

## Documentary Storytelling / Exercise 3

Journalists' Toolkit 2 / Spring 2008

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The following questions are based on the textbook by Sheila Curran Bernard. You will need to refer closely to the textbook to answer the questions properly.

- You will be assigned one of the three documentaries that Bernard used in her case studies (Chapter 7). **Do not** read Chapter 7 before you watch the documentary!
- Read Chapters 5 and 6 before you watch the doc.
- Watch your selected feature-length documentary *completely* before you begin trying to answer the questions. **NOTE:** You will be watching the doc with other students from our class! Make sure you have arranged a time and place to watch the doc *together*.
- After watching the doc, discuss the following questions with the other students in your group. Take notes. Go home.
- Then read Chapter 7. (It is quite important that you have the discussion with the others **BEFORE** you read this chapter.) *Then* answer the questions below.
- **Type** your complete answers in a numbered format (numbers matching the questions below) in MS Word (or equivalent).
- **E-mail** the Word document to me as an attachment by the deadline.

### Chapter 5

1. Did any particular **shot** in the documentary stand out for you? Describe one shot that you remember.
2. Did any particular **sequence** in the documentary stand out for you? Describe one sequence that you remember.
3. Was your group able to agree on an **inciting incident**? What do you consider to be the inciting incident?

4. Describe a different **point of attack** that the filmmaker(s) could have selected. Do you think this different one might be better than the actual one? Why or why not?
5. Identify one secondary **story line** that is distinct from the main one.

### Chapter 6

6. Discuss the **chronology** of the doc you viewed. You don't have to rehash it all, but do discuss at least one example of how the story was diverted away from the main chronology or timeline and then returned to it. Was the leaving and returning smooth—or not?
7. Building on the ethical issues that Bernard identified in Michael Moore's film *Roger & Me* (pp. 77–80), think back on the doc you viewed and discuss a particular **scene** that could be questioned in the same way. That is, if you wanted to **fact-check** the filmmaker, which scene would you look at more closely?

### Chapter 7

8. (*Obviously, you can't discuss this one in advance.*) In reading Bernard's case study about the doc you viewed, did you agree with her assessment of the **three acts** in the doc? Why or why not?
9. In particular, would you dispute her choice for what marks the **beginning** of the **third act**? Why or why not?