

# five hours with raja

Ethics and the Documentary Interview



Anna McKessar

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communication Studies.

**2009** School of Communication Studies. Primary Supervisor: Eileen Lavranos

# CONTENTS

**Table of Images iii**

**Authorship iv**

**Acknowledgements v**

**Abstract vi**

## **Chapter One: Setting the Scene 1**

*Introducing Our Key Research Questions 1*

*The Parameters of this Project 2*

*Meet Claudia and Amit 4*

*Purpose 5*

## **Chapter Two: Connecting Theory and Practice 9**

*Defining Documentary 9*

*Challenges 10*

*Informed and Ongoing Consent 12*

*Methodology 12*

Consent 12

Voice 14

Context 14

Authenticity within the Interview 15

Faithfulness and the Beginnings of Research Direction 17

Developing the Filmmaker-Participant Relationship 18

## **Chapter Three: Positioning The Documentary 20**

*Television Documentary in New Zealand 20*

*A Different Approach 24*

## **Chapter Four: Producing Five Hours with Raja 26**

*Research Design 26*

*Testing a Subject 26*

*Understanding Grief 27*

*The Interview 29*

*Observational Sequences 30*

*The Complications of my Emotional Response 31*

*Editing the Documentary 32*

Editing as Data Analysis 32

The Interview as a Framework 33

Structuring the Narrative 34

Combining Interview with Observational Footage 34

Creating Space 35

**Chapter Five: Future Directions 37**

**Bibliography 41**

## TABLE OF IMAGES

*Figure 1.1 Pedro and Amit Gounder, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 1.2 Misty morning in rural New Zealand, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 1.3 Claudia working with clay, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 1.4 Claudia holds baby Raja seconds after he is born, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 1.5 Claudia and Amit watch their new son take his first breaths, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 1.6 João Pedro, Claudia's brother, meets Raja for the first time, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 2.1 Claudia sees Raja for the first time, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 2.2 Initial interview with Amit and Claudia, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 2.3 Interview with Claudia during August of 2007, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 2.4 Dusk at Karekare beach, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 3.1 Claudia, Amit and their boys shortly before Raja died, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 3.2 Claudia mends a broken clay bowl, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 3.3 Claudia, Amit, Raja and Pedro together at Hutt Hospital. Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Figure 4.1 Reflections at Karekare, Five Hours with Raja 2009*



## **AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost my heartfelt thanks to Claudia Astorga-Ralph, Amit Gounder and their families who unreservedly welcomed me into their homes and their lives. Your courage and positivism is inspirational.

Thank you to Vicki Culling, Joan Curle and Sands NZ for teaching me about an issue that is so close to your hearts. What an amazing gift you offer your communities.

Eileen Lavranos and Geraldene Peters – thank you for your patient encouragement, support and feedback. I would have given up long ago if it were not for you.

To Richard Nauck and Rob Harley. You guys are amazing. You have supported me every step of the way, encouraging me and making sure I have what I need to get the job done. You both go way beyond the call of duty every day. Thank you for believing in me and convincing me to believe in myself.

Tibor Riddering, the most incredible editor and friend. Thanks for giving up your days and weekends to help me shape *Five Hours with Raja* into something watchable. Thanks for putting up with panicked technical questions on weekends and sending me the most heartening emails that have ever flown into my inbox.

To my beautiful mother Pauline Harris. Thank you for the late night spell checks, copy editing, and moral support. I'm your biggest fan.

The wonderful Daniel McKessar. Thank you for your constant love, support and encouragement, for your fantastic child distraction techniques and amazing hugs. I love you.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of a young woman coming to terms with her grief. It unpacks how an invitation to film an unusual and life-changing event developed into an opportunity to question the ethics of the interview. It examines how the intricacies of a trust relationship influence the very threads and textures of the resulting documentary.

This paper is a partnership between a practical documentary project and a more traditional written discussion. The documentary *Five Hours with Raja* is weighted at eighty per cent of the final thesis and the written exegesis makes up the remaining twenty per cent. Together these two elements investigate the developing relationship between Claudia – the documentary’s key protagonist, and the filmmaker, investigating how their relationship has affected the style, method, content and even the fundamental story line of a documentary. It also discusses the consequential ethical considerations and dilemmas behind creative and practical decisions, investigating ways that a filmmaker can draw the participant into the process to allow a greater degree of ownership, a stronger voice and a more immediate sense of intimacy with the final audience.



Figure 1.1 Pedro and Amit Gounder, *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

## CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE



Figure 1.2 Misty morning in rural New Zealand, *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

### Introducing Our Key Research Questions

Documentaries are problematic. They claim to inform us about events, cultures, establishments, and people, and to present this enlightening information within the confines of their programme duration. They organise these slivers of information, collating and creating a coherent picture of the world (Fischel, 1989). But perhaps even more important than facts and figures is the awakening desire that documentary creates for more than information. As an audience we want insight, understanding and intimacy. We want the camera to take us places, introduce us to people, and show us things that we have never seen, and we want it to do so in a way that we feel we are “there” (Fischel, 1989 p.35).

In many ways, *Five Hours with Raja*’s key protagonist, Claudia, is a very “ordinary” person who faced an extraordinary challenge. It was the “normality” of her life that I attempted to convey in the documentary. The audience can imagine being part of Claudia’s experience because she is like so many of us, and her experience of grief is one we can readily identify with, yet through her eyes we see things that we have never seen, and gain access to experiences that are not our own. But where does this leave the subject of our fascination? What ethical responsibility does a filmmaker have to a documentary’s participants, and do the intricacies of this trust relationship influence the very threads and textures of the documentary? Winston (2000) argues that documentaries are ethically troublesome, being both journalistic and artistic, but “the problems lie more with the way participants are treated than with responsibilities to the

audience” (p.157). This research examines the approach that filmmakers take to filming and interaction, and the relationships and obligations that these choices reflect. Important aspects for this project have included thorough background research, the decision to build a trust relationship with the participants, careful approaches to shooting, and considered final decisions in scripting and editing. A combination of these factors has ultimately influenced the kind of film that was made and the knowledge that is offered to viewers. These questions of ethical responsibility have informed the direction of the project, both on a practical basis in the making of *Five Hours with Raja*, and on a more conceptual plane in the exegesis.

### The Parameters of this Project



Figure 1.3 Claudia working with clay, *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

*A documentary maker tries to get inside other people's realities, to see the world as they see it.*

Michael Rabiger (2004)

During the production process of the documentary I was interested in the partnership between the filmmaker and the participants and how the nature of this relationship had consequences for subjects and viewers alike. *Five Hours with Raja* applied deliberate methods to draw the participant into the filmmaking process, allowing Claudia a greater degree of ownership of her story, a stronger voice in the documentary and subsequently a more immediate sense of intimacy with the final audience. Devices such as narrative voice, diary cameras and sculpture were used to create a more intimate view of the life of the participant and involve the participant in the documentary making process. Much of the practical analysis of the material gathered occurred during the process of editing *Five Hours with Raja*. As the story was crafted, decisions

were made about what to include and what to leave out. This exegesis investigates and evaluates how these deliberate methods of both filming and editing affected the way Claudia and her family responded to both the filmmaker and camera, and ultimately influenced the telling of the story. It highlights the ethical considerations and dilemmas that underlay these creative and practical decisions demonstrating how the filmmaker's relationship with the participant affected the style, method, content and even the fundamental story line of the documentary. The exegesis also explores and analyses the ethics of the interview by reviewing current literature and documentary filmography.

Although my experience to date has been in producing documentaries for television, *Five Hours with Raja* is not a television documentary – its structure and treatment do not fit within broadcast parameters. A television documentary made for New Zealand's major free-to-air broadcasters is typically 42 minutes (a commercial hour) in length. It is structured into a relatively rigid five-part format that allows for advertisements to play between each segment. These breaks in the documentary's narrative mean that the end of each part is required to "tease" the upcoming attractions of the next part in an attempt to hold viewers to the channel. In addition the opening shots of the subsequent part often recap the most recent story developments, reminding viewers of what they have already seen. These structural limitations alone disavow *Five Hours with Raja* from the television documentary sub-genre. But what of an alternative sub-genre? There are strong educational elements within Claudia's journey as she demonstrates a different approach to her baby's death. However, Bates (1987 as cited in Duby, 1997) would argue that the deliberately casual and loose semantic structure of the documentary jeopardises a strictly educational definition. *Five Hours with Raja* tends not to use voice over to create clear order to Claudia's experience and although the story's neutrality is arguable, the message is not explicitly linked to other course materials or teaching tools, a common feature of educational programming (Duby, 1997). Alternatively, there are elements incorporated in *Five Hours with Raja* that are more commonly found in festival documentaries: the strong voice and personal journey of Claudia as a key protagonist; the slow flowing reflective nature shots; and the attempt to address an underrepresented social issue – baby loss. Because of the broad spectrum of content and styles found in today's film festivals this is the closest fit. However, I believe that like many documentaries do, *Five Hours with Raja* blurs the borders and sits somewhere between television, festival and educational programming.

## Meet Claudia and Amit



*Figure 1.4 Claudia holds baby Raja seconds after he is born, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Five Hours with Raja* follows the journey of a young family who make the unusual decision to continue with their pregnancy after their foetus is diagnosed with anencephaly, a neural tube defect that is fatal. The pregnancy and short life of the new baby has a profound impact on the entire extended family and affects them in a variety of ways over the following months and years. Claudia's and Amit's journey was documented carefully over a period of two years and their thoughts and feelings as well as those of their extended family gathered. The resulting documentary film provides the viewer with an intimate "inside view" of one family's experience, revealing the steps that this group of people have taken to acknowledge and grieve the loss of a child who was very much part of their family. Raja's life has had a particularly profound impact on his mother Claudia. She has made a series of "Raja related" choices that have taken her to places she never imagined.

