relatively sane while I finished my thesis.

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ABSTRACT

As I produced a documentary film about tigers in captivity in the state of Texas, *The Legend of the Texas Tiger,* I learned that my legal background plays a central part in the way that I structure a filmic argument and think about filmmaking. I found that the metaphor of legal advocacy was particularly revealing in the examination of other filmmakers as well. In my discussion of Errol Morris' Gates of Heaven, Frederick Wiseman's *Primate*, and Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man,* I examine the role of documentary filmmakers as curators of reality who present an argument to a metaphorical jury: the audience. This version of the truth that is presented to the audience often tells us just as much about the filmmaker as it does the film's subject.

INTRODUCTION

To explain my process, I will put my film, *The Legend of the Texas Tiger*, in the context of documentary films that share a similar aesthetic and philosophy to my own filmmaking approach. The three films I will discuss are *Gates of Heaven, Grizzly Man*, and *Primate*. Unifying my discussion will be my examination of the idea of the curation of reality and its similarity legal advocacy and the management of evidence in a legal setting.

On the most basic level, documentary film differs from dramatic fictional filmmaking in that it is purporting to "represent reality" and tell a non-fiction story. Perhaps instead of thinking about the process of documentary filmmaking as simply telling a non-fiction story, it is more useful to delve into the individual choices that filmmakers use to construct reality in a way that represents their own particular, advocated version of the truth. Truth is thus curated by the filmmaker. It is the filmmaker who gets to decide how a chosen subject will be processed and then presented to a malleable audience. It is helpful to look at these curated choices as the way in which a filmmaker compiles evidence to construct an argument.

Some researchers have looked at the historical role of documentary film footage being used as evidence (Gunning 46-63). Other scholars have specifically looked at the role of interviews as witness testimony (Waterston 51-73). However, the role of the filmmaker as the curator of what I see as a metaphorical legal case being presented to a "jury", who is in this case the film's audience, has not been widely explored. In "The

Philosophy of Errol Morris: Ten Lessons," Carl Plantinga references this jury/audience metaphor in his discussion of Errol Morris' exploration of the subjective nature of truth. It is this metaphor, using my own legal background, that I seek to build upon and investigate by incorporating additional metaphors to the legal evidentiary process.

To expand on the legal metaphor, the filmmaker is in effect prosecuting a case to the "jury," who in this case is the film's audience. The filmmaker is compiling evidence to build a case to convince a jury that this particular view of the subject is the preferred way in which to view the facts. At all times, it is the filmmaker who chooses which events or ideas to include, their chronology, and the explicit and implicit interpretation of real life events. The filmmaker as curator and advocate is the central filter through which this story is delivered to the spectator.

If any three documentary filmmakers (including the ones I will discuss) were given the same topic, they would most assuredly make three different films. More than production technicians following a set of (unchanging) instructions, filmmakers are faced with an almost infinite amount of options when it comes to planning, writing, shooting, editing and stylizing a film. Those decisions then deeply affect the way the film will be received by an audience. In *Representing Reality*, many of these decisions and strategies were organized into what Bill Nichols described as the modes of documentary filmmaking (32-75). While Nichols' modes may be instructive of certain types of documentary films, contemporary filmmakers such as those discussed in this paper, have

proved that they don't easily fit into nearly organized boxes and often use a variety of stylistic choices to tell their stories.

Although these three hypothetical filmmakers may make a litany of different and distinct choices along the way towards constructing their films, they do share something very important with one another - they are actively guiding the experience of their audiences through their constant curation. As part of this process, filmmakers compile footage as evidence to ultimately achieve what will become their individually curated version of the truth. A film audience is largely captive. It is an impossibility and generally not the aim for a film to provide audiences with an objective overview of every single view and perspective on a subject. The filmmaker chooses what to film, who to film, where to film, when to film and why to film as a means of compiling evidence to construct an argument. Their curated version of the truth, is thus the filmmaker's argument to the jury or audience.

