

HILLSBOROUGH: TRUTH AND TRAUMA

by

Lynne Fox

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HILLSBOROUGH: TRUTH AND TRAUMA

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Lynne Fox

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Ryerson University

Abstract

On April 15th, 1989, at the F.A. (Football Association) Cup semi-final football match, Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield (U.K.), ninety-six men, women and children were crushed to death. Now known as the Hillsborough Disaster, this event is the worst sporting disaster in the history of England. My twenty-one year old brother, Thomas Steven Fox, was one of those ninety-six victims.

New inquests into the deaths of the victims of the Hillsborough Disaster opened in 2014. My documentary film, “Our Steve” is a forensic look at the inquest into my brother’s death in an attempt to document this process as it was happening. As the new inquests into Hillsborough re-entered the public sphere through media, television and political platforms, my need to represent this story and that of my family became the impetus for this project.

for
Our Steve

HILLSBOROUGH: TRUTH AND TRAUMA

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*If not me, who? And if not now, when?*¹ ~Hillel the Elder

Introduction

I was sixteen years old when my eldest brother went to a football match and never came home. Twenty-five years later neither myself nor my family knew the full circumstances surrounding his death. The Hillsborough Disaster has been well documented through media, film and text, largely approached from an objective and fact-based viewpoint with primary focus on the moment leading up to the disaster. Emphasis has been placed on the collective, providing both depth and scope to the tragedy, but these stories emerge from accounts of an event that has already been founded, processed and evaluated.

The Hillsborough Disaster is not exclusive to a series of decisions that took place on April 15th, 1989 but rather how those decisions impacted the lives of individuals, families and an entire community of people. Although the trauma experienced in the wake of Hillsborough was both a personal and a shared experience, the week following the disaster brought a unique type of “public mourning on Merseyside.”²

Lies told and negative press coverage in the immediate aftermath of the disaster along with doctored police statements, which cited incorrect accounts of the days events, led to global blaming of the Hillsborough victims and other fellow supporters for these deaths.³ Allegations of soccer hooliganism and riotous behaviour by Liverpool fans were

¹ Hillel the Elder, *Pirkei Avot*, 1:14.

² Tony Walter, "The Mourning after Hillsborough," *The Sociological Review* 39, no. 3 (1991): 622.

³ Former Ch. Supt. David Duckenfield was in charge of Hillsborough on the day of the disaster. On March 11, 2015, during the Hillsborough inquests, he admitted in court that at 3:15pm of the day of the disaster he told Graham Kelly, then secretary of the Football Association, that Liverpool fans had gained “unauthorized access” to the stadium. “Hearings, Wednesday 11 March 2015 PM session,” *Hillsborough*

alleged to have been the main cause of the disaster.⁴ Myself, my Mum and the other families of the victims have spent nearly three decades fighting against the mistruths and the subsequent negative stereotyping of northern English football.⁵ Consequently, attempted efforts by the bereaved families to assert the truth about the disaster earned Liverpool the reputation as “a self-pity city”; this compounded grief and stigmatization has continued to haunt the reputation of Liverpool and taint the legacy of those who died.⁶

I have spent my entire adult life educating people about the truth of Hillsborough both in the U.K. and in Canada. The narrative of Hillsborough, involving tragedy, loss and injustice is in some ways relatable, however, trauma caused by this negative narrative is much more difficult to understand; in the case of this disaster it is imperative in order to challenge lies and mistruths. Hillel’s ancient words have echoed through my mind over the last two and a half decades; I can no longer leave it to others to challenge these mistruths, and now is the time to do this.

During the filming process I struggled between remaining Steve’s little sister and being a filmmaker, ultimately raising two questions: whether autoethnography is the most suitable method for conveying such an intimate story and whether a filmmaker, so personally invested in a topic, can detach themselves in order to allow the audience to come to their own conclusions. My initial intention for this project was to produce a

Inquests, accessed May 6, 2016, <https://hillsboroughinquests.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/hill110315pmjurypresentallpm.pdf>.

⁴ Until I personally made the change in November 2015, the public encyclopaedia ‘Wikipedia’ incorrectly referenced the Hillsborough Disaster under its sub-section ‘Human Stampedes’. “Stampede,” *Wikipedia*, accessed Mar. 26, 2015,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stampede#Human_stampedeshttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stampede#Human_stampedes

⁵ Philip Bolland, "The Construction of Images of People and Place: Labeling Liverpool and Stereotyping Scousers," *Cities* 25, 6 (2008): 357.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 364.

documentary film that remained objective, however, by the end of the process I realised that it is my own subjectivity as a filmmaker, a sister and a family member of Hillsborough that not only shapes this entire film but ultimately defines it. It is through this film that I am able to explore and explain my own trauma within the context of a collective experience by utilizing the method of autoethnographic filmmaking in order to tell a story that is both intensely personal and also a collective experience.