My relationship with Claudia and Amit began on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2006 when a colleague of mine received a phone call from Vicki Culling, director of Stillbirth and Newborn Death Support New Zealand (Sands NZ). Vicki was a Vodafone World of Difference<sup>1</sup> recipient, and as such we were recording some of the highlights of her year for a corporate video. She had recently met Claudia through her role at Sands, and wanted to know if someone from the organisation I worked for could come and interview Claudia and potentially film the birth of her

---

<sup>1</sup> Each year the Vodafone New Zealand Foundation recruits up to six people for the World of Difference programme. Developed in 2002, the programme pays the salary and expenses of recipients for a year, so that they have the opportunity to work full time for a cause they feel passionate about.



baby. The task fell to me. Two days later I found myself on a flight to Wellington armed with a camera and tripod. Claudia and Amit had agreed to be interviewed the night before their baby's birth because they wanted to capture their entire journey on video to share with families who may face a similar situation or with the people who interact with them.



*Figure 1.5 Claudia and Amit watch their new son take his first breaths, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

The very next afternoon Claudia and Amit welcomed their son into the world. Waiting in the overflowing maternity ward was a crowd of family and friends – and a camera. I had the privilege of being present during very precious and private times – a pre-birth meeting with the paediatrician; the monitoring of Baby's heart before going into theatre; and finally the delivery theatre when little Raja was born. I continued to document Claudia's journey as she and her family farewelled him and she began to adjust to life without her son.

### **Purpose**

Pregnancy loss is more common than many believe. It could be that as many as one in five conceptions will result in miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal loss (Miller-Clendon, 2003). In New Zealand around 170 babies a year are born alive but die in the first week and a further 35 will die within 28 days of being born, most frequently due to being extremely premature, abnormalities, problems during pregnancy or delivery, or infection. When a baby is born alive and then dies within 28 days, this is referred to as neonatal death. When a baby dies after 22 completed weeks (154 days) of gestation and before they have lived seven completed days after birth, it is referred to as perinatal death. Raja fits within both of these categories.

I felt very honoured and privileged to have been allowed in to witness and record such a precious, powerful and private journey. The night before going into hospital Claudia lamented:



“There’s not enough information out there. It would help if people weren’t scared to talk about their baby’s problems, about their children passing away. If we knew about what our baby had, if we’d heard of it before...” At that moment I determined that I would make their journey into a documentary.

Vicki Culling compares people’s unwillingness to talk about infant death to attitudes towards cancer twenty years ago. A recent *North and South* article (Young, 2006) quoted these shocking statistics:

*The total number of babies stillborn or dying within 28 days of birth is 30% higher than our road toll. Of 19 OECD countries New Zealand’s perinatal death rate is ranked at a dismal 17<sup>th</sup> place. Our infants die at ten times the rate of all deaths from cancer and 14 times the rate of cot death. Yet still the topic remains taboo. Why is this still happening in the 21st century? And why don’t we hear about these babies’ deaths? (p. 99)*

With over 600 families affected by a baby’s death every year Claudia’s and Amit’s story is sadly the story of many New Zealand families. However, I know of no local documentary project that has covered this issue to date.

This is important because documentaries track New Zealand’s social development. They play an important role in preserving our history and commenting our present. They are also a key part of the democratic process, promoting new information, exposing viewers to new ideas and encouraging debate (CNZ & NZFC, 2008 p.17). They may also have indirect effects, contributing to “slow and unobservable changes” in public opinion (Winston, 2000, p.151).

As such, the first avenue explored for this story was a documentary for commercial television broadcast, mostly due to television’s large immediate audience. However despite much effort, initial proposals to make a documentary about this family’s experience were rejected. In spite of my disappointment I realised that I had been provided with a unique opportunity to explore Claudia’s and Amit’s experience from a different perspective. The film was freed from the constraints of commercial pressures. I was able to continue recording Raja’s story as part of this practical project for a Master of Arts in Communications Studies. I had an opportunity to explore the ethical responsibility a filmmaker has to a documentary’s participants, and how the intricacies of this trust relationship influence the very threads and textures of the documentary. I continued to spend time with Claudia as her grief unfolded. I could also reflect a little deeper on the documentary making process and the issues that are discussed here in this exegesis.

Good documentaries go beyond factual exposition and tackle areas of life that are complex, ambiguous, and morally taxing (Rabiger, 2004). They should act on our hearts, not just our minds – documentary exists to change how we feel about something.

We can know rationally that the experience of baby loss must be a profound one, but until we have witnessed it up close, or have been touched personally by a loss, it is hard for this cognitive knowledge to change how we feel (and subsequently how we think) about the parents and children who walk this difficult path. Really using documentary's potential means going beyond facts and opinions to show evidence that will make a strong impact. I believe that *Five Hours with Raja* does this. Although I have read many books and articles (Lothrop, 1997; Miller-Clendon, 2003; Awarau, 2007; Young, 2006) that underline just how isolating and devastating the experience of baby loss can be, being in the delivery theatre with Claudia and Amit demonstrated the reality much more powerfully. When Claudia anxiously asked, “What else is wrong with our baby? How long?” her love and vulnerability were demonstrated in a way that mere words cannot express.



Figure 3.3 Claudia, Amit, Raja and Pedro together at Hutt Hospital. *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

An example of the reverse can also be given. In her book *Help, Comfort and Hope after Losing Your Baby in Pregnancy or the First Year*, (Lothrop 1997) describes a conversation with a mother whose daughter had been stillborn in the 33<sup>rd</sup> week of pregnancy:

*I'm glad we delivered in this hospital. The staff was with us totally. The loss of our baby is certainly the worst experience I ever had in my life – far worse than*

*anything else that has happened to me – and yet there was also a beauty to Naomi's birth. I experienced such peace and harmony.*

- Barbara 32 (p.15)

As a woman who has never experienced the loss of a child, it is hard for me to imagine how the words “peace” and “harmony” could fit into such a picture. It is only after walking this road alongside Claudia that I can begin to understand Barbara's sentiment. Perhaps this is because, as Rabiger (2004) suggests, behaviour, action, and interaction are always more effective and involving, because they invoke our own thoughts, feelings and ideas. Cameron Bennett, longstanding journalist and presenter of TVNZ's *Sunday* programme, said at a recent conference that viewers don't want to be preached at, they want to share in someone's story (Bennett, 2009).

*Five Hours with Raja* has the potential to help get a little more “information out there”. It is a documentary that targets an audience of individuals and families whose lives are touched by baby loss. I hope that those who watch Claudia's and Amit's story are encouraged by their positive approach, and comforted by the knowledge that they are not alone. I hope that friends, healthcare providers and support people who view the documentary gain a greater degree of understanding and empathy. This exegesis also raises issues about ethical interactions with documentary participants that should concern all documentary filmmakers. Although most normative research presumes that the media ought to be ethical in their professional conduct (Kieran, 1997, p.1) very few practitioners have the time or inclination to examine these issues during their day-to-day working life. As a primarily practical piece of work this research also offers something new to the field of documentary studies. I was able to begin the investigation of ethical themes within a documentary before filming began and so this discussion has a different approach from the main body of academic literature that focuses on analysing programmes after their completion.

## CHAPTER TWO: CONNECTING THEORY AND PRACTICE

### Defining Documentary

Before we explore the issues of ethicality, definition of documentary within this research must be established. Documentary is a genre that is difficult to precisely characterise. Strategies and styles employed in documentary films change over time just as the dominant modes of expository discourse adjust. Recent research into New Zealand's independent documentary sector by Creative New Zealand (CNZ) and the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) found that the genre is on a continuum with "movement over time as new styles of programme emerge and others lose popularity" (CNZ & NZFC, 2008, p.15). The comfortably accepted realism of one generation appears pretentious to the next and so new approaches must be constantly developed to re-present "things as they are" and yet others will challenge this very representation (Nichols, 2005). In addition to these challenges, the very nature of the film medium, and its specific use of photographic images and sound recordings create a murky middle ground in the fiction/non-fiction distinction (Plantinga, 2005), not to mention the further complications of differing audiences, aesthetics and delivery methods – the television documentary, the festival documentary and the educational/community documentary – just to name a few. Whilst I acknowledge that there are many different definitions and sub-genres of documentary, for the purposes of this research I will use guidelines compiled by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). ACMA (as cited in CNZ & NZFC, 2008, p.6) defines documentary as a "programme that is a creative treatment of actuality other than a news, current affairs, sports coverage, magazine infotainment or light entertainment programme". I have chosen an industry-based definition because television was the first considered forum for *Five Hours with Raja*. Although the final documentary no longer fits neatly within this category (we will discuss this a little more later), the paradigm of television documentary was the initial starting point from which this project evolved and so the ACMA definition is particularly useful within such a context. Also, as this research is primarily practical, a current industry definition seems more appropriate than a theoretical one.



Figure 3.1 Claudia, Amit and their boys shortly before Raja died, *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

### Challenges

“At the heart of [television’s] power is the gift to transmit images that reflect every aspect of the human condition and experience... As such, television offers tremendous opportunities for informing and educating its viewers about realities to which otherwise they may not have access” (Kendrick & Costello, 2000, p.20). Yet this power itself is the cause of a great dilemma for filmmakers. The fragile balance between offering programmes that educate and inform without distorting reality or causing harm is acknowledged to be difficult if not impossible to achieve. Through the very tissue and texture of their work, filmmakers create a form of discourse, fabricating its effects, impressions and points of view (Rosenthal & Corner, 2005). The conflicts surrounding introducing a camera to a real life setting and the resulting decisions involved around what to film, what to include in the final edit and how these images are contextualised form the basis of a well established body of communication and documentary theory and are practically investigated within *Five Hours with Raja*.

Kieran (1997, p.21) uses the apt analogy of a cartographer’s map to describe the challenge of editing and condensing material that was faced within this project and by programme makers across the world. The cartographer’s aim is to make the most faithful map possible. But, if in completing this task, the cartographer tries to represent every geographical detail, every highway, byway and blade of grass he or she would end up with a map that would literally cover the whole country, no doubt suffocating all the unfortunate people beneath it. Obviously the map would be worthless: you could hardly fold it up and put it in your pocket or tell, without actually travelling there, what an area was like. In being so literal-minded the

cartographer would undercut the very point and purpose of making a map in the first place. Documentaries, like maps, must necessarily be selective.

Another key treatise and challenge underlying documentary as a unique genre is the belief in the evidentiary relationship between photographic images and reality. Many theorists including Brian Winston (2000) have noted the early expectation that the camera, as a mechanical instrument, could serve as a scientific eye on reality. The important inference being that mechanism is equal to objectivity.