A documentary film is a unique enterprise in that there is a deep interplay between subject and the documentary filmmaker himself or herself, who can be seen as a curator of events and ideas. The filmmaker plays a central role in shaping the documentary film and thus shaping the desired argument to the audience. Even in cases where the filmmaker himself is not physically present in the film, his curation is pervasive and revealing. It may seem self-evident that a film reveals just as much about the filmmaker and self-expression as it does the film's subject, or the pro-filmic event as referenced in Carl Plantinga's *Rhetoric and Representation*, but it is a topic that is rarely discussed as

central, and indeed inherent, to the documentary filmmaking process. In fact, many contemporary theorists have historically treated self-expression of the filmmaker as problematic or even deceptive to documentary film (Plantinga 41). Instead of ignoring or eschewing documentary film‘s unique ability to frame a film event through the lens of a filmmaker‘s self-expression, we should embrace this fact and use it to better understand the role of the filmmaker in creating the documentary film. Most filmmakers are aware of the subjectivity inherent in the filmmaking process. Conversely, most audiences seem to be under the impression that documentary films are intrinsically objective. In order to examine this analytical approach to filmmaking, we must begin to look at how the filmmaker explores an event and then shapes it into something that is neither an objective reportage of facts nor a narrative, fiction film.

Documentary film exists in a world somewhere in between. As Janet Merewether states in Shaping the Documentary Subject, “To suggest that documentary represents ‘fact‘ or ‘reality‘ underestimates the elaborate aesthetic frameworks, formal structures and multiple layers of meaning intentionally created during the writing and directorial process” (97).

It is this sort of directorial/editorial control that I will refer to as curation. I will use this term to emphasize the filmmaker as a mediator between the audience and the external reality that should be distinguished from the world of the fiction film, which is often truly an original creation, even if it shares similarities of history, characters, and place with the everyday reality of the audience.

While my idea of curation is more evident in documentary films that are clearly non-traditional in nature (from *Koyaannisqaatsi* to *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*), the curatorial process is, I believe, just as true in all documentaries. Each documentary filmmaker has a separate, distinct, and unique approach that dictates the methodology and perspective of the filmic process. This approach may be informed by the filmmaker's background, experiences, and/or socio-political views. More illuminating than the actual filmed event, is the transformation of that event through a filmmaker's choice of the following:

1) choice of interview subjects,

2) the filmmakers' shooting style, including picture and audio elements and

3) whether the filmmakers appear as a presence or non-presence in the film.

If we look at a film in this manner, it becomes more evident that we are learning just as much, and perhaps more, about the filmmaker than about the subject of or the events or characters in the film. The more we pull apart the process and methodology used by the filmmaker, and examine, why the filmmaker has chosen those processes, the more clearly the filmmaker's approach filtering of reality will appear. No matter what the subject or style of a documentary film may be, the accompanying or underlying subject of the film is always a reflection of the filmmaker's choice and sensibilities.

CURATION & EVIDENCE DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO THREE FILMS

Discussion of *Gates of Heaven*

John Grierson, the first writer to define the term "documentary film," knew from the beginning that documentary film was more than mere reportage of facts and occurrences. When he first coined the term "documentary" he defined it as "the creative treatment of actuality" (Merewether 97). The expressiveness of the filmmaker as curator shapes what Grierson referred to as "the creative treatment of actuality" (97). If we acknowledge that each filmmaker is an individual, it seems obvious that each one would creatively treat or curate actuality differently. For example, Errol Morris suggests that "the documentary can be as personal as fiction filmmaking, and can bear the imprint of those who make them." (97). In the following discussion, we will learn how a filmmaker who relies on testimonial interviews where he himself is not present is able to curate and construct a film that is personal to him.

What is particularly interesting about Errol Morris is that throughout his films he sometimes uses interview testimony to serve a counterintuitive purpose. That is, he is sometimes trying to telegraph to the audience that certain witness' testimony is not altogether accurate or reliable (Perez 17). This is an issue that becomes central in his later film *The Thin Blue Line*, in which he essentially exonerates a murderer by picking apart the discrepancies and inaccuracies present in a variety of testimonial interviews. In *Gates*

of Heaven, he is already playing with this idea of testimony as a means of cross-examining potentially unreliable witnesses (Perez 17).

Gates of Heaven is an ethnographic exploration of the people involved in the pet cemetery trade (MacDonald 14). Similar to a legal process, ethnography typically involves compiling multiple testimonies as means of archive so we can learn who are these people and what were they doing. But beyond the who and whats, Morris is interested internal struggle and philosophical underpinnings of the people involved in the pet cemetery trade. As curator of the film, Morris carefully organizes testimonial evidence in a way that allows him to tell a story about humanity versus economics.