The History of Hillsborough

The Taylor Report

In August 1989, Lord Justice Taylor, head of the first official inquiry into the disaster, published an ‘Interim Report’ which gave a critical analysis of the disaster, stating that the “main cause of the disaster was overcrowding” and “the reason for this was failure of police control”.⁷ Taylor was quick to exonerate the Liverpool fans and instead placed responsibility for the disaster on the authorities in charge on the day, in particular, South Yorkshire police, criticising a number of individuals and agencies involved and stating that “senior officers in command were defensive and evasive witnesses”.⁸ Subsequent to this report, there were expectations that criminal prosecutions would ensue and that a Coroner’s inquest would lead to the verdict of ‘unlawful killing’, however, this was not the case.⁹

⁷ Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Taylor, “The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster - Interim Report,” *Home Office*, Cm 765, (August 1989): 49, sec 278. Accessed on March 29, 2015.
<http://www.southyorks.police.uk/sites/default/files/Taylor%20Interim%20Report.pdf>

⁸ "The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel," *The Stationery Office, London* (2012): 198, sec 2.6.123.

⁹ Phil Scraton, “The Legacy of Hillsborough: Liberating Truth, Challenging Power,” *Race & Class* 55, no. 2 (2013): 9.

The Coroner's Inquest

A Coroner's Inquest into the disaster was held in 1989, which is typical when the cause of death is unknown or if the individual(s) has died in a violent or unnatural way. Its purpose is to provide answers to questions regarding when, where, how and why someone has died in order to establish facts and specifically not to allocate blame. This process involves collecting statements from witnesses, some of which are then called to the stand in court in order to be taken through these statements by the Coroner. There is then an opportunity for legal representatives from 'interested party's' to question these witnesses.¹⁰ The original Hillsborough Inquests took an extraordinary path; following a meeting with the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) in March 1990, Coroner Dr. Stefan Popper, who was in charge of establishing the facts, made the decision to hold limited hearings before a jury which focused only on medical evidence and alcohol blood levels prior to death; these became known as the "mini-inquests".¹¹ This unprecedented decision included summarised witness statements, taken and read out by West Midlands Police officers, which alluded to "widespread drunkenness" and fan hooliganism as the cause of the disaster. Left unchallenged, these allegations gave weight to further victim blaming.¹²

The preliminary hearings, conducted over an eight-week period, did not cover *how* the victims died and in August 1990, four months after the 'mini-inquests' had finished, the DPP announced that "there was no evidence to justify any criminal proceedings' against any of the corporate organisations involved and 'insufficient evidence to justify proceedings against any officer of South Yorkshire Police or any other

¹⁰ "Section 1.3: What is an inquest?," *INQUEST Charitable Trust*, accessed on April 1, 2015, <http://www.inquest.org.uk/help/handbook/section-1-3-what-is-an-inquest>.

¹¹ Scraton, (2013), 10.

¹² Ibid.

person for any offence’.”¹³ This effectively meant no one was at fault for the disaster, which put more pressure on the continuing generic inquests to find out exactly what happened.

The generic inquests resumed in November 1990 in order to ascertain *how* the victims died, however, in another unprecedented move Popper revealed that he would not be hearing evidence after 3:15pm of the day of the disaster.¹⁴ His reasoning for this was that all of the victims had received their injuries by the time the game was stopped at 3:06pm, meaning two things: all of the evidence regarding the rescue operation (or the failure of) was omitted, and, the families were not going to find out exactly what happened to their loved ones immediately after their deaths. Following Popper’s summing up of evidence, which included an assurance that “accidental death as a verdict could incorporate a high degree of negligence,” the jury reached a verdict of accidental death in all ninety-five cases.^{15/16} Although the Coroner had specified this verdict came with a possibility of blame none was actually placed. To the families and the rest of the world, this result came as an admonishment of the Taylor Interim Report. Taylor’s report had established South Yorkshire Police were at fault, providing a sense of vindication to the victims and the survivors. The Coroner’s subsequent ninety-day inquest, at that point the longest running in British history, then reverted the blame back to the fans, resulting

¹³ Phil Scraton, “Policing with Contempt: The Degrading of Truth and Denial of Justice in the Aftermath of the Hillsborough Disaster,” *Journal of Law and Society*, vol 26, no. 3 (September 1999): 290.

¹⁴ “The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel,” *The Stationery Office, London* (2012): 291, sec 2.10.5

¹⁵ Scraton (1999), 291.

¹⁶ Tony Bland was the 96th victim of Hillsborough; he suffered severe brain damage and was in a permanent vegetative state as a result of the disaster. In November 1992 doctors were allowed to disconnect his feeding tubes after a High Court judge ruling.