Kendrick and Costello (2000) argue:

*The development of the documentary genre has been heavily implicated with this belief in this indexical nature of photographic images, the sense that photographic images contain a physical trace of that which they refer to (p.21).*

They contend that although this belief has long been deconstructed by a widespread awareness of the inherent mediatory nature of filmmaking, it continues to influence contemporary audiences' fascination with factual forms. This is particularly visible in medical documentary where narrative is often used to contextualise images, providing a semantic frame to the words and actions offered by those who form the camera's focus. "Depictions of lay people personalize health concerns", they "add emotional content", and also "heighten the legitimacy of their claim to represent social concerns" (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 1999, p. 330). It can be argued that *Five Hours with Raja* does just this. Claudia's very personal journey becomes the representative story of other parents' loss, just as in medical documentary where patient narratives have been interpreted as alternatives to medical discourse; offering a "real life" insight into the experiences of patients. The challenge for this project is to achieve this insight without compromising my commitment to represent Claudia in a respectful and authentic manner.

The issue of the viewer as voyeur has been a point of contention from earliest times. Ever since humankind became cognizant and able to create and convey intimate images, the issue of when does the viewer become a voyeur has held relevance and resonance (Boarman, 1994). There is also the issue of whether contemporary medical or health documentary is a discursive continuation of the historical practice of gazing at the curiosity, the freak, as a new form of spectacle (van Dijck, 2002, p. 538). There is no doubt that television can play a major role in demystifying much of the fear and anxiety associated with all aspects of health care delivery but it needs to do so in a way that is ethical.

*There are no substantive moral parameters that support a programme-maker's agenda to entertain, educate and inform the public at the expense of frail and vulnerable individuals. To achieve this, programme makers must produce work that takes viewers beyond a voyeuristic gaze where clarity never destroys compassion.*  
(Kendrick & Costello 2000, p.20)

It can be seen that there are serious limitations within any documentary narrative, which can only approximate reality. Documentary, including *Five Hours with Raja*, cannot overcome the intrinsic limitations involved when attempting to capture the essence of multifaceted people, complex situations and long histories within the small frame of a moving image. These restrictions are only highlighted when cameras are used to capture situations that reveal the fragility of being human.

*When cameras invade arenas that are intended to haven people during times of vulnerability, then their presence deserves moral scrutiny.* (Kendrick & Costello, 2000, p.16)

To combat this, consent must be a core element in trying to ensure that participants offer their free and non-coerced willingness to participate or otherwise.

### **Informed and Ongoing Consent**

There are limitations that hinder consent to be elevated to the status of truly informed. This is because the creative processes of production and editing place the programme's finished identity totally under the auspices of its makers. Given this, some would argue, it is difficult for those who are being filmed to give informed consent to a creative and unfurling process prior to its completion (Brooker & Brooker, 1997). Rightly Costello and Kendrick (2000) note that this does not release programme makers from their duty of care towards those who are filmed; it just emphasises that the dynamics of programme making mean that consent, as opposed to its close relative, informed consent, is the best that can be achieved. Such well-meaning rhetoric is empty, however, when viewed with critical consideration. Perhaps the best we can do is take it a step further and suggest that informed consent can mean assent to being filmed in a way that will not misrepresent, distort, manipulate or disenfranchise participants.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Consent***

There is a strong argument for suggesting that consent should be an ongoing and dynamic process, not a singular, static or isolated statement of assent. When cameras intrude on the privacy of suffering, those who form the focus of the camera's gaze should be able to claim exclusion at any time from such invasiveness. In this particular case, the nature of Claudia's

situation was so unpredictable that there could be no definite plan as to how things would proceed, nor could Claudia be expected to know how she would feel or respond to the events of Raja's birth and inevitable death. Instead, options needed to be discussed for my approach in various scenarios. This enabled me to gauge Claudia's and Amit's level of comfort with a camera's presence, and what would be appropriate in a variety of eventualities. This early discussion was vitally important as Claudia would be under considerable emotional and physical stress at the hospital, as well as being under regional anaesthesia during Raja's delivery. In this state she would be in no condition to offer consent so it was important to establish her wishes well in advance.

It was also imperative that right from the start a relationship rooted in trust and respect was established. The first time we met, Claudia, Amit and I discussed the sorts of questions I would ask them, and how comfortable they felt about these. Although this is not the usual course of action, Claudia's and Amit's story was more participatory than investigative and I felt it was appropriate. I was telling their story partly for their benefit and partly for the benefit of others – not to create newsworthy information. The essence of this relationship was furthered by the understanding that, if at any stage (both during and after filming), Claudia, Amit or their close family members were uncomfortable with my presence, they could ask me to leave, or withdraw their permission for a specific segment to be included in the final work – an unusual practice within commercial documentary making, due to its stronger financial imperatives. Although this guarantee from myself significantly risked the project's content (at any stage over a period of two years Claudia or Amit could withdraw their consent for any or all parts of the footage to be used), it was an appropriate risk, balancing to some extent the risk that Claudia and Amit were taking by putting their personal and very emotional story in my hands.

This was part of a process agreed upon with AUTECH (Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee). Information sheets and consent forms were distributed to those who appeared in the film. Each person was given information about the purpose and content of the documentary, what would be required from him or her, and where the film would likely be shown. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and to decline or accept participation. At the family home, and then again at the hospital, I outlined to those present what I would and wouldn't film. I also committed to stop filming if approached by any family member who was uncomfortable. Claudia and Amit were given the opportunity to view the documentary as a final draft. They were given the right of veto over any scene they felt uncomfortable with, or misrepresented by. Thankfully, neither of those problems arose.



### ***Voice***

Having established the fragmented nature of documentary narrative and the necessity of abridgement, it was important to ensure that the documentary's message (or voice) was as "true" to Claudia's and Amit's experience as possible. Voice is narrower than style: it communicates a sense of the text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how the various materials are presented and organised (Nichols, 2005, p.18). In this sense, voice is not restricted to any particular method or feature, such as dialogue or spoken commentary; it is instead a blueprint, created by the unique interaction of all of a film's codes and it applies to all modes of the documentary (p.19).

*Five Hours with Raja* has a voice that conveys how it is speaking to us and how it organises the materials it presents – the pattern formed by the unique interaction of all the film's elements.

*The fact that documentaries are not a reproduction of reality gives them a voice of their own. They are a representation of the world, and this representation stands for a particular view of the world ... The voice of documentary is the specific way in which an argument or perspective is expressed.* (Nichols, 2001, p. 43)

In order for this documentary to reflect Claudia's voice as authentically as possible I looked for ways to draw her into the process, allowing a greater degree of ownership of her story and a more immediate sense of intimacy with the final audience. One method I used was Am Cam footage. I invited Claudia and Amit to record portions of their journey themselves. I also invited them to share their thoughts and experiences in interviews. I planned for this material to eventually be interwoven amongst observational sequences and other narrative devices.

### ***Context***

Goodman (2004) has observed that it is "almost impossible to predict in the beginning how they [educational and documentary videos] would come out in the end" (p.325). Although each sequence in *Five Hours with Raja* could not be anticipated and planned for from the beginning – life does not follow a script after all – I could structure some elements. I committed to visiting Claudia on at least three occasions after Raja was farewelled and I kept in consistent contact with her so that if any new events occurred, I could do my best to capture them. I also developed a considered approach to how I would interview Claudia on future occasions.



*Figure 3.2 Claudia mends a broken clay bowl, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

I knew that the material I had filmed prior to and during Raja's birth was moving, but in order to create a documentary that connected with people and communicated the family's dilemma, I had to create some context for those pictures. I needed to introduce Claudia and her family, and to show why they chose to do what they did in delivering "Raja to the world" at full term. I also wanted to explain something that Claudia kept insisting – that Raja's story is a story of hope and joy, not just of grief and suffering.

For these reasons I chose to record aspects of their journey over a longer time period and to illustrate many of the positive outcomes for Claudia. I felt that it was important to follow through because the story did not end with Raja's birth and death. Not only did I ask Claudia about her thoughts in formal interview settings, but I also asked her to show me what she meant. She took me to a conference, to her art school and to their most sacred places of remembrance. She even took me to Phoenix Arizona by means of a Mini DV camera. In post production each of these threads would come together along with music, animation and still sequences to create a 55 minute film, portraying my version of their story.

### ***Authenticity within the Interview***

It has already been suggested that documentary relies heavily on being able to convey to us a sense of authenticity (Nichols, 2001). This sense of authenticity must be present across a range of areas: correct information, authentic events, authentic relationship and authentic people. If you want spontaneity, you must be natural yourself. You set the tone for the interview. If you are formal or tense, your interviewee will be more so (Rabiger 2004). These are concepts that I was particularly cognizant of when planning to interview Claudia. I was aware that how I related to her was of equal importance to the questions I asked her.

I prepared for the interviews with Claudia and Amit with a great deal of deliberation and care, researching thoroughly and trying to understand some of the challenges they were facing and

gathering knowledge about the background and structure of their family. The physical preparations for the interviews were also carefully considered. I focused less on the technical aspects of lighting and monitoring the aesthetic value of each shot, than I did on making sure that the participants were as comfortable and relaxed as possible. This was partly due to practical and budget constraints and partly due to my planned priorities. In every interview situation I was the only crewmember. I was solely responsible for setting up, shooting, monitoring sound and conducting the interview. This immediately forced compromises. In the case of the initial interview it had only been two days since I had heard of Claudia and Amit and their situation. I had used that time to find out as much as I could about anencephaly, the decisions Claudia and Amit would have had to make, and reading blogs from other bereaved families and their communities. I wanted to be informed, prepared and sensitive to their situation. It would be the first interview that I had ever conducted on my own and the first time that I had operated the Sony Z1P (the camera I used to film the initial footage). I had no lights to set up (my baggage allowance did not allow for them) and no radio microphones. I chose to set up the interview in the best available space I had – the living room. It was quiet, a place where Claudia and Amit felt at home, and there was room for a couple of other family members to sit and provide additional emotional support. It wasn't ideal; there were fluorescent lights and I could hear children running up and down the hallway outside, but it was the best I could do at the time. The resulting footage definitely reflects those compromises. It is grainy, soft at times, and the backdrop is a plain purple wall – far from the beautiful soft depth that is achieved in many other documentaries. It is, however, compelling, intimate and moving. It captures Claudia and Amit in the middle of a scenario that could never be re-enacted. It is the eve of their baby's birth – they are uncertain, nervous, excited and vulnerable. I was able to capture the tension of that moment because I was not distracted by details that I had decided were less important, focusing instead on my relationship to Claudia and Amit and our ability to communicate with each other.

