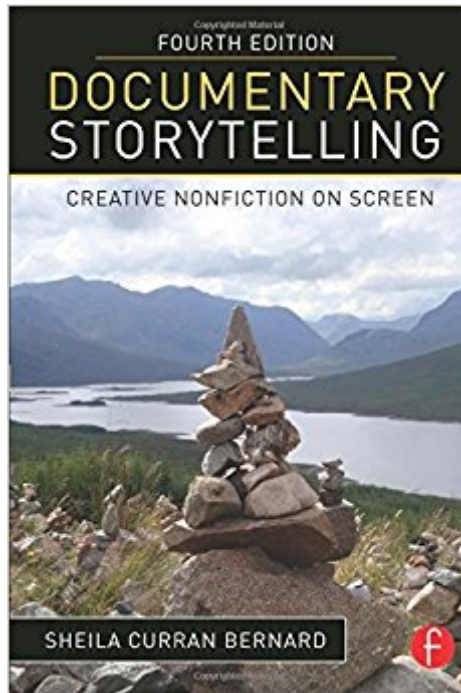




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# Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction On Screen



## Synopsis

Documentary Storytelling has reached filmmakers and filmgoers worldwide with its unique focus on the key ingredient for success in the growing global documentary marketplace: storytelling. This practical guide reveals how today's top filmmakers bring the tools of narrative cinema to the world of nonfiction film and video without sacrificing the rigor and truthfulness that give documentaries their power. The book offers practical advice for producers, directors, editors, cinematographers, writers and others seeking to make ethical and effective films that merge the strengths of visual and aural media with the power of narrative storytelling. In this new, updated edition, Emmy Award-winning author Sheila Curran Bernard offers: New strategies for analyzing documentary work New conversations with filmmakers including Stanley Nelson (The Black Panthers), Kazuhiro Soda (Mental), Orlando von Einsiedel (Virunga), and Cara Mertes (JustFilms) Discussions previously held with Susan Kim (Imaginary Witness), Deborah Scranton (The War Tapes), Alex Gibney (Taxi to the Dark Side), and James Marsh (Man on Wire).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sheila Curran Bernard is an award-winning filmmaker and writer whose credits include projects for broadcast and theatrical release as well as museum and classroom use. She has taught at Princeton University, Westbrook College, and the University at Albany, SUNY.

Very concise, informative, and well written. Perfect for anyone looking to learn more about

storytelling through nonfiction film.

A nice step by step for how to approach making a documentary.

great information!

The book gave me great insights into various ways documentarians approach their work. As a new videographer, it was a great survey course.

Some concept of narrative seems to be creeping into all the arts nowadays but at least in works prepared for the screen it means telling a story. Although it's easy to think that story telling applies mostly to fiction, it is just as relevant to documentary productions. The book is divided into three parts. The first is aimed at explaining just what story is, from the basic idea of a story to an examination of how one can be creative, even in a presentation bound to facts. The second part discusses some of the elements of developing a documentary story from research to editing. The third part is a series of interviews with the makers of documentaries, emphasizing how they developed the stories in the work, although occasionally spilling off into other areas. I found this last section particularly interesting from the range of documentarians from those who carefully plotted their films to those who actually eschew plotting. To a great extent the author relies upon examples drawn from recent documentaries, including, for example a "close viewing" of Morgan Spurlock's "Supersize Me." The author also provides references to web sites and books that illustrate and explain further details of how particular documentaries tell their stories. (Occasionally some of the references didn't seem very useful, but I don't blame the author for that.) The best way to use the author's instruction is by viewing the actual films and concentrating on how they develop their story line. This is a basic approach to the idea of storytelling. It is written in clear and simple language. I'm not enough of an expert to know if there are important subjects that have not been covered, but what is here rings true and accords with my experience. There was an emphasis throughout on the fact that that documentary storytelling does not require chronological order for presentation, but rather often benefits by moving about in time. There are approaches to documentary filmmaking that do not tell stories (or at least may not fit into the framework described here) that are not discussed. The book is aimed at a beginning student in film school who is interested in making documentaries, although other students of film, interested in developing their appreciation of the finer points of documentary films will also benefit from a reading. Note: The publisher provided me

with a review copy of this book at no charge.

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