He starts this process by his choice and arrangement of interviews. The audience is presented with two interviews juxtaposed against each other, brothers Dan and Phil Harberts. Dan and Phil are the heirs to the throne of Bubbling Wells Pet Cemetery run by their soon-retiring father Cal. The beginning of Phil's interview has him trying to impress the audience with his book smarts and business acumen.

Stylistically, Morris wants us to feel like we are taking an ethnographic testimony from Phil and the setting of the interview becomes increasingly important as the testimony unfolds. Morris has his camera locked down and the audience is presented with a seemingly traditional interview. Phil is seated at a desk that is cluttered with awards and cheap-looking trophies. The wall behind him is covered in fake gold plaques. Phil's testimony touches on issues of self-confidence. He claims to be self-motivated and successful. This is coupled with the fact that Morris' busy framing has him literally

wedged between a menagerie of gaudy mementos which becomes more and more absurd, if not comical, as the audience learns that Phil is not as successful as they might have initially thought him to be. Phil tells us that his father has passed over him and anointed his younger brother as second in charge, he admits that he relies on motivational tapes to help build confidence and that he was forced to leave the business world after failing to excel in the insurance industry.

Morris is not even present in the scene and yet he has effectually stacked the deck against Phil Harberts and impressed upon the audience that he is not to be relied upon. Although Morris cannot be seen, we can assume that he must have been present to ask questions. While we don't hear the questions, we can assume it's Morris pulling the strings and leading Phil Harberts in a certain direction. Morris obviously has chosen what topics to discuss with Phil Harberts and how to curate the interview footage editorially so that the end result is that the audience does not trust him. More than using this interview as testimony, Morris is using the construction of his film to actually challenge the testimony. He is in effect, cross-examining Phil Harberts to advance his own version of the truth. In "The Philosophy of Errol Morris: Ten Lessons" Carl Plantinga remarks:

> Truth for Morris is not a simple reporting of facts. It is an investigation into subjective evidence that eventually shapes what a jury of his peers, in this case, his audience is able to cull from the sometimes disparate subjective truths of his subjects.

Ultimately, Morris' choices to undercut the reliability of Phil Harberts which tells the audience to pay careful attention to the economic push and pull involved in the pet

cemetery business (Jaffe 37). Phil serves as the cold, business-minded, capitalist foil to his brother, who is portrayed as a naturalistic hippy more interested in the care and welfare of the cemetery's customers. Indeed, this is not the only time in the film that Morris touches on the internal battle between true sympathy for the former owners of deceased pet versus the money that can be made on their sorrows. The first half of the film compares a simple small-town man with the dream of opening a pet cemetery with the owner of a rendering factory that cracks jokes about processing dead animals for a fee. Throughout the film Morris explores the tension between sympathy and profit, and it becomes clear that this is the version of true filmed events that he wants to impress upon the audience/jury.

Discussion of *Primate*

Like Errol Morris, Frederick Wiseman curates his films to advance a particular story to his audience/jury. Stylistically Wiseman's approach is very different than Morris'. Wiseman has an actual legal background and holds an LLM degree from Yale University (Zipporah). It is then not surprising that his use of film as evidence is more overt than Morris' approach in *Gates of Heaven*. That being said, stylistically Wiseman approaches his curated legal argument in a way that seems objective from the outset. In what Bill Nichols has referred to as the observational mode, Wiseman makes it seem as though his camera is a fly-on-the-wall at the Yerkes Primate Research Center in his film, *Primate*. Although the film might seem objective in that there is a lack of formal

interviews, narration or any ostensible presence of the filmmaker, what Wiseman's audience/jury is presented with is a carefully constructed prosecution of scientific testing and experimentation on primates.

Wiseman, as curator, actively uses everything he films and places it in such an order so that he may sway the audience/jury to arrive at a certain decision about the usefulness and necessity of testing and experimentation on animals. Wiseman eschews the need for interview testimony and instead uses his film footage to serve as circumstantial evidence to build a case that the Yerkes facility is basically doing more harm than good. Although it might seem like Wiseman just left his camera in a room, we know that he has chosen to film certain things. While he starts the film with rather mundane experiments on the primates, his film builds to a crescendo as he exposes more invasive and shocking procedures. This is coupled with the fact that there is no rebuttal from the people working at the facility. There is no explanation of why these unpleasant tests are necessary. So, the objective footage has little to no context for an audience, and they are left to feel uncomfortable with the experimentation being meted out by the staff at the Yerkes facility.