In the initial interview, and during later shoots, I found it useful to begin within the "safe zone" of usual everyday conversation. I would ask Claudia about something I knew she felt comfortable and enthusiastic about – for example Pedro's latest escapades at kindergarten-leaving the more intimate and emotional discussion for later when she had become more comfortable with the situation. This is a method recommended by Rabiger (2004). This approach helped both Claudia and myself to relax and prepared the way for personal conversations later on. Many of my most memorable moments were recorded towards the end of interviews, when I invited Claudia to take bigger steps and cross new emotional thresholds. An example of this is a very intimate moment in an interview towards the end of the documentary:

**Anna:** If you could meet yourself, Claudia, two years ago, walking down the street and take yourself out for coffee, what would you tell yourself?

**Claudia:** *That (gets upset) ... if I met myself two years ago I would tell her – I would tell myself – that it's not REALLY hard. Cause it really wasn't hard. That I will be able to get through whatever quite easily but not smoothly. Two years ago I was already a strong person but I wasn't just quite sure, but that's all I'd have to say.*

**Anna:** Give yourself a bit of hope?

**Claudia:** *Yeah. That's about it. That I'll be able to get through it because I was just a bit scared.*

When a person speaks from the heart, particularly for the first time, it can be very affecting. Here speech is the action. Rabiger sees this “living out something important for the first time” (p. 181) as part of a good documentary’s essential emotional shock and story development. He describes the suspense and sense of sharing a “privileged moment” as this major breakthrough takes place, as electrifying (p.181).



Figure 2.3 Interview with Claudia during August of 2007, *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

### ***Faithfulness and the Beginnings of Research Direction***

When examining the growing sense of responsibility I felt towards Claudia as my research continued we can borrow some advice from Simmel’s (1996) essay. He writes that all social relations are guided by a quality of faithfulness, where persons affirm not just their feelings for each other, but their commitment to the relationship that they are establishing. Faithfulness is “the instrument of relationships which already exist and endure” (p.41) – faithfulness is the glue that holds social community together. It does not refer to an emotion reaction, which may change from day to day, but a moral intention. Fischel (1989) expands on this concept as it relates to the documentary:

*Unlike other emotions, faithfulness is something we choose and enact, in order to complete our connections to other people. It is a political and ethical mandate which underlies the emotional content of relationships, even when they are experienced as problematic. The presence of faithfulness in relationships between filmmakers and their subjects is therefore a matter of choice, not circumstance. Its presence or absence affects how films are made, what they say, and how they say it. (p. 4)*

This theory of faithfulness helps me to understand my own relationship to Claudia. Vicki Culling explained the wider societal reluctance to talk openly of baby loss – Claudia echoed a similar sentiment, offering to share her experience on camera as a means of amelioration. I wanted to reciprocate Claudia's generosity by making a film that confronted her experience and shared her family's spirit. I also wanted to create the film in an ethical and honouring manner. There was an exchange of faithfulness at work.

### ***Developing the Filmmaker-Participant Relationship***

A key to both the documentary's story and my key research questions was the developing relationship between Claudia – the documentary's key protagonist, and myself – the filmmaker. I was interested in how this relationship would influence the creative and ethical direction of the project. Clearly a huge potential constraint would be Claudia's unwillingness to share her story and so it was important that we developed a relationship where we could trust each other.

When filmmaker Gail Dolgin (2008) was asked how she developed the close relationship with key protagonist, Heidi, evident in her film *Daughter from Danang*, she revealed that the crew met with Heidi only two days before they left for Vietnam to shoot. Dolgin felt that from the start there was a remarkable rapport and trust established that enabled the filming to proceed with a sense of openness and intimacy.

*We think this was a result of a number of things - Heidi's genuine outgoing personality and perhaps most important, the fact that we were the first people to ask her in detail about her past. The story that had been locked inside for so long began flooding to the surface. In many ways it re-enforced our experience as filmmakers that most people have stories they want to tell but have very few opportunities to find anyone who will listen. (Dolgin, 2008, p.1)*

Dolgin's thoughts reflect some of my own musings, particularly with regard to my relationship with Claudia. My initial interview with Claudia was conducted within hours of our first meeting, and on the eve of Raja's birth. She astounded me with her openness and was willing to share her most raw emotions. I tried to honour her trust and vulnerability by doing what I could to make her feel comfortable and to reassure her family. The interview was conducted in the presence of her father, her aunty and her grandmother. They sat in the far corner of the room

where they could offer emotional support. They were invited to stop the interview to comfort her if at any stage they felt uncomfortable or compelled to do so.

Other filmmakers and academics have also reflected upon this phenomenon where strangers become the repositories of confidences (Fischel, 1989). They are told and shown things that are withheld from peers. Anne Fischel (1989) commented that she has been amazed at the apparent ease, and even urgency, with which people have shared their personal histories with her. She believes that telling one's story to a stranger places it in another context, and therefore confers importance upon it (p.38). But what are the obligations that should guide these relations between filmmaker and participant, stranger and confessor? I believe that the key ingredient is an intrinsic awareness of these concepts and a determination not to step over the fine line of intrusion to get your story.

## CHAPTER THREE: POSITIONING THE DOCUMENTARY

### Television Documentary in New Zealand



*Figure 4.1 Reflections at Karekare, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

As the development of different documentary styles suggests, the genre has always had to be fluid, adapting to broadening international media landscapes. With the arrival of television, documentary became closely allied to the major aspirations of public service broadcasting: the desire to inform, educate and entertain. As such it became a staple feature in most public broadcasters' programming schedules.

In New Zealand, despite some new media opportunities, television is still the primary market for documentaries that tell local stories (CNZ & NZFC, 2008). Over the forty odd years from 1960 to 2008, New Zealand television broadcasting has drifted slowly across the panorama of possibilities from full state ownership to open market competition and then back again slightly. From the perspective of practitioners (if not audiences) documentary appears to be under constant pressure. In New Zealand this strain is being felt through the competition for available funding, the constraints of particular models of funding, fewer broadcasting opportunities for certain styles of documentary, and pressure on broadcasters to attract mass audiences. Where once documentary was spared the tyranny of the ratings discourse, it is now being forced to directly engage with it, and deliver more for less (Roscoe, 2004). In an increasingly competitive commercial market, documentary faces key challenges.

One of local documentary's biggest challenges is market size. New Zealand has a small population and there are many producers competing in a small market (CNZ & NZFC, 2008). There are specific documentary content requirements for television and neither New Zealand On

Air nor the Māori broadcasting funding agency, Te Māngai Paho, will support a project without a broadcaster commitment to screen it.

*Documentary is by no means a nurtured and protected genre, automatically respected for its social-political functions, but is required to compete for popular audiences in the same manner as other forms of television programming.* (Hight & Coleborne, 2006, p.235)

Hight and Coleborne argue that much of this competitive pressure comes from programmes that imitate documentary's own forms, in particular the fact-fiction or reality television format. I will not discuss the variety of these forms nor the debate they have attracted here, but much has been written on this matter (Andrejevic, 2004; Bruzzi 2000; Dovey 2000; Friedman 2000; Hight, 2001; Homes and Jermyn 2003; Kilbourne 2003; Murray and Oulette 2004; Nichols, 1994; Palmer 2003; Roscoe and Hight 2001) and there is no doubt that the resulting impact on documentary itself has been significant. Corner (2002) argues that the significance of these new pressures lies in increasing demands that documentary itself adjusts to new forms of representation:

*Neither postmodern scepticism nor the techniques of digital manipulation present documentary with its biggest future challenge. This will undoubtedly come from the requirement to reorient and refashion itself in an audiovisual culture where the dynamics of diversion and the aesthetics of performance dominate a greatly expanded range of popular images of the real (p.267).*

Claudia's and Amit's story was at a disadvantage here. Documentary commissioners have labelled their situation as one "without hope" as their son Raja is never going to "be fixed". Although there are strong themes of love and support within the story, commercially run stations don't like stories about "dead or dying children". Additionally, to give the story a wider perspective a longer time frame would be needed for shooting. This is not standard. In Debrett's (2004) research a typical NZ \$130,000 budget was broken down into two weeks' pre-production, a three-week shoot and three-week edit. This approach creates a number of obvious constraints.

Firstly, the limited time and budgets required for a documentary to be commercially viable discourage risk taking. Instead topics, treatments and forms that have been identified as low-risk and proved successful elsewhere are favoured. "The known was always given preference over the unknown" (Debrett, 2004, p.1). In New Zealand this has meant that many new documentaries mimic overseas projects and rely heavily on popular celebrity presenters.



The second constraint Debrett notes is the low budget allocated for programmes. This budget is insufficient for investigative documentaries that require a longer time frame for research and shooting, and for documentaries observing the development of a story through time. Most of the documentaries that play on either TV3 or TVNZ's TV One, conform to a particular style that mixes interviews, reconstructions and observational footage (Winston, 2000). This form lends itself to greater editorial control, enabling relatively tight scripting prior to production and accommodating the limitations of the low-budget production schedule. In this routine approach to filmmaking, little is left to chance and, as a consequence, many of the insights into the complexities of character, and the conflicts and relationships that emerge when shooting over a longer time frame, rarely make an appearance. It is this issue of time spent in shooting, allowing for revealing moments to unfold on camera – and in editing – for the crafting of these into a story form, that many documentary makers regard as essential to the art of narrative, observational documentary making.

The third major constraint of commercial television is the need to structure the documentary around commercial breaks. This process influences timing and the way in which the story is constructed. It also restricts overseas sales and festival exhibition.