<http://hillsborough.independent.gov.uk/repository/docs/WYC000000580001.pdf>

in a continuation of narrative aligned with allegations of “aggressive, beastial mentality” and self-concern.^{17/18}

The Stuart-Smith Scrutiny of Evidence

In 1997, following allegations of the suppression of evidence during the first Hillsborough inquests and the emergence of ‘new evidence’ detailed in the drama-documentary ‘Hillsborough’ by Jimmy McGovern, Home Secretary Jack Straw announced a judicial review of all evidence pertaining to the disaster. Looking for new evidence significant enough to have changed the outcome of the Taylor Inquiry or the Inquests, Lord Justice Stuart-Smith conducted the ‘scrutiny’.¹⁹

On October 6, 1997, Stuart-Smith invited the bereaved families to meet at 10:00am in the city centre at Liverpool’s Maritime Museum. With no reserved parking there was somewhat of a delay as families needed to get from the car-park to the museum. Just before 10:00am, as they gathered on the steps outside, Stuart-Smith turned to Phil Hammond, a bereaved parent and Chairman of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, and stated the following, “Have you got a few of your people or are they like the Liverpool fans, turn up at the last minute?”²⁰

In February 1998, Straw announced that, “nothing had emerged of such significance that...challenged previous decisions, judgments, rulings or, in the case of the

¹⁷ “Home, On This Day,” *BBC*, accessed on May 7, 2016,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/28/newsid_2531000/2531015.stm

¹⁸ Nigel Clarke, “YOU IDIOT”, *Daily Mirror*, (London, UK), Apr. 18, 1989, 31. Accessed April 5, 2015, <http://hillsborough.independent.gov.uk/repository/docs/PRE000000410001.pdf>

¹⁹ Rt Hon Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, *Scrutiny of Evidence Relating to the Hillsborough Football Stadium Disaster* (London, Home Office Cmnd 3878, February 1998),

<http://hillsborough.independent.gov.uk/repository/docs/HOM000045010001.pdf>

²⁰ Brian Reade, *44 Years with the Same Bird: A Liverpoolian Love Affair* (Pan Macmillan, 2009), 247.

inquests, verdicts.”²¹ Another rejection in validation and loss of justice elevated the trauma experienced by families of the victims, survivors of the disaster, and a community struggling for vilification of those responsible for the disaster.

Private Prosecutions

In August 1998, after many years of public fundraising, the Hillsborough Family Support Group brought about a private prosecution against former chief superintendent David Duckenfield in charge on the day of the disaster, and former superintendent Bernard Murray, Duckenfield’s deputy at Hillsborough. Both defendants were charged with “manslaughter (Counts 1 and 2) and misconduct in public office (Count 3) arising out of the events at Hillsborough Stadium on the 15th April 1989.”²² After seven weeks of evidence, the jury at Leeds crown court acquitted Murray of all charges and after being unable to reach a unanimous verdict on Duckenfield were discharged. The trial judge, Mr. Justice Hooper, ordered a stay of proceedings against Duckenfield and denied the application for re-trial, his reason being that Duckenfield had endured a public trial and the “very public humiliation that accompanied it. [Requiring] him to undergo a further trial would, in the very unusual circumstances of this case, constitute clear oppression.”²³ After the trial had finished it was revealed that the judge had given both officers extraordinary assurances that if they were to be “found guilty of manslaughter, neither

²¹ Scraton (1999), 293.

²² Crown Copyright, “Regina v David Duckenfield and Bernard Murray,” *Courts and Tribunals Judiciary*, accessed on December 9, 2015, <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/duckenfield-and-murray-ruling.pdf>.

²³ David Ward, “Hillsborough retrial 'would be unfair',” *Guardian* (UK), Jul. 29, 2000. <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2000/jul/29/newsstory.sport>

would face a prison sentence”.²⁴ This decision made the entire case feel like a waste of time as it was pre-determined that decision to prosecute would never be reached.

The Hillsborough Independent Panel Report

Despite an extraordinarily long journey towards vindication and exoneration of wrongful allegations, the bereaved families and survivors continued their fight for justice; in 2010, ten years in advance of the normal 30-year point for public disclosure, all documentation held by Government and local agencies relevant to events surrounding the Hillsborough Disaster were released to the Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP).²⁵ Made up of nine members, the HIP was appointed to oversee the disclosure of all official documents and in turn produced a report two years later that uncovered a “legacy of lies” and many untold truths about the disaster.²⁶ As well as revealing that over 41 victims could have been saved on the day had the emergency services acted appropriately, the panel also found that in addition to having blood alcohol levels of all victims checked, including that of a ten-year-old, the police also ran a criminal record check of all victims who had not registered any alcohol in their systems on the day. This was “an exceptional decision”, the panel said, for which it found “no rationale”.²⁷

²⁴ "The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel," *The Stationery Office, London* (2012): 56, sec 1.258.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶ David Conn, “The Hillsborough disaster's legacy of lies,” *Guardian*, (London, UK), Oct. 17, 2011, accessed Mar. 29, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/oct/17/hillsborough-disaster-legacy-lies>

²⁷ David Conn, “Hillsborough disaster: the truth,” *Guardian* (London, UK), Sept. 12, 2012, accessed Mar. 29, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2012/sep/12/hillsborough-disaster-police-coverup-revealed>.

