

TOPIC 3: RE-ENACTMENT IN CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY

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Brian Winston

‘The problem of “sincerity” aside, “reconstruction” is anyway no straightforward threat to documentary value ... From the point of view of authenticity and ethics not all reconstruction can be considered suspect. It sits in a continuum from complete non-interventionist surveillance through to totally fictional set ups. (Winston *The Documentary Film Book* (BFI 2013, p. 8)

Touching the Void (Kevin MacDonald,
2004)



Errol Morris

‘Truth isn’t guaranteed by style or expression. Truth isn’t guaranteed by anything’.

Standard Operating Procedure (Errol Morris, 2006)



Paul Arthur 'The Horror', *Artforum International*
46:8, (2008), p. 112.

' [*Standard Operating Procedure*] belongs to a film genre that provides titillation through horror. To employ this rhetoric in a documentary about actual horror is obscene, yielding familiar aesthetic thrills as a substitute for specificity of meaning'

Errol Morris

Re-enactment is not so much a visual activity, as it a conscious activity. It is the process through which we imagine and re-imagine the world around us. The important thing to remember is that everything we consciously experience is a re-enactment. Consciousness, itself, is a re-enactment of reality inside our heads ('Play it Again, Sam (Re-enactments, Part Two)', Morris, 2008b).

The Act of Killing (2011)

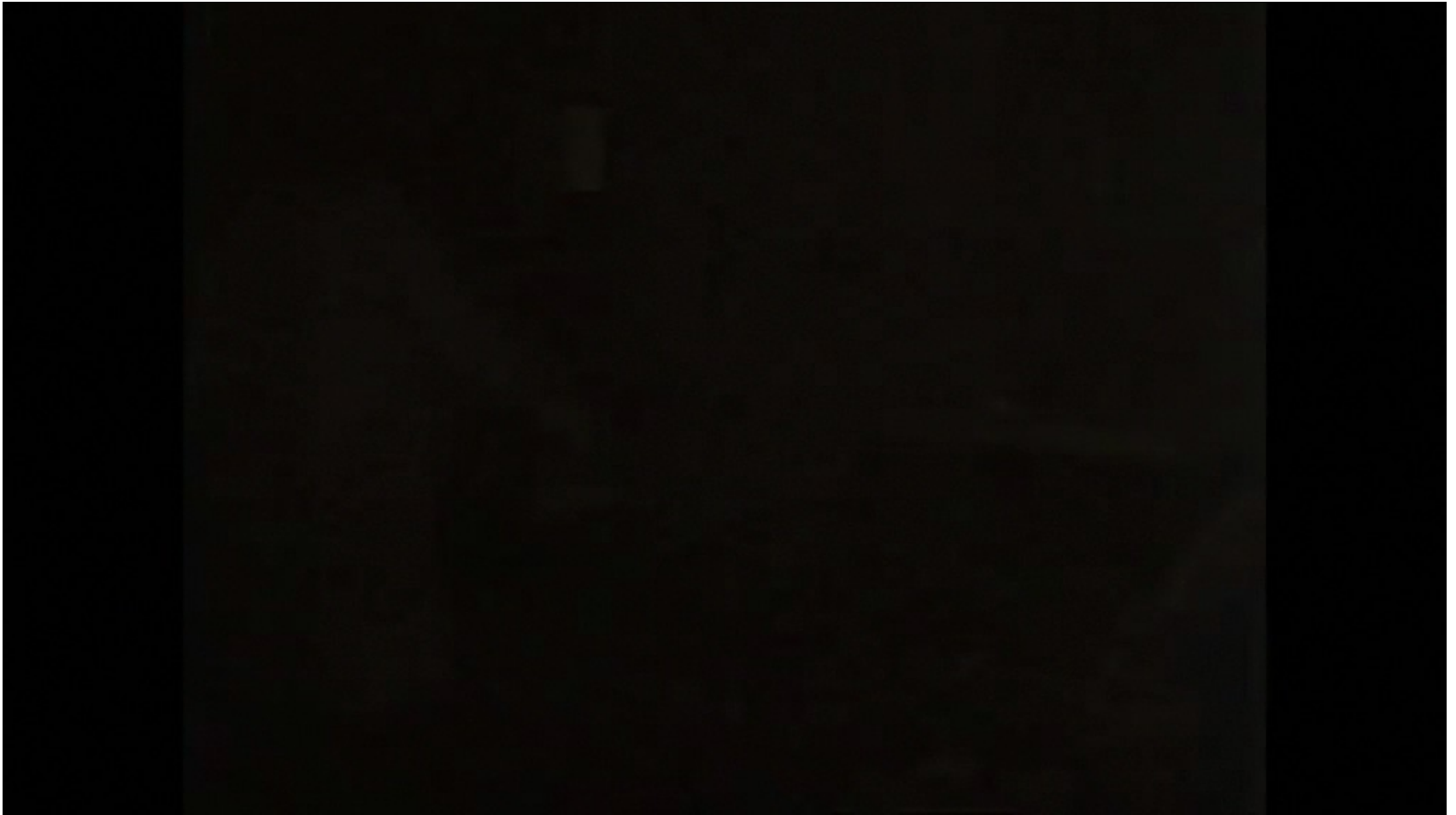


Nick Fraser

- ‘Of course murderers, flattered in their impunity, will behave vilely. Of course they will reliably supply enlightened folk with a degraded vision of humanity. But sorry, I don’t think we want to be doing this. It feels wrong and it certainly looks wrong to me’

‘The Act of Killing: Don’t Give an Oscar to this Snuff Movie’, The Guardian, 23 February 2014.

The Arbor (Clio Barnard, 2010)



Alecky Blythe

‘... once actors have memorised their lines, they stop listening to how they were actually spoken in the first place ... it’s an actor’s instinct to perform: to heighten, to try and make their lines more “interesting” (Blythe 2008: 81)

Dreams of a Life (Carol Morley, 2011)