There are some notable exceptions to the commercial productions that typify New Zealand documentaries. It is useful to look at these as they illustrate that constraints are merely that. Commercial constraints limit, but they are not hard and fast rules. The examples given by Debrett reflect the ability of some filmmakers to negotiate their way around them. These exceptions include *The New Zealand Wars* series (Stephens, 1998) and *The Cave Creek Story* (Monaghan, 1998) produced by Greenstone Pictures. I should also note here that there are a number of documentary projects that I have been involved in, which prove exceptions to the trend of short time frames. These include *Who Deserves to Be Born* (2008), a documentary commissioned by TVNZ in 2005 that tracks the search of two families to have a child free of cystic fibrosis, and *While You Were Sleeping* (McKessar, 2009), which is the story of a young boy's slow rehabilitation after a motorcycle accident that killed his father and left him with serious injuries. Both of these stories had a production time line that exceeded two years and have been shot on a very limited budget. Both were undertaken by production companies that had the ability to work sporadically on the ongoing documentaries while receiving income from other areas.

The original pitch to make the documentary *Five Hours with Raja* was presented to two of New Zealand's major broadcasters in 2006. The response of TV3's documentary commissioner was particularly strong. She felt that the story was too sad for commercial television:

*People want to come home from work on a Thursday night and relax. They don't want to turn on the television and watch programmes about dying children. They want distraction and entertainment. You can't stand to see that stuff, it's different once you are a parent. I would turn it off.*

These comments reflect the specific nature of TV3's agenda. The network is entirely commercial and its commissioning and programming is ratings driven. Commissioners are "acutely aware" of how each documentary has rated and what they are competing against on the schedules of other free-to-air channels.

*Charming, quirky programmes may attract theatre audiences but you know they won't attract a broad audience whereas New Zealand's most obese woman probably will. Big took a 42 per cent share. You can't do that all the time but you get a sense of what will work. (Sue Woodfield, TV3 Programme Commissioner cited in CNZ & NZFC, 2008, p.32)*

Recent research into New Zealand's independent documentary sector has reported similar sentiments from within TVNZ. In 2005, TVNZ reviewed its approach to documentary programming, causing a hiatus in commissioning. The weekly *Documentary New Zealand* strand, which had enjoyed a prime-time slot for many years and consisted of mainly one-off programmes, was disbanded. In its place are smaller prime-time strands, which run across the schedule and group documentaries according to theme, content and tone. Documentaries are commissioned if they can generate broad viewer appeal during prime-time. As a commercial business, TVNZ aims to reach as many viewers as possible. Most importantly, it believes prime-time audiences are looking for entertainment. Although programmes can be educational or informative, they must be put together with great consideration.

*We have to be careful we're not making programmes for people because we think it's good for them, that we're not making spinach TV (TVNZ spokesperson cited CNZ & NFC, 2008, p.31).*

*Five Hours with Raja* has been discussed on a number of occasions with TVNZ's documentary commissioner Jude Callen (personal communication, September 2006, July 2007, August 2008). Unfortunately the network's programmer could not see it "fitting comfortably anywhere in her schedule," although Jude noted that "the taster tape was very powerful and the parents and families extraordinary," adding "I'm sorry I don't have better news for you." Although Jude is interested in the documentary on a personal level and has requested a viewing copy, it still does not fit into the current programming timetable of her organisation.

It should be noted that there are a number of other television channels in New Zealand who broadcast documentaries. These include Māori Television, Sky's Documentary Channel and

TVNZ's new digital platforms. Māori Television does not have the strong commercial imperative of mainstream free-to-air television, but its specific mandate<sup>2</sup> excluded *Five Hours with Raja*. Sky's Documentary Channel was launched in November 2006 as an outsourced, privately owned venture. Although welcomed as an additional outlet where New Zealand documentaries can be seen, the Documentary Channel pays low rates for existing material and generally does not commission new material. More recently, in March of 2008, TVNZ 7 was launched as an advertising-free channel on the Freeview digital platform. Although local content makes up the majority of its schedule, TVNZ 7 is not commissioning any new documentaries.

This environment provides the backdrop on which Claudia's and Amit's story has unfolded. The topics, treatments and forms identified as low-risk and proved successful elsewhere do not really fit the unusual account of Raja's short life. It is ironic to note that whereas once investigative documentaries were allegedly subject to various forms of political pressure, now they are primarily hampered by commercial constraints.<sup>3</sup> In order to receive government and/or broadcaster funding, documentary makers must tailor their films to quite narrow, broadcaster-imposed specifications (Kilborne, 1996). As Chris Haws, former chairperson of Documentary, the EU funding programme, has observed:

*"Most documentary film-makers have come to terms with the reality of made-to-measure films. There is still a place for those who believe they are creative artists but the opportunities for exhibition remain severely limited" (as cited in Kilborne, 1996 p.143).*

### A Different Approach

In some ways broadcaster barriers provided a unique opportunity for *Five Hours with Raja*. The film was freed from the constraints of commercial imperatives: a structure designed for four advertising breaks in a commercial hour, a fast and pacey editing style, and a shorter production timetable. I was able to shoot and edit *Five Hours with Raja* in whatever way I wanted. It also

---

<sup>2</sup> To promote te reo Māori me ngā tikanga Māori through the provision of a high quality, cost-effective Māori television service, in both Māori and English, that informs, educates, and entertains a broad viewing audience, and, in doing so, enriches New Zealand's society, culture, and heritage.

<sup>3</sup> The term "commercial" can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that television has been developed to be profitable by the standards of a business and the second is a certain style that flaunts capitalist values. I would argue that it is the second interpretation of commercialism that would make it more difficult to secure funding for Claudia's and Amit's story. The sadness of their story is a risk for advertisers and so funding will be harder to secure. In spite of the potential to "inform and educate", both key criteria in the Broadcasting Act, commercial considerations are likely to override social ones.

created a unique opportunity to reflect a little deeper on the documentary making process and the issues that are discussed here in this exegesis.

The final result is a documentary that is not for television – its structure and treatment do not fit neatly within those boundaries. The film's slower, more reflective pace is suited better to a theatre audience. Like many other productions, *Five Hours with Raja* blurs the borders of definitions and sits somewhere between television, festival and educational programming.

It is highly likely that *Five Hours with Raja* will be submitted to a number of film festivals in the future. Many feature-length or personal documentaries are perceived as produced primarily for film festival release or a 'festival' slot on television and these are likely venues for this documentary. The New Zealand International Film Festival gives documentaries significant screen time (50 in 2005, 54 in 2006 and 53 in 2007), and these figures include some local productions (CNZ & NZFC, 2008). The DOCNZ Festival Trust organised its first International Documentary Film Festival in 2005 to showcase high-profile documentaries and give an opportunity for emerging filmmakers to show their work. Film festivals are important for reaching audiences and a number of small digital theatres in towns and cities throughout New Zealand allow public access to documentaries that do not screen on television.

*Five Hours with Raja* will also be made available to SANDS NZ where I hope it will act as a valuable educational tool. Vicki Culling believes that a New Zealand documentary would be a useful vehicle by which to convey the tragedy and heartbreak of having your baby die. Awareness is vital because many people know nothing about the experience of having a baby die and make many assumptions which ultimately impinge on bereaved families' grief processes. A documentary would provide a medium through which the discussion about stillbirth and newborn death might take place. A story like *Five Hours with Raja* is powerful because it is the story of a real experience with real emotions and grief conveyed. For families who have lost a baby, the documentary would provide a segue into more open discussion and expression of their experience.

*A documentary explores a factual subject thoroughly. It not only shows it illuminates. It attempts not merely to inform but to provoke deeper thought and understanding than a cold presentation of facts will do... it is a justified style to be adopted by the TV educationalist. (Bates cited in Duby, 1997 p.73)*

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRODUCING FIVE HOURS WITH RAJA

*“A documentary maker tries to get inside other people’s realities, to see the world as they see it” (Rabiger, 2004, p.37).*

### Research Design

Just as design is a critical element in the research process, it is also vital to the filmmaker. In research there are a variety of strategic design decisions around how, where and with whom research should be conducted. The final combination of these questions frame the research, posing a set of dilemmas that reflect trade-offs among exactitude, the ability to generalise and realism. In filmmaking, there is a design but for a different purpose. The goal is not to confirm predictions nor explain in precise ways the relationships among variables. Steven Spielberg has said, “You make a movie to get the audience to stand up and cheer” (cited in Goodman, 2004, p. 328). This comment was made in direct reference to drama (whose structural manipulation is essentially obvious and clear), but as a non-fiction piece the intention with *Five Hours with Raja* was both conflicting and comparable. My intention was to minimise the manipulation of the material and let the reality of the situation bring its own dramatic impact to the piece (this is why I developed the context of Claudia’s family, went to the conference in Christchurch and then her art school). However, I also intended to evoke those “stand up and cheer” feelings in the most ethical and considered way possible by connecting the audience with the raw emotional power of Claudia’s reality.

There is a series of steps that are followed when crafting a documentary. Regardless of the end product, there still needs to be a basic level of research, scripting, shooting, editing, selling (whether this is a pitch to a documentary commissioner or a proposal to a film festival committee) and then finally showing or screening. The time spent on each of these steps differs across stories, organisations and genres, but the basic elements remain the same. In this section I will discuss the process of beginning these steps for Claudia’s and Amit’s story; some of the basic theory that is being applied; and my experiences putting these theories into practice.

### Testing a Subject

No matter what paradigm you start with, testing the power of a subject takes research and some self-questioning. Directors and authors such as Michael Rabiger (2004) emphasise the importance of asking the hard questions at the beginning, “Do I really want to make a film about this?” Making a documentary is a long, slow process in which you are immersed in another

world for long periods. Before starting it is important to “count the costs”. A good documentary will go beyond factual exposition or a feel-good exercise, and tackle areas of life that are complex, ambiguous, and morally taxing.