The New Inquests

The HIP Report was pivotal in the opening of new inquests into the Hillsborough Disaster. Following the release of the report, based on the new evidence contained within it, Attorney-General Dominic Grieve QC made an application to the High Court in December 2012 to have the original inquest verdicts quashed and a new inquest opened.²⁸ The Rt. Hon. Sir John Goldring was appointed as Assistant Coroner for South Yorkshire (East) and West Yorkshire (West) to conduct the inquests which took place in Warrington, U.K. They started on March 31, 2014 and concluded on April 26, 2016.

The Contempt of Court Act

Prior to the start of the new inquests, Assistant Coroner Goldring issued a statement that requested that “the proceedings are reported accurately and in a balanced way” and that nothing is to be published that could prejudice the inquests, including through online media. On March 31, 2014, the first day of the inquests, he made the following orders under the Contempt of Court Act 1981;

*Pursuant to Section 4(2) of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, pending the conclusion of these inquests and subject to further order, reporting is deferred of those parts of proceedings in these inquests which take place in the absence of the jury. The purpose of making this order is that it appears to the Coroner that such order is necessary for avoiding a substantial risk of prejudice to the administration of justice in the inquests proceedings.*²⁹

²⁸ “England and Wales High Court (Administrative Court) Decisions,” [2012] EWHC 3783 (Admin). Accessed on June 3, 2016. <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2012/3783.html>

²⁹ “Media Coverage,” *Hillsborough Inquests*, accessed on November 5, 2015, <http://hillsboroughinquests.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Contempt-of-Court-Act-31-March-2014.pdf>

This meant anyone passing opinion on the proceedings or revealing evidence that the jury have not been privy to were at risk of being referred to the Attorney General for Contempt of Court.

On May 14, 2015, seven months after I had started filming for this project, a new media protocol was put in place in regards to evidence brought forward concerning the individual movements of the victims of the disaster. In favour of “open justice” a procedure by which media outlets have to request permission to use footage was put in place. The protocol applies to;

a. Disclosed material not previously shown to the jury during the inquests' hearings prior to the date of this Protocol; and

b. Disclosed material shown to the jury during the inquests' hearings prior to the date of this Protocol, but where it was agreed that the material would not be published or broadcast.

For the avoidance of doubt, any disclosed material previously shown to the jury without objection to publication or broadcast is not covered by this protocol.³⁰

This new protocol restricted the usage of *any* footage relating to the Hillsborough Disaster being used in a public forum, including media that was already in the public domain. Introducing a new concealed truth, the ban on use of visual material caused me to draw parallels between the recent inquests and the original inquests from 1989.

The disaster itself was a very public event that was broadcast live on television, radio and reported on immediately throughout the world. The media interest gave voice to people in power, the police, politicians, public icons; everyone who was someone both inside the sporting industry and outside of it gave their opinions publicly and openly

³⁰ “Protocol on the Provision to and Publication by the Media of Audio Visual Materials Adduced in Evidence in the Hillsborough Inquests,” *HM Coroner for South Yorkshire (East) and West Yorkshire (West)*, accessed on November 5, 2015, http://hillsboroughinquests.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Media-Protocol-14-May-2015-43992297_1.pdf

without concern for any aftereffects. This didn't, however, give voice to those without power, such as the working class families of the bereaved who were left questioning what happened and yet silenced by the accusation that their own family and friends were somehow responsible for the cause of the disaster. With no voice, no method for group consolidation, and no money to levy any counter-action, the community was vulnerable and powerless against these claims. This is when the inaccuracy of Hillsborough which became known as the "legacy of lies" was born.³¹

The legal and political structures put in place at the time of the disaster did not further the families quest to find answers, in fact, it hindered it. The truth lay hidden for twenty-three years, and when it was finally unveiled it resulted in the original inquest verdicts being quashed and a new inquest opened. But even with the new inquests and in particular with the contempt of court act, families and victims of Hillsborough remained repressed by the systems of power already in place which silenced the quest to lay bare the truth.

Cultural Context

Liverpool in Mourning

*"Liverpool became a three Cathedral city on Hillsborough Sunday."*³² ~ Grace Davie

Cultural memory is an integral part of understanding communities and society, in particular those in which we are raised; it creates awareness from which a community is able recognise its own uniqueness, it is essentially our 'second nature'.³³ It is also a way

³¹ Conn, *legacy of lies*.

³² Grace Davie, "Believing without Belonging. A Liverpool Case Study." In *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 81, (1993): 82.