Although Wiseman is not physically present in the film, we can assume that he has acted as a curator making every choice along the way in order to build his case. For instance, he has chosen to film at a primate testing facility. Like the experimental subjects, the humans working at the facility notably are also primates.

Shot in the observational style, Wiseman's curation is always lurking somewhere beneath the surface (Benson & Anderson 238). Although it may seem to an audience that they are watching events happen in real time, his choices carefully plot out the version of truth that he wants to impress upon the jury. Towards the end of the film, after an inundation of disturbing sequences his version of the truth is convincing. We are made to feel that these primates are captives of the Yerkes facility, experiencing the horror of experimentation (Benson & Anderson 243). This includes fiddling with sensors on exposed primate brains while they are awake and sending them up into zero gravity for no stated purpose. This is not to say that the scientists did not have valid reasons to invasively attach sensors to primates with their skulls cracked open, or strap them into a zero-gravity plane and flip them upside-down over and over again. But the way in which Wiseman presents these scenes to us, he intentionally leaves out the rationale. Without having any understanding whatsoever of why they are conducting these types of experiments, we are led to believe through Wiseman's curation that this is essentially pointless torture for these animals.

Not only is Wiseman using his fly-on-the-wall footage as circumstantial evidence to make that point, he is doing so in a way that is really a prosecution of the Yerkes facility. He is clearly taking a stance that his film will provide a version of the truth that makes it evident that in his view Yerkes experimentation on primates is purposeless torture of animals. What makes this more disturbing and provocative is that Wiseman has not chosen to film experimentation on fruit flies or mice, but instead he has chosen to film

monkeys and whatever that are our closest cousins from the wild kingdom. It is not a stretch to assume that Wiseman intends for us to make this connection. As curator, he has chosen to literally name his film *Primate.* The audience/jury is meant to relate to animals being tested on as closely related sentient beings that have the potential ability to understand fear, torture and abuse.

Discussion of *Grizzly Man*

Herzog is a definite departure from the other two filmmakers - specifically when dealing with his own physical presence in the film. Not only is Herzog present in the film, he takes over the film. The film itself is a majority of archival footage taken directly from Timothy Treadwell. He uses this footage to partially tell Treadwell's story, but more specifically to tell Herzog's own version of Treadwell's story.

In *Grizzly Man*, Werner Herzog approaches the relationship of a man who wishes to forge friendships with wild animals. In the story of Timothy Treadwell's ill-fated and fatal final summer among the Alaskan Grizzlies, Herzog fashions a film about himself via someone else's footage. Herzog has an admittedly contentious relationship with what Nichols refers to as the above-mentioned observational documentary mode. He seeks to use elements of performance, post-modern self-reflexivity and the blurry line between fact and fiction to delve into the subjective truths of the topic as seen through his own philosophy. Because only some of the footage is Herzog's and the rest is Treadwell's,

Grizzly Man is a strong example of the filmmaker as both curator and evidentiary advocate.

Herzog is a "fan" and student of German expressionism - his style of documentary filmmaking thus blends the experimental and existential nature of German expressionism with documentary filmmaking (Gandy 7). Regardless of topic, many of his documentaries focus on an exploration of the mind versus the cruel and unstoppable forces of the natural world (9). German expressionist film eschews any sort of objective realism in exchange for the exploration of inner emotional truth. Many German Expressionist films deal with topics of madness, insanity and betrayal. Herzog's connection to this aspect of German Expressionism is overt. In addition, and unlike the other documentary filmmakers explored in this paper, Werner Herzog is not just a documentary filmmaker. He is also well-known for directing fiction films including the historical dramas *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* and *Fitzcarraldo* among others (11).

Thematically, Herzog plays in the world of German Expressionism's horror, grotesqueness, emptiness and nihilism (Gandy 7). Structurally, his documentary films are more of a rejection of objective realism than a representation of it. Thus, when approaching a film like *Grizzly Man*, it is not surprising that Herzog uses Treadwell's footage as evidence in his psychological exploration of a man who lived amongst bears. The film is not about living with bears. The film is about the internal makeup and inner turmoil of a man who tried to "become a bear." Herzog also makes generous use of existential themes. Thus, the natural world is not a world of wonder and awe as it is often

depicted on blue-chip television nature programs. Nor is it the world of fun and frolic of the early Disney nature documentaries. Instead, the natural world is the impetus that drives man to madness, a cruel and unfeeling world that crushes human dreams and swallows up everything around it.