When digging into the make-up of both my story, and myself, I asked a number of questions suggested by Rabiger (2004), that helped me judge my commitment to Claudia’s story and indicated my ability to sustain interest and energy. Some of these questions were:

- Is this an area where I am knowledgeable, or even opinionated?
- Do I feel a strong emotional connection to it?
- Can I do justice to the subject?
- Do I have a drive to learn more about this subject? (p. 47-8)

From my first conversations with Claudia I felt a strong emotional connection to her. I wanted to know more about her situation and to understand better why she had chosen the path that she had. Although I did not feel particularly knowledgeable about baby loss and battled with my own lack of confidence, I had no doubt that I wanted to help her share her story with other New Zealanders, particularly parents. From the first days a bond began to form between filmmaker and participant, and with this connection came for me a sense of responsibility. This sense indicated the presence of key questions about the ethicality of my documentary project. These questions would develop into my major research focus.



*Figure 2.1 Claudia sees Raja for the first time, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

### **Understanding Grief**

Reading about parents’ experiences of baby loss was essential to the research and “design” process. It was important to understand as fully as possible what Claudia and Amit were experiencing. I read a combination of books that incorporated the personal experiences and

observations of bereaved parents (Lothrop, 1997; Miller-Clendon, 2003), academic articles (Edwards, McCreanor, Ornsby, Tuwhangai, & Tipene-Leach, 2009; Rose, 2005), and mainstream print articles (Awarau, 2007; Young, 2006). I also read online blogs and messages (Jaquier, 2006; Dawn, 2006; Author Unknown 2006a; Author Unknown 2006b). This information helped me to prepare my questions carefully, and to be sensitive to issues that I may not have otherwise been aware.

*When we lose a baby we join a club of which nobody wants to be a member. It is almost a secret society where, once you have joined, you will find friends, family, acquaintances that are already members, often unknown to you. This shocked me when I joined the club and talked about my latest loss. (Miller-Clendon, 2003 p.1)*

This excerpt led me to ask Claudia about previous baby losses in her own family. She told me that her mother had suffered more than one miscarriage. Later I asked Margarita herself about this experience. Her response is shown in the final minutes of the documentary. Although at first I was primarily concerned with how filming the interview affects the way the story is told, now, part way through making the documentary, I realised that the filming of the story had had a profound impact on the extended families' perspective and experience. This new information became an important part of the documentary.

These authentic experiences I learned of from others encouraged me to pursue my research. I felt that the documentary would fulfil a much needed purpose and source of information for others. *Five Hours from Raja* differs radically from *Losing Layla* (Gorman, 2002) because the audience are observing both loss and grief. Claudia does not have the self-absorption of Vanessa, nor the self-awareness of a filmmaker making a film about her own experience. Not knowing these techniques, she did not prepare the "perfect" answer or speech or reflection on her experience, and this raw natural quality makes Claudia's story both powerful and authentic.

After reading many women's stories I discovered that the point at which their loss occurs has no bearing on how they are affected. When people first become pregnant, they make plans for their baby – where it will sleep, what it will wear, what its name will be, even where it will go to school. The loss of their baby is also the loss of these dreams (Miller-Clendon, 2003). However, to give birth to the child, even if it has already died, to be able to say hello and good-bye, despite the increased physical discomfort involved, seems to be more beneficial for processing the experience in the long run than to remove the child through medical intervention (Lothrop, 1997).

This is the decision that Claudia made. It was important both to her, and ultimately the story, that I understood why she had chosen this route for her family. Again and again she talked about

the need to create memories with her child, and she was determined that these memories would be shared by others in her community as well. She did not want to mourn her child in isolation. It is very painful, especially for mothers, when they feel as though their child was only real for them, that nobody else has known their baby. Even fathers often have trouble consciously conceiving the reality of their baby until they've seen it (Lothrop, 1997). In some ways I think that creating this documentary has been an additional validation of Raja's existence and that my interest in his life was a comfort to Claudia. Now with a copy of the documentary at hand, other people can "know Raja's story" too.

### **The Interview**

Rabiger (2004) advises not to be afraid of interviewing people in crisis, contending that you will soon know if someone truly wants to be left alone. But for most, "Crises are the time when one needs to talk, and a truly satisfying exchange leads to a sense of release... Listening to testimony is itself a healing act for all concerned" (p. 180). In addition Franks (as cited in Kendrick & Costello, 2000) has also suggested that in some situations film participants may gain from the experience of talking about their illness (or in this case, Raja's condition), acquiring a greater degree of self-knowledge (p. 243). This seemed to be the case the first time I met Claudia and Amit. In our initial interview they talked to me about their baby (who was to be born the next day) and their experiences during pregnancy with very little prompting. During the first half hour I asked only four questions; yet Claudia and Amit talked virtually non-stop.

However, in the recording of Raja's story I was cognizant that one of the most traumatic events that can affect a family is the death of an infant (Biggs, 2001; Raphael, 1975 and Sheldon, 1998 as cited in Edwards. et al. 2009). I was constantly aware that I needed to walk a careful line between "getting the story" and offering Claudia the respect, privacy and patience that she needed. She made this task easy with her gregarious nature and inherent openness. There were a few emotional moments during interviews where we stopped for a few minutes so that she could gather her thoughts, and there was also an occasion when Claudia asked to reframe her answer as she felt that she hadn't expressed her feelings well initially. I was pleased that Claudia had the confidence to request these options that we had talked through earlier.

An additional protection for Claudia mentioned earlier is the presence of support people during some interviews. This was always an option for her, but she found that as we got to know each other better, she was confident to speak with me on her own. This is perhaps because she was more in control of herself at later dates as she continued to work through her grief.

Dyregov and Matthieson (as cited in Edwards et al., 2009) point to different patterns of grieving within a cultural group: for example, between at-home and working mothers and gendered



differences in the time frame and intensity of grief. I encountered this in my discussions with Claudia and Amit:

*We've had quite a few ups and downs. Sometimes we can get quite distant. We grieve really, really differently so us not being able to talk when the other wants to. I definitely grieve differently to Amit because I will put everything into making stuff. Doing different things, and he'll keep it inside. And then when it gets too much for him he'll just get really upset. He'll want to talk and it might not be "the right time".*

Claudia Astorga-Ralph, August 2007

Because of these differences I requested at times that Claudia and Amit give their own separate answers to some questions. I found this both helpful and revealing.



Figure 2.2 Initial interview with Amit and Claudia (Pedro is on Claudia's lap), *Five Hours with Raja* 2009

### Observational Sequences

It is the observational moments within *Five Hours with Raja* that are for me the most compelling. Although far from technically perfect, they reveal a family in the midst of great turmoil and hopefully trigger understanding and a sense of intimacy for viewers. I think that the sequences within Hutt Hospital have achieved, at least in part, that elusive goal: to “take us places, introduce us to people, and show us things that we have never seen”. Just as I had anticipated when planning the research design, the observational footage shows the audience in pictures, what words cannot express. We see the emotion on people's faces, and watch how differently Claudia and Amit react to the stress of the pending caesarean section. We can see

young Pedro's obliviousness to the drama unfolding around him and the empathy and worry etched on Claudia's father's brow.

There are other moments too that reveal new aspects of Claudia's character. When we see her packing little booties and teddy bears into zip lock bags, we realise that Claudia's grief has moved to a place where she can operate outside her own pain and give to others. Similarly, when we see the family at Petone Beach feeding the birds, we see that their experience of Raja is not just defined by his loss, but also by a celebration of life. For me, these are important realisations because they illustrate the hopeful nature of Raja's story and communicate in a sensitive and ethical manner the essence of Claudia's story. They give her a voice within the documentary.

It also should be acknowledged that my own voice was also important. Very few filmmakers seem prepared to admit that through the very tissue and texture of their work, all filmmaking is a form of discourse fabricating its effects, impressions, and point of view (Nichols, 2005, p.19). I was not merely an observer, but integrally involved in the telling (and also to some degree the unfolding) of the story. Although I did my best to present events, situations and information clearly and ethically, I see the world through my own unique paradigms and those translated into the documentary through my shooting and editing choices.

### **The Complications of my Emotional Response**

Documenting Claudia's journey carried an enormous emotional charge for me as a filmmaker. From that very first interview I was exposed to a high degree of intensity in front of my camera. It was hard to hold back my own tears, and in many cases I didn't. That extremely emotional day of Raja's birth and death was particularly difficult. I felt both privileged and humbled to be invited into the lives of Claudia, Amit and their families and was given unrestricted access to the most intimate moments of their journey. Throughout the day I watched events unfold, removed to a degree by the viewfinder, and the awareness of my responsibility to record each precious, and never-to-be-repeated, moment. It wasn't until I stepped off the airplane in Auckland and saw my husband that my emotions were released. I spent a good ten minutes standing in the airport car park in a flood of tears.

When faced by these same emotions in Claudia, my ability to control my personal emotions and continue my work as a documentary filmmaker was tested. The complexity of the situation became clear as I witnessed the pain that Claudia and her family were experiencing. In spite of my best efforts, I was unprepared. Suddenly I had to find a balance between the respect I owed to Claudia and her family, the compassion I felt for everyone in the room, and my own emotions and reactions to the pain everyone was feeling – all this had to be balanced with my desire as a

documentary filmmaker to capture the moment with minimal intrusion, affecting it as little as possible with my presence. I was also aware of my commitment to Claudia to record as best as I could, all of those moments with her son. If anyone had asked me to stop, I would have immediately turned off the camera, and had made this clear in an earlier family meeting, but my job was to document those "real life" moments as they unfolded – it was life and death in the making.

Gail Dolgin (2003) describes her own dilemma when filming Heidi's breakdown in her film *The Daughter from Danang*:

*It was probably one of the toughest tests we have had to go through in our lives as filmmakers – and as human beings. We all face each moment without prior knowledge of the outcome. It is this challenge that stimulates our work as documentary filmmakers – filming life itself. As filmmakers we often find ourselves in situations in which we need to decide what's more important: to get the shot, or to preserve the privacy of our protagonist's intimacy. And we have to decide as we go, often without time to deliberate. We hope that in moments in which there is no time to make rational decisions, we can trust our intuitive integrity. We like to believe that filmmakers are no different from any other human being and as human beings we all have the obligation to be ethical.*

Like Dolgin, I came across a number of situations that required me to trust in my own instincts about human interaction. I did, however, build in a number of safeguards that would ensure due ethical consideration had been taken. These were largely covered in the previous section on informed consent.

## **Editing the Documentary**

### ***Editing as Data Analysis***

The problem for the researcher and the filmmaker is the same – how do I visualise a large data set and then look for meaningful relationships (Goodman, 2004)? In this way editing is comparable to the data analysis process. On one hand, it is the long, tedious process of connecting different images and sequences within the film. On the other hand, it is a creative process of interpretation to create a product whose purpose is to capture and hold the audience's attention.

This process of creating the final film and the difficulties in shaping the narrative was not easy. Selecting what material would stay and what material would be cut out was a necessary task that was often achieved by creating whilst working across disparate kinds of material (as described by Corner, 2004) – observational, interview, handy cam and graphical - to name a few. The

whole point of creating a narrative within the documentary format was to “observe events occurring before the camera within a relatively stable system of place-time continuity, usually in a greatly abridged and edited chronological sequence (p. 338).” This condensed representation pointed me again to my key research questions: the ethical considerations and dilemmas behind these creative and practical decisions. How could I be true to the essence of who Claudia is and maintain a degree of authenticity for her voice in the documentary? I chose to combine different elements to construct mood and demonstrate Claudia’s personality. For example the road-trip Am Cam footage from Arizona demonstrates Claudia’s playful nature while the sequence of her packing up small baby packs for Sands illustrates her desire to help others. The combination of each of these elements, although constructed, helped create a fuller picture of Claudia and her life, giving her a broader context.

*Films evoke natural sounds, music, the spoken word, text animation, and a variety of visual images. These multiple cues are not important in their own right, but they are different ways to create meaning. Most research deals with abstract ideas that must be given meaning. Words are a very limited way of creating that meaning. In some cases, other media may be more effective, or a combination of media may elicit meaning more powerfully (Goodman, 2004, p. 334).*

### ***The Interview as a Framework***

Although *Five Hours with Raja* is frequently observational and strongly rooted in the texture of everyday life, it is structured around a number of key narrative interviews. These interviews provide the framework around which other passages are woven. The interviews allow the bulk of the story to be told by Claudia and Amit themselves, either as the moments are beginning to unfold (as is the case in the earliest interview), or retrospectively, as we see in the final interview.

This technique, where the voice of the interviewed participant is used to form the basic building blocks of a documentary film, is not a new one. Rosenthal and Corner (2005) have theorised that the emergence of documentaries built around strings of interviews is a strategic response to the recognition that events cannot speak for themselves, but neither can a single voice speak with ultimate authority (Nichols, 2005). In the case of *Five Hours with Raja*, the interviews act as an authorial diffuser because a gap remains between the voice of the participant and the voice (or message) of the film. Of course, the voice of the participant does not ameliorate the controlling voice of the documentary system itself, but the effect on a viewer is distinctly different (Rosenthal & Corner, 2005 p. 24). This is why I relied on Claudia’s and Amit’s words to communicate ideas that I wanted to convey to the audience, and pared back the amount of

voice over. I felt that if I had used voice over to communicate some of the sensitive ideas around dealing with grief and loss, the documentary would take on an authorial and didactic feel that I was hoping to avoid.

### ***Structuring the Narrative***

When I came to edit, I assembled all of my visual material first and categorised it into lists of interviews, observational, reflective, handy cam and covering footage. I tried to develop what it suggested, rather than start with speech organised as a paper edit. I did this in an attempt to prevent speech dominating the editing stage (Rabiger, 2004). Each sequence seemed to fall naturally into the categories of background, the event, grieving, moving on, and looking forward. It made sense to break the story into these five parts, telling it in a predominantly chronological order.

The editing process involved a lot of compromises. As I have mentioned earlier, much of the footage was grainy, wobbly, soft or badly composed. Budget limitations and my own stretched capacity as the sole crewmember had also left me with muddy and compromised sound in a number of environments. My priority, though, was to show the viewer what it had been like as best I could. A good example of this is the initial interview. Although the two shots are aesthetically compromised – there is too much headspace; you can hear a lot of the background noise of the household – I did not replace them. I included this compromised footage because it is important to see both Claudia and Amit together as a couple. The fact that Amit is there for the interview, that he is supporting Claudia, although clearly not always at ease, is revealing. The couple's anxiety and vulnerability the night before Raja's birth could not be re-enacted. These shots capture them in moments of stress and fear, and no recounting after the event would work as well.

*Even those obvious marks of documentary textuality – muddy sound, blurred or racked focus, the grainy, poorly lit figures of social actors caught on the run – function paradoxically. Their presence testifies to an apparently more basic absence: such films sacrifice conventional, polished artistic expression in order to bring back, as best they can, the actual texture of history in the making (Rosenthal & Corner, 2005, p. 21).*

### ***Combining Interview with Observational Footage***

At stages I invited Claudia and Amit to reflect on events we have observed in detail, such as the birth itself. During observational sequences in the theatre at Hutt Hospital, we cut away to a later interview where Claudia and Amit are reflecting on these very moments.

*I just relaxed, and totally relaxed because I was so nervous. I was really excited to see what he looked like, because I'd seen other babies on the Internet and they had the same thing as, yeah they had anencephaly, and I just wanted to see what he looked like and then I saw him and oh, he was so beautiful. He looked like Pedro, and he looked more like me, and he was alive and he was making noises and he had his eyes open and then they put him on my chest and I could feel his heartbeat. Oh that was just so beautiful.*

Transcript from interview with Claudia & Amit – August 2008

On this occasion Claudia introduces a vivid level of self-reflexivity into both her own performance, as well as into the film's structure. In his article *The Voice of Documentary*, Bill Nichols argues that additions like these create something that is impossible in films that rely completely on interview, which give us no sense of a character's present but only use his or her words as testimony about the past.

### ***Creating Space***



*Figure 2.4 Dusk at Karekare beach, Five Hours with Raja 2009*

*Five Hours with Raja* also makes frequent use of poetic natural scenic shots, often in conjunction with voice or music, indicating the passing of time. I introduced these segments create breathing space and time for the viewer to process the often intense and intimate scenes they have just witnessed. Claudia and Amit talked to me a lot about going to the water to feel close to Raja. These slow sequences evoke this sense of place and reflection that is also important.

The slow shots of New Zealand's coast and the Hutt River mark off one scene from another and help develop a mosaic structure that necessarily admits to its own lack of completeness, even as

individual facets appear to exhaust a given encounter. For example, the combination of music, voice over and amateur footage shot during the hours of Raja's passing create the sense of a whole narrative (or the "exhaustion" of the event), yet their brevity and the slow fade into images of the coastline acknowledges the necessary condensing that has occurred during editing. Nichols (2005) refers to this sense of incompleteness and exhaustion, as well as a shift in image pace and composition, noting that it generates a strong sense of a hierarchical and self-referential ordering.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Walking with Claudia and Amit through the process of meeting and farewelling Raja has had a profound impact on me. It has been a stretch of my emotions, my skills and my understanding of the documentary genre. On my first major project I have been involved in researching, interviewing, camera operating, scripting and editing. I have learned a lot about each specific area, but by far my most difficult responsibility was to walk the thin line between sensitivity and the practicalities of “getting the story”. That is why ethical considerations have played such an important role in this paper. Claudia and Amit’s story is essentially a human journey, and as such the people involved have become a priority for me. Happily the biggest hurdle for this project has already been overcome – Claudia likes the final documentary.

There have however been a number of practical constraints that have affected this project. I have already mentioned the difficulty of being the solo camera and sound operator whilst interviewing. On a number of occasions I have left Lower Hutt with compromised pictures and sound. I found this particularly frustrating. My stretched capacity was partly to blame as was my limited skill base, which doesn’t quite stretch to include professional camera operator. But my greatest weakness was also my greatest strength. As a young woman travelling on my own with a small kit I was able to gain access to areas that would otherwise have been out of reach (the operating theatre at Hutt Hospital). I found people were more relaxed with me on my own than I have observed on other occasions when I have been working with a larger crew. I think Claudia and I were also able to bond quickly because of my casual approach and similar age.

The geographical distance also proved to be a challenge. As I live in Auckland and Claudia lives in Lower Hutt, every time I visited her I had to arrange flights, accommodation and transport. This proved costly and so my time in the Hutt Valley was often limited. This meant bad weather had to be put up with. Originally I had planned to film Claudia, Amit and Pedro playing in the sea and sand on Petone Beach for my final sequence. However every time I went to Wellington the weather was wild, windy and wet. In the end we went to the beach anyway and filmed the “seagull” sequence, which incidentally came out better than a sunny day would have. When I was not able to travel to the Hutt Valley for key events I relied on Claudia’s family filming things themselves. This was the case with the scattering of Raja’s ashes. Although this material has been included, it is a shame that I could not have been there myself to capture pictures of a higher quality.

The am cam footage was my biggest technical compromise. It was extremely grainy with poor sound quality and a different aspect ratio from the rest of the material. I decided to make a feature of these problems by building a “am cam” filter that would be laid over certain clips. I



also created flash frames of static and noise. These additions highlighted the fact that Claudia and her family had played a part in filming their story and I think add to the intimacy and personality of the documentary.

Without a doubt the biggest challenge I faced when scripting and editing *Five Hours with Raja* was the voice over. I would have liked to develop a greater sense of self-reflection and intimacy within the documentary by having Claudia voice the documentary narration, but it proved impractical. As I wrote the voice over script for Claudia I felt fraudulent – these were not her words, they were mine. Claudia does not write or keep a diary and so I could not borrow her existing words, nor could I expect her to develop the ability to script a documentary over night. I wrote, rewrote, cut back and deleted blocks of narration. I struggled to find the right tense and the right tone. With each draft I pared back the spoken narration more. If I had had more time I would have liked to edit the documentary without any voice at all. Unfortunately that is a difficult and timely process that I could not afford. I am not happy with the final voice over track. When I recorded it in a studio I was nervous and uncertain and I think that the tone is too abrupt in a number of places, especially at the beginning.

I was very fortunate throughout this research project to be working in a place where I have access to filming and editing equipment. My employers allowed me to use cameras, sound equipment, lights and an edit suite after hours. This enabled me to retain fairly high production values throughout.

When reflecting on the outcomes of this practical project we can borrow a suggestion from Goodman (2004) who suggests that when comparing the processes of documentary filmmaking and research there is a stronger focus on feeling versus knowing. In filmmaking, one goal is to elicit involvement and emotion from the audience members as they try to make sense of the perspectives and personalities they see unfolding within the documentary. For example, I would hope that as the audience witnesses Claudia and Amit visually struggling as they held their son in the hospital, they would feel a degree of the mixed pain and joy visible on Claudia and Amit's faces, and in feeling this emotion, they would understand at a deeper level the complexity of baby loss. This is a different approach from text-based research, where for the most part, the reader is a more passive recipient of the knowledge. The direction is more intellectual than emotional and the form of transmission and type of audiences are different. I chose to tell Raja's story with moving pictures because I believe that documentary films provide a very powerful means to represent communities to one another and to address social issues and problems. In spite of its many constraints and ambiguities, documentary excels in matters of the heart.

*One makes documentaries out of a fascination with, concern for and sympathy with reality in all its unshapely beauty. We may be motivated by curiosity or outrage, but as craftspeople we take it as our mission to create something like an honest virtual reality -- a simulacrum of the emotions and/or thoughts we experience in confronting actual reality. Only the most naive among us waste time dithering over whether it is "true" or wondering if there really is an Heisenberg effect.<sup>4</sup> But neither do we want to create outright lies (McMahon, 2007, p.2 ).*

Although I knew that I could never create a ‘true’ account of what Raja’s life and death has meant to his family and those around them, I struggled all the same to reproduce that elusive sense of authenticity and intimacy that many filmmakers desire. Recording the moments of Raja’s birth and life had been a profound experience for me, and I wanted other people to be able to access a version of these events. In the watching of the film and the engagement with its characters, I wanted to change how people thought about baby loss.

In some small ways I think that this may have already happened. My editor and friend Tibor Riddering who helped me to colour grade and polish the documentary talks about the impact this story has had for him and his wife. They lost their first child during pregnancy and Tibor says that watching this documentary has helped him to reframe their daughter’s existence in a more positive and celebratory light.

Vanessa Gorman (2002), filmmaker and key protagonist in the film *Losing Layla* (2002) commented, “grief lived openly has a mysterious power to heal.” We see this concept lived out in Claudia’s and Amit’s lives throughout the documentary. Perhaps the ability to share her story openly is one of the gifts that the filmmaking process has had to offer Claudia. Watching back the final version of *Five Hours with Raja* it is clear that her confidence and assurance has grown over the two years we follow her journey. The final thought she leaves us with in the documentary (and also in my final interview with her) is revealing:

*Our son, he was born nearly two years ago and we have his photos, we have lots of memories and we can still be happy about it. I’ve never really sat down and just moped around and thought ‘I’m really sad’ or ‘I’m hurting because he passed away’. I don’t have that at all. The memories were too good.*

---

<sup>4</sup> The Heisenberg or observer effect refers to changes that the act of observing will make on the phenomenon being observed. In this case it refers to how people change their behaviour when aware of being watched.

In the future it would be interesting to see a similar project conducted that includes the reflections of the participant as well. I'm sure we could learn a lot from what those on the far end of the lens have to say.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrejevic, M. (2004). *Reality TV: The work of being watched*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Author Unkown, a. (2006, August 10) Entry in *Family Stories*. Message posted to Anencephaly Support Foundation, archived at <http://www.asfhelp.com>
- Author Unkown, b. (2006, August 10) Entry in *Loss of Child*. Message posted to Anencephaly Blessings from Above, archived at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/anencephalyblessingsfromabove/>
- Awarau, A. (2007, May 11). Baby! You're just amazing. *Auckland City Harbour News*, p. A1.
- Bennett, C. (2009, February 18). *The Raw Power of a Great Story*. Lecture presented at the Media Biz 09 Conference, Auckland.
- Boarman, H. (1994). *Viewer/voyeur*. Norwich: Norfolk Institute of Art and Design.
- Brooker, P., & Brooker, W. (1997). *Post-modernism after images*. London: Arnold
- Bruzzi, S. (2000). *New documentary: A critical introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Corner, J. (2002). Performing the Real: Documentary Diversions. *Television & New Media*, 3(3), 255-269.
- Corner, J. (2004). Television's "Event Worlds" and the Immediacies of Seeing: Notes from the Documentary Archive. *The Communications Review*, 7, 337-343.
- Creative New Zealand and The New Zealand Film Commission. (2008). *Research into New Zealand's Independent Documentary Sector* (Research information paper). Auckland.
- Dawn. (2006, August 10) Entry in *Amanda Marie*. Message posted to Stories of the lives of infants with anencephaly, archived at <http://www.anencephalie-info.org/e/amanda.php>
- Debrett, M. (2004). Branding Documentary: New Zealand's Minimalist Solution to Cultural Subsidy. *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(1), 5-23.
- Dolgin, G. (2008, June 17). Daughter from Danang. Message posted to Filmmaker Q&A, archived at <http://www.daughterfromdanang.com/about/qa.html>
- Dovey, J. (2000). *Freakshow: First person media and factual television*. London: Pluto Press.
- Duby, A. (1997). Harnessing TV Formats to Educational TV. *Educational Media International*, 28(2), 70-74.
- Edwards, S., McCreanor, T., Ornsby, M., Tuwhangai, N., & Tipene-Leach, D. (2009). Maori Men and the Grief of SIDs. *Death Studies*, 33(2), 130-152.
- Fischel, A. (1989). Engagement and the Documentary. *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 34, 35-40. Retrieved 19 January, 2008, from <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlineessays/JC34folder>.

- Friedman, J. (Ed). (2000). *Reality squared: Televisual discourse on the real*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Goodman, P. S. (2004). Filmmaking and Research: An Intersection. *Journal of Management Enquiry*, 13(4), 324-335.
- Hight, C. (2001). Debating Reality-TV. *Continuum*, 15, 389-395.
- Hight, C., & Coleborne, C. (2006). Robert Winston's Superhuman: Spectacle, Surveillance and Patient Narrative. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(2), 233-245.
- Hodgetts, D., & Chamberlain, K., (1999). Medicalization and the Depiction of Lay People in Television Health Documentary. *Health*, 3(3), 317-333.
- Homes, S., & Jermyn, D. (Eds). (2003). *Understanding reality television*. London: Routledge.
- Jaquier, M. (2006, August 10) Entry in *Anouk*. Message posted to Stories of the lives of infants with anencephaly, archived at <http://www.anencephalie-info.org/e/anouk.php>
- Kendrick, K. D., & Costello, J. (2000). 'Healthy Viewing?': Experiencing Life and Death Through A Voyeuristic Gaze. *Nursing Ethics*, 7 (1), 15-22.
- Kieran, M. (1997). *Media Ethics*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Kilborne, R. (1996). New contexts for documentary production in Britain. *Media, Culture & Society*, 18, 141.
- Kilborne, R. (2003). *Staging the real: Factual TV programming in the age of Big Brother*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lothrop, H. (1997). *Help, Comfort and Hope after Losing Your Baby*. Cambridge: Fisher Books.
- McMahon, K. (2007). Form and Non-Fiction. *Australian Film, Television and Radio School Resources*. Retrieved August 10, 2007, from <http://www.afrs.edu.au/full-timeCourses/Documentary/Resources/Articles/FormandNon-Fiction>
- Miller-Clendon, N. (2003). *Life after baby loss: A guide to pregnancy and infant loss and subsequent pregnancy in New Zealand*. Auckland: Tandem Press.
- Murray, S., & Ouellette, L. (Eds). (2004). *Reality TV: Remaking television culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- Nichols, B. (1994). *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Nichols, B. (2001). *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Nichols, B. (2005). The Voice of Documentary. In Rosenthal, A., & Corner, J. (Ed.), *New Challenges for Documentary* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), (pp. 17-33). Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Palmer, G. (2003). *Discipline and liberty: Television and governance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

- Plantinga, C. (2005). What Documentary Is, After All. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 63(2), 105-117.
- Rabiger, M. (2004). *Directing the Documentary*. Boston: Focal Press.
- Roscoe, J., & Hight, C. (2001). *Faking it: Mock-documentary and the subversion of factuality*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Roscoe, J. (2004). Television: Friend or Foe of the Australian Documentary? *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(20), 288-295.
- Rose, T. (2005). *Loss before life begins: the invisible babies and their invisible deaths*. Unpublished Thesis, AUT University, Auckland.
- Rosenthal, A., & Corner, J. (2005). *New Challenges for Documentary*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Simmel, G. (1996). Faithfulness and Gratitude. In A. Komter (Ed.), *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. (pp.39-69). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Van Dijk, J. (2002). Medical Documentary: Conjoined wins as a mediated spectacle. *Media, Culture and Society*, 24, 537-556
- Winston, B. (2000). *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*. London: British Film Institute.
- Young, V. (2006, October). Oh Baby: Silent Death. *North and South*, 247, 98-101.

### **Documentaries Cited**

- Dolgin, G. (Director) (2002). Daughter from Danang [Documentary Film]. [With V. Franco]. In *American experience*. U.S.A: PBS Home Video.
- Gorman, V. (Director) (2002). Losing Layla [Documentary Film]. [Produced by C. Henkyl]. In *Australian Story*. Australia: ABC TV.
- Harley, R. (Director). (2008). *Who Deserves to be Born* [Television Documentary]. Auckland: Television New Zealand.
- Lataster, P., & Lataster-Czisch, P. (Directors) (2007). *If We Knew*. [Documentary Film] The Netherlands: Lataster Films.
- McKessar, A. (Director) (2009). *Five Hours with Raja* [DVD]. New Zealand: AUT University.
- McKessar, A. (Director). (2009). *While You Were Sleeping* [Television Documentary]. [Produced by Rob Harley]. Auckland: TV3/Media Works.
- Monaghan, J. (Director). (1998). *Cave Creek – The Story of a National Tragedy* [Television Documentary]. [Produced by Tony Manson]. Auckland: Television New Zealand.
- Stephens, T. (Director). (1998). *The New Zealand Wars* [Documentary Series]. [Produced by Colin McRae]. Auckland: Television New Zealand.