³³ Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* no. 65 (1995): 132.

for that community to then “prevent forgetting”.³⁴ Culture differentiates us from other people, places and identities. We need to retain it in order to understand ourselves.

Following the Hillsborough disaster, the people of Liverpool found inventive and unique ways, both personally and publically, to express their grief including visits to Anfield, the home ground of Liverpool Football Club, which became a site of collective memory and a place of memorial. Over twice the population of the city visited the spontaneous shrine in what became an official week of mourning following the disaster.³⁵

In a city already famous for its two historic Cathedrals and where the culture of football is often compared to religion – both football and religion each create community and are ingrained in the Liverpool culture. Drawing from the depths of its culture, the people of Liverpool displayed a solidarity through spontaneous actions, a “distinctive religiosity expressed in actions as well as words.”³⁶ The “strong and articulated sense of communal identity” and the “exceptional sense of belonging” that the Hillsborough disaster brought has stayed with the city and has given power to its collective spirit as a whole.³⁷ As Davie, a Professor at the University of Exeter with an interest in sociology of religion rightly argues, this “could not have happened elsewhere in Britain.”³⁸

Collective Power

³⁴ Roxana Waterson, "Trajectories of Memory: Documentary Film and the Transmission of Testimony." *History and Anthropology* 18, no. 1 (2007): 66.

³⁵ Davie, 81.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 88.

The search for truth can provide a source of community, identity and kinship that can contribute to personal narrative and empowerment.³⁹ The collective point of view aids in contributing to an understanding and a validation of truth. Although rooted in subjectivity, collective points-of-view help shape content; when a collective community is affected by trauma there is the potential to understand the grieving process and the experience of trauma itself by removing the isolation that trauma can often cause. The establishment of shared experiences through loss, instead become an act of communal truth-seeking as an exercise in healing, where feelings generally associated with loss, such as anger, guilt, denial, or regret, instead become mutual emotions.⁴⁰

It is inevitable that within such a tragedy trauma will emerge but it is the way in which trauma is dealt with which is key to surviving it. Throughout the course of history of Hillsborough there has been ample opportunity for the truth to be realised and the trauma contained. Far from this, the perpetuation of the lies surrounding the disaster actually triggered trauma.

Defining Trauma

Trauma can be conceptualised from two perspectives: medical and social. The medical perspective as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, places the onus on the individual with the expectancy that their experience is individual, involving emotions of intense fear, helplessness and horror.⁴¹ This definition views trauma as a ‘disorder’ and the individual as abnormal. This can be contrasted with

³⁹ Kai Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press 1995), 186.

⁴⁰ Mike Brennan, “Mourning and loss: Finding meaning in the mourning for Hillsborough,” *Mortality* 13, no 1. (2008): 4. DOI: 10.1080/13576270701783082.

⁴¹ American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 4th ed. Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 2000.

the social model of trauma where feelings of fear and horror are seen as adaptive, purposeful, and normal responses to abnormal circumstances.⁴² Were the medical definition of trauma labels all that experience it with a disorder, the social definition recognises the abnormal circumstances and ‘normal’ reaction to them.

Consistent with the social model, trauma specialist Professor Gordon Turnbull, stated that the brain is “wired to collect as much information as it can” in the aftermath a traumatic experience, gathering as much knowledge about the event as possible in order to process it, piecing it together “like a jigsaw puzzle” and often revisiting it over and over again in their mind.⁴³ The information is then reconstructed, processed, evaluated, and logged in the brain as a fully “comprehensive autobiographical memory.”⁴⁴ However, if bits of information are missing or, as is the case with Hillsborough, are found to contradict, then the information becomes incomplete or trapped and is not properly processed in the brain, which can lead to a medical diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴⁵

Delay in Healing

In the case of Hillsborough, the delay in psychological healing is twofold: not only did misinformation and lies fed to and distributed by the media lead to an inability

⁴² Cecilie Bingham, Linda Clarke, Elisabeth Michielsens, and Marc Van de Meer, "Towards a Social Model Approach?" *Personnel Review* vol 42, no 5 (2013): 615. doi:10.1108/PR-08-2011-0120.

http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00483486/v42i0005/613_tasma.

⁴³ Prof. Gordon Turnbull, interview by Mark Pougatch, *Hillsborough's Untold Stories*, BBC Radio 5 Live 693 and 909 kHz, April 14, 2014.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

for victims to process the trauma, the repeated confrontation with it created a perpetual circle of trauma.⁴⁶

The 1990 Coroner's Inquest was a prime opportunity for the victims to start the process of recovery, however, due to the Coroner's unprecedented cut-off time of 3:15pm, the facts surrounding the death of the victims were never fully established. Many questions as to how victims got from the pens to the gymnasium remained unanswered, leaving family members unable to process the reality of the deaths of their loved ones.