Herzog is actively present in the film. He appears both on camera and via almost constant narration. At times, he gives commentary and counterpoint to Treadwell's own words. In fact, there are portions of the film where Herzog literally will cut Treadwell off and talk over his footage. A specific scene in which he does this, is the scene above the beach where Treadwell films himself recording exposition for the story he is building, but then starts ranting wildly about the park service, giving us a window into Treadwell's madness. We don't even hear every word he says, and we don't need to, because Herzog tells us that Treadwell has lost touch with reality and is now riddled with rage and madness.

Herzog takes over Treadwell's film and dominates the direction of the story. While the arguments above show that beneath the surface *Gates of Heaven* and *Primate* are both films that are personal to Morris and Wiseman respectively, Herzog's personal version of the truth is absolutely overt in *Grizzly Man*. Herzog actively and obviously shapes the story as it unfolds. Perhaps the scene in which Herzog is most a presence in the film is the scene in which he listens to the audio tape of Timothy Treadwell being eaten by a bear. Not only has Herzog interjected himself into the film, he is now privy to

information that the audience/jury is not. Furthermore, he then begins to give on-air advice to Timothy Treadwell's ex-girlfriend, one of his interviewees in the film.

Like Morris and Wiseman, Herzog utilizes footage as evidence. Specifically, Herzog uses Treadwell's archival footage and his own interview footage as circumstantial evidence. He uses this circumstantial evidence to make the case that Treadwell had a flawed understanding of nature and his role in the animals' world. In his famous Eyes of the Bear soliloquy Herzog performs a dramatic closing argument for his audience/jury. Herzog tells us that there is nothing in these bear's eyes that amount to an understanding of friendship or any sort of kinship with humans. Additionally, he says he sees no soul in the bears eyes. He sees only a hungry creature, with humans as a potential food source. This is not the first time that Herzog introduces the topic of Treadwell's great misunderstanding of the natural world. Earlier in the film Herzog interviews a helicopter pilot and the curator of a Native American museum located in the vicinity of Treadwell's campsites. Both of these men state emphatically that Treadwell had no business trying to insert himself in the world of Alaska's Grizzlies. So, Herzog has in effect planted interviews to help build this case throughout the film and then hammered it home in a performative closing argument befitting of a deft prosecutor.

APPLYING THESE CONCEPTS TO MY FILM,

THE LEGEND OF THE TEXAS TIGER

I am of course most familiar with the philosophical journey I grappled with during the production of my own film, "The Legend of the Texas Tiger." Indeed, through the process of producing this film I came to appreciate just how much a documentary film is an exploration of the filmmaker as much as it is an exploration about a subject. Like Wiseman, I too have a legal background. As a former practicing attorney, I have keen familiarity with the use of testimony as evidence. It is not surprising, then, that although unintentionally, I shaped a story about exotic animal sanctuaries in Texas using testimonials. The more I delved into the story, the more I realized I was treating my film as a courtroom for the issues surrounding exotic pet ownership. It was only after I had spent a year on the film that I realized my methodological approach was an outgrowth of my own background and personal philosophies. As such, exploring the methodology behind a filmmaker's decisions is a topic that I deemed worth of exploring in my thesis.

I had initially hoped to interview a private owner, a sanctuary owner and a zoo spokesman to cover the three sources of tiger owner in the State of Texas. Finding a private owner who was willing to speak with me on camera was easier said than done. Although I chased many leads down, none of them led to an on-camera interview. What I realized in the editing of my film was that one of my sanctuary owners had started not as a sanctuary, but as a private owner. I thus was able to structure his interview footage as a way to speak to the fairly large issue of “Why do regular people want to own tigers as

pets." My second biggest challenge was determining how to order my interviews and how that would affect the way in which the audience would view these people. What I ultimately determined was that I largely agreed with my interviewees from the Black Beauty Ranch. I decided that their words deserved more focus than the interviews from the Pride Rock and Tiger Creek sanctuaries.

For a long time, I fought against including my own voice in the film. What I realized as a poured over my film was that the endpoint that I wanted my audience to reach was unachievable without my own shaping of the story through not only choice of interview and shooting style, but with narration as well. As soon as I opened myself up to the opportunity of narrating transitional sequences, the film started to fit together like a puzzle with the corners completed. Initially I had decided that, like in *Gates of Heaven*, the interviews should stand on their own. As I only realized later, and discussed in the above section on *Gates of Heaven*, was that Morris really did not have those interviews stand on their own. Indeed, his film was carefully curated in a way so that his interviews all served the purpose of putting forth his version of the truth. The added benefit of including myself in the film as narrator was that I could act as a layperson or general audience member, while still including my legal background in explaining the complexities of the legislation that affected tiger ownership in the State of Texas.

From a curation standpoint, throughout my film I am attempting to both educate my audience and advocate for a certain solution for the strange circumstances surrounding a large tiger population in Texas. Using a legal metaphor, I approach the subject initially as

a lawyer would approach an opening argument to the jury. I do so through the curation of testimonial interview evidence and my own narration which is fashioned as seemingly objective third person narration. From the outset of the film I know that I cannot yet put forward my argument to my audience/jury before I explain the somewhat complex situation that has arisen in Texas' wild-west exotic pet ownership regulatory scheme from an expositional standpoint.

The organization of my testimonial interviews is purposeful. Again, using a legal metaphor, the people interviewed in my film are my own witnesses. That is, they are the witnesses that I have called to the stand to provide evidence that my version of the facts is accurate and reliable. I am using their testimony to advocate for a certain version of the facts and for my jury to arrive at a certain decision. Namely, that my version of the facts is so appealing that they largely agree with the solutions and decisions that I have put forth in my argument (the film itself). Specifically, I have bookended my film with interviews from the Humane Society's Black Beauty Ranch to impress upon my audience that they should pay close attention to those specific interviews. My own narration sequences are then used to advocate and highlight these ideas to the audience/jury. While my curation at the beginning of the film feels more instructive and more closely tied to something akin to an opening argument, towards the end of the film I use the narration as a closing argument to really plead my case to the audience/jury.

CONCLUSION

Filmmakers may fashion and stylize their films as either objective or subjective; but, regardless of how the film is framed for an audience, ultimately the documentary film is personal to the filmmaker. Sometimes filmmakers freely acknowledge this relationship with their films and sometimes they use the magic of film to hide this relationship. In either case, filmmakers are always acting as curators of reality. They are choosing to film certain things, in a certain way, and choosing to put them in a certain order, so that they may advance a certain perspective on the real-life events. Metaphorically, these curated directorial and editorial choices act as legal evidence being presented to an audience who serves as the filmmaker's jury. The filmmaker is constantly building his case, and the film itself is what he or she is choosing to present to the audience or jury in order to sway their receipt of the facts.

While I was aware that my own film dealt with some peripheral legal issues. I did not initially realize how much my background would play in the decisions I made throughout. Indeed, there were certain ideas that I knew would be central to this film - that I wanted to tell the story via multiple perspectives through interviews and that I did not want to script any of these interviews but to use them as a vehicle to probe my interviewees perspectives. I was aware from the outset, that I was producing a film that would need to be crafted through the edit. In fact, subconsciously, Gates of Heaven was influential. Gates of Heaven similarly deals with multiple storylines, which only tell a

complete story after they have pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle to tell the bigger picture story. What I realized is that there are really multiples puzzles that can be pieced together using those puzzle pieces. It is up to the filmmaker to determine what the big picture really should be, before those pieces can be stuck together in a graspable way.

My breakthrough occurred when I realized that my own background had in affect dictated many of the decisions I had made along the way - and that organically, the film was begging me to put it together in a way that was natural to me - like a legal argument. What I ended up with was an exploration not only of tigers in Texas, but also an exploration of my own filmmaking process, and myself.

Interestingly, as discussed above, in planning my thesis I noticed that other filmmakers use directorial and editorial choices such as choice of interview subjects, certain shooting style and their own presence in their films to help guide their version of the truth. Each filmmaker's version of that "truth" can be compared to something very akin to a legal argument. As put forth in the discussions above, filmmakers are curators of reality, who utilize film footage as evidence to put forth these arguments to an audience/ jury.

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