



The Art of Documentary



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Factual Entertainment

- Based on facts
- True stories
- Real events

A photograph of a bright blue sky with a large, fluffy white cumulus cloud in the center. The sun is partially visible behind the cloud, creating a lens flare effect.

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Types of Documentary

- Historical
- Wildlife
- Issues based
- As it Happens
- Political



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Critical Elements

- Research
- Story/subject



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Research

- Hours of information gathering
- Become a part of it (e.g. online dating)
- Seek out qualified people and draw them in



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Story

- What has been done before
- What is unique about your story
- TV or film/festivals (how many eps)
- Which broadcaster/festival will it suit
- Write an initial outline (1-2 pages)

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Types of Documentary

1. Historical

- Stories from the past
- Knowledge Based (but can be lifestyle)
- Lots of research
- Bring to life with re-enactments/graphics



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Types of Documentary

2. Wildlife

- Long production period (years)
- Know your subjects
- More scripted than you thing
- Patience

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Types of Documentary

3. Issues based (Health, or social issues)

- Less structured scripting
- Complicated – needs real situations
- Emotive – be prepared
- Interview driven – people stories
- Patience

A large, fluffy white cloud is set against a clear blue sky, occupying the upper right portion of the slide.

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Types of Documentary

4. As It Happens

- The hardest type of doco
- Still need research and guide script
- Working with the unknown
- Long production period – following real life
- Narrative written after completion of filming
- What is your cut off point - specific

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Types of Documentary

5. Political

- Film maker is politically motivated for change
- Often not balanced but from filmmakers viewpoint which can vary
- Often reality driven
- Usually not for TV but festival circuit

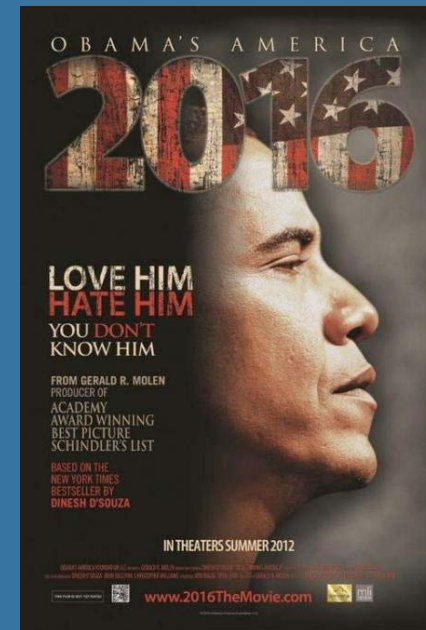
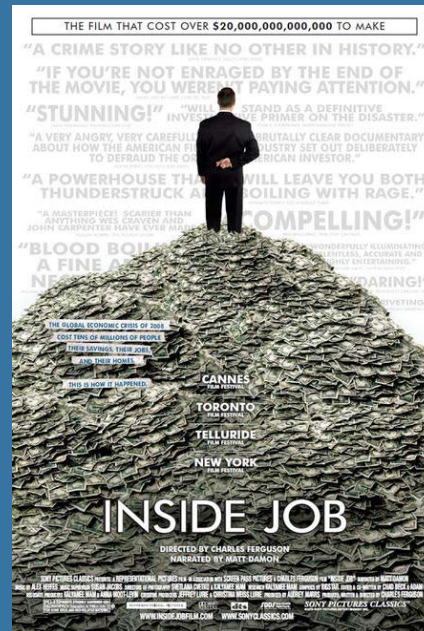


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Development

Planning and preparation is the most important and time consuming part of the process. An idea needs nurturing.

- Research, research, research
- Know your subject – great story
- Basic Treatment (2-3 pages)
- Is it unique
- Where will it fit in the marketplace
- Know the networks/audience



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Development

Know your networks...is your film:

- Topical
- How many episodes/how long
- Which network is it best aimed at
- What is unique selling point
- Strand and time slot (and rating)
- Eligibility Producer offset Rebate (Requirements)
- What other factors will cause a network want your series, or a distributor your film



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Development

Producer Offset Rebate

- Up to 20% for Documentaries
- Up to 40% for films
- Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure (QAPE)
- Applicant must be Australian Company
- Minimum expenditure of \$500,000 (\$250,000 per hour)
- Producer Equity Payment available for lower budgets
- Project needs evidence of sale and/or distribution
- Accounts fully audited and need to be precise



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Development

Bring in the right team

- Not a 1 person deal
- Experienced filmmakers critical for funding (at least one)
- Director is critical
- Strong team preferably with credits



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One off Documentary

One off/Festival release films

- The documentary Foundation (Tax deductible)
- Crowd Funding
- Private high net worth philanthropists
- Grants from authorities
- Work with a charity that can bring support
- Educational product
- Private offering with business plan



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Production

- Make sure all your copyright is in place...and options.
- Make sure that you have developed a full script (or as much as you can)
- Make sure you have all your permits in place for production
- Make sure you have crew that can work in difficult situations
- Make sure you have release forms for interviews
- Always have a list of key interviews that need to be done. They will create the backbone of the story
- Have your list of pre-planned/staged shoots or re-enactments that need to be done



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Marketing

- Once you have shot a little , then make a promo film to tempt a distributor or network
- Marketing should begin early in the peace
- Have your target markets and if you are aiming at a particular sale then update the potential buyer
- Have a strategic plan from the beginning
- Title is important
- Facebook page & website feeding information
- Make sure you know your subject if you are asked to speak about it...facts and figures to back it up

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Conclusion

- Documentary production is a difficult road.
- Don't expect to make a lot of money...most of us live on wages...even the experienced ones
- Producing documentary is a very rewarding especially if your work makes a difference in the world in which we live
- Funding is not easy. You may find that once you start the process then momentum kicks in. Many filmmakers have shot some of their doco which has then brought more funds in.



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Questions?