What followed the inquest was a series of failed investigations to establish the truth in what happened. As Scraton highlighted, initial investigations exposed dissimilarity between the "official discourse" taking place publicly and that of the bereaved families and survivors.⁴⁷ Where protection was given to those in positions of power, victims of that dynamic were presented with a "view from below", a situation defined by a hierarchy of privilege that allows those with knowledge to have the capacity to influence others.⁴⁸ Put more simply, victims and bereaved families of the Hillsborough Disaster have been unable to have their say or their voices heard and validated for over a quarter of a century, extending the ongoing suffering of all affected by the disaster.

Ethical Considerations

Using Narrative as a Tool

*Films of memory are thus part of the struggle against the forgetting of past injustices, and ultimately have the potential to contribute to shifts in our interpretations of history.*⁴⁹ ~ Roxana Waterson

⁴⁶ Caruth, 6.

⁴⁷ Scraton, (2013), 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁹ Waterson, 51.

The Hillsborough disaster happened at a critical time in my emotional development. I was sixteen years old and about to sit my final exams at school. Surrounded by adults consumed by immense grief and trauma, I retracted into my own world and suppressed my imperious emotions. It took me almost fifteen years to finally begin the process of grief, and many more years trying to undo the damage this grief caused me, so much so that when the new inquests were about to begin I was acutely aware of my default reactions to Hillsborough and the negative affect the new inquests were likely to have on me.

By choosing to document the inquests I was forcing myself to take part in a process that would hopefully lead to fundamental healing and a sense of justice. By publically showing the final film I was encouraging my audience to participate in this journey with me, to experience that immense sense of injustice that lead me here in the first place.

Testimony

It is imperative that events which cannot or have not been articulated be transmitted in order to be heard to enable validation; as such, testimonies become witness to truth and must be preserved.⁵⁰ Creating a narrative around the inquests positions them within the past, present and future, eliminating the “historical gap” experienced during trauma and enabling myself “to bear witness, to enable that is, the act of bearing witness...to take place, belatedly, as though retroactively,” providing myself and other

⁵⁰ Dori Laub, “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press (1995): 69.

trauma survivors an opportunity to articulate our own stories, possess them, and most importantly, validate them.⁵¹

Narrative is informative, educational, factual and resolute. It is not just the presentation of facts but also the presentation of the emotional response to personal experience. It can chronologically situate trauma in such a way that it offers the foundation for understanding by becoming a pedagogical tool, guiding others towards the establishment of truth, by allowing for the processing of information that can ultimately lead to emotional resolve. As an act of information sharing it can be investigative and provide tangibility to incomprehensible experiences by transitioning the abstract into the concrete.^{52 /53}

The inability to verbalize trauma creates a distance from it and a dis-ownership of its history, causing impossibility for recovery. As such, the traumatized “carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.”⁵⁴ These “bearers of witness,” or survivors of trauma, have an opportunity to share their personal stories which account for the “historical gap” often experienced between an event and the recounting of it.⁵⁵ They represent ‘truth’ and become the messengers of a history that would not have otherwise been communicable. One way to transmit difficult history is to create a timeline by way of film, bringing the history into a state of existence within time and allowing for the narrative of the trauma to reveal itself.

⁵¹ Laub, 69.

⁵² Claude Lanzmann, “The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press (1995): 202-203.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Caruth, 5.

⁵⁵ Laub, 69.

Representation

Narrative ultimately stitches time together, producing a “living testimony” that enables a conscious decision on the narrator’s part to reclaim their position as witness.⁵⁶ This “repossessing of one’s life story through the giving of testimony” is survival and reclamation; Laub explains that “...giving testimony is itself a form of action, of change, which one has to actually pass through, in order to continue and complete the process of survival after liberation.”⁵⁷

This liberation unfortunately also raises the issue of representation within documentary filmmaking, in particular, when making films around one’s own family. There is a tendency for close relations and friends to take part in the making of a film through obligation to the filmmaker. Fortunately, throughout my adult life, my own family have always been advocates for justice surrounding Hillsborough. More recently, my Mum had been involved in many press interviews both locally and nationally, so she was familiar with both the process and the exposure. It was a conscious decision however to include myself in my film. Some people have commented to me that this was “very brave of me” to do so, but ethically I couldn’t request the participation of family members and close friends without participating myself. I also had unique access to the situation that no other filmmaker had, and in order to document this history, I had to have my own family participate. The trust of my family to tell the ‘truth’ is assumed but I need to gain the trust of the audience too and the best way to do this was through transparency. With so much negative exposure regarding Hillsborough through the media I needed to

⁵⁶ Laub, 69.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 63.

establish that my role as filmmaker was not an attempt at further exposure but rather a strong desire to represent truth through individual accounts of the disaster.

Ethical Impetus

September 12th, 2012 saw the release of the Hillsborough Independent Report. Evidence revealed in that report led to the original inquest verdict being quashed and a new inquest ordered. This was a pivotal time for the Hillsborough families and the campaign for justice. We were about to embark on a historical process, one that would be looked back upon for generations to come. The media were already highlighting the importance of these new inquests worldwide and I naively believed the new inquests would continue to be well-documented and reported upon in order to raise public understanding of the issue of Hillsborough and the fight for justice. I was wrong.

Shortly before the inquests began, the Coroner, Rt Hon Sir John Goldring, announced that the “Contempt of Court Act of 1981” would be enforced should anyone comment both publically or through online media in any way that may prejudice the jury.⁵⁸ This effectively meant a worldwide silence over anything that was not heard by the jury. Constantly aware of the negative public perception surrounding Hillsborough, I was apprehensive of the possibility of the inquest not being given the attention it needed in order to fully expose the truth about the disaster. The simple act of not allowing the word “cover-up” to be used in connection with Hillsborough highlighted to me the curtain that was being thrown over the full exposure surrounding the inquests. Painfully aware that without the luxury of dramatization the media may not be interested in

⁵⁸ “Contempt of Court Act 1981”.

highlighting any information uncovered throughout the inquests, this became the impetus for my film.

Documentary Framework

There have been many documentaries made on Hillsborough and an award winning piece of drama, as well as numerous written pieces of work that look at the disaster itself in relation to the history, sociological concerns and trauma through the lens of the law.⁵⁹ Within these writings, dramas and documentaries the injustice and legal repercussions are the most predominant feature. But none of these documentations involve autoethnography, a method that seeks to both describe and analyze a personal experience in order to gain better understanding.⁶⁰ Autoethnography is both a process and a product that acknowledges the subjectivity and emotionality of a filmmaker.⁶¹ Where ethnography is an investigation and complete immersion into a culture, autoethnography then provides an opportunity to represent culture and the trauma within from a first person perspective. In this case, the culture being examined is that of myself and others immediately affected by the disaster. This means relying on self-analysis and evaluation through qualitative research in order to find the missing pieces required to fully process the trauma.

⁵⁹ The most notable documentaries have been made more recently; ESPN 30 for 30 series, Hillsborough was first shown in April 2014 and was updated and shown again in May 2016 on BBC2, BBC Panorama aired "Hillsborough Disaster, How They Buried the Truth" in 2013, Hillsborough: The Search for Truth (ITV) and Hillsborough: The Truth (ITV) were both aired in 2012. "Hillsborough Remembered" (History Channel), aired in 2009.

⁶⁰ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol 12, no. 1, Nov. 2010. Accessed on Mar 30 2015. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>

⁶¹ Ibid.

Epistemology

On the twentieth anniversary of the Hillsborough Disaster over 28,000 people gathered at Liverpool's stadium Anfield for the annual memorial service. Usually the service would draw a crowd of around 10,000 people. But this day it filled the main Kop stand and continued to fill the Anfield road stands as the service got underway. I remember as I watched the service online from my home in Toronto thinking to myself that I had never seen the stadium so full. They even let supporters into the Director's box, an albeit small but significant show of "people power".⁶² During the service Andy Burnham, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the first MP to ever be allowed to speak at one of the services, stood in front of the crowd and started his speech with the following: "But today, as the Prime Minister has asked me to convey, we can at least pledge that 96 fellow football supporters who died, will never be forgotten."⁶³ He was interrupted by one lone shout of "Justice!" from the crowd. This was spontaneously followed by almost 30,000 people continuously chanting "Justice for the 96!" The MP was silenced. As he stood and listened he nodded, acknowledging the injustice of the previous years and that even as a member of government he had nothing new to provide. But that day, after finishing his speech and meeting with the families, he vowed to get to the truth about Hillsborough, and he did.

Exactly five years on, shortly after the new inquests had begun he once again took to the podium at the annual anniversary service and stated, "I knew you were right and

⁶² Jim White, "Liverpool fans turn on Andy Burnham at Hillsborough memorial," *Telegraph* (London, U.K.), April 15, 2009.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/football/teams/liverpool/5160448/Liverpool-fans-turn-on-Andy-Burnham-at-Hillsborough-memorial.html>.

⁶³ Lynne Fox, *Our Steve*, online, directed by Lynne Fox (2016, Toronto: 2BirdsMedia, unreleased): 09:16 Accessed at <https://vimeo.com/167893024>, password 'Liverpool.1981'.

they were wrong.”⁶⁴ As a fellow football supporter and with many friends who were at Hillsborough on the day, his version of the truth had come from first-hand knowledge of what happened that day. Where the rest of the world had been informed by the media, who in turn were fed misinformation by the people who were to blame for the disaster, Burnham had gone straight to the source, the survivors themselves.

A perfect epistemology for sorting truth from falsehood does not exist. These tendencies towards prejudgement despite opposing theories which may contradict make it difficult to sway opinions despite the reality of truth laid out before us because of the human instinct to see everything through our own direct experience. There exists a compelling human desire to be right rather than wrong when looking for answers; we look more toward our own informed opinions when considering cause and effect, facts that guide our moral compass between right and wrong. The tendency is to ask the question ‘who’ is right, rather than ‘what’. This puts the onus on opinion of “who” is right, rather than the ethic of “what” is wrong.

Kant suggests that our minds contribute to the way we see the world based on experience; the mind does not just simply receive information, it also gives it shape.⁶⁵ If events in our minds take place within a time, it is because our mind has given them temporal shape. If certain events are affected by others, it is because our minds make sense of things through cause and effect. Knowledge therefore is not something that just simply exists externally to us and is then ingested, but is something that is filtered through our minds and our experiences. This is the difference between a priori and a posteriori knowledge; a posteriori knowledge is what we gain from experience, and a

⁶⁴ Fox, *Our Steve*, 37:10.

⁶⁵ A. C. Grayling, "Critique Of Pure Reason By Immanuel Kant," *Independent*, Jul 26, 2014. <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1548339691?accountid=13631>.

priori knowledge is the breadth of knowledge we have independent of our own experience.⁶⁶

a priori knowledge = fact

a posteriori knowledge = experience

In 1985 thirty-nine Juventus football fans were killed at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels, Belgium after rioting broke out at the match between Juventus Football Club and Liverpool Football Club. Fourteen Liverpool fans were convicted of manslaughter and English football clubs were banned from all European football competitions. Liverpool was still under this ban when the Hillsborough Disaster occurred. So, when it was widely reported that Liverpool fans had broken down a gate at Hillsborough causing the death of 95 football supporters, the world was ready to utilise its a posteriori knowledge and believe the incorrect reports.⁶⁷

Autoethnography

Documentary film can help ingest knowledge, of Hillsborough in particular, through the sensory filter of one's own experience, providing the opportunity to experience Hillsborough in a new way, reshaping judgement were pre-judgement had already dominated. As a filmmaker who experienced the effects of Hillsborough directly, an autoethnographic documentary approach is an ideal way to enable the audience to understand the disaster on a social, empirical and emotional level.

⁶⁶ Immanuel Kant, "Of the Ground of the Division of all Objects into Phenomena and Noumena," In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Willey Book Co, 1899: 237-272. Doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/11654-014>.

⁶⁷ David Conn, "Hillsborough disaster: deadly mistakes and lies that lasted decades," *Guardian* (London, U.K.), April 26, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/apr/26/hillsborough-disaster-deadly-mistakes-and-lies-that-lasting-decades>.

Autoethnography, as a methodology, enables the transference of power; it provides an ethical foundation in filmmaking by allowing knowledge and experience to coexist, leading to an inclusive representation of an event. There has been a significant rise in autoethnography within documentary film in the 1980's.⁶⁸ This could be due to the unique view the 'auto' can bring - the difference between "experienced reality" and "external reality", a reclaiming of narratives in order to give stories a more humanistic view.⁶⁹ It is also reflexive, providing an opportunity for comprehension that can lead to an undoing of trauma itself. As Freeman explains:

*Realizations, narrative connections, are made after the fact, when the dust has settled. The result is that we are frequently late in our own understanding of things...Autobiographical understanding thus emerges as a fundamental tool for ethical and moral re-collection.*⁷⁰

No one is more worthy of telling you these stories than the people on the front lines.⁷¹

The direct relationship between subject and content is the key to the success of autoethnographic filmmaking. Sarah Wall states that autoethnography "is an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding", however, the very notion of ethnography itself brings with it questions regarding ethics in representation including objectivity, quality of data and legitimacy.⁷²

⁶⁸ Google Books NGram Viewer -

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=autoethnography&year_start=1800&year_end=2015&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cautoethnography%3B%2Cc0.

⁶⁹ Mark Freeman, "Chapter 5 Autobiographical Understanding and Narrative Inquiry," in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, edited by D. Jean Clandinin, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., (2007): 128. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552.n5>.

⁷⁰ Freeman, 132.

⁷¹ Coral Edwards in MacDougall, David (dir.) 1987, *Link-Up Diary*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.

⁷² Sarah Wall, "Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7, no. 1 (2008): 38, 39.

When using autoethnography subjectivity is inevitable. As well as qualitative research, this project draws upon the ontological theoretical knowledge of Bazin in order to adopt “aesthetic qualities” that seek power to “lay bare the realities” of the story.⁷³ This concept was important to me because I was dealing the issue of “truth”, not just my truth but that of others and of the historic past. I knew that in order to capture this I had to invest the time of duration during the inquests and the documentation of this process as we went. I also knew that this journey was a part of my truth and my recovery within that. I wasn’t just documenting it to show it, I was documenting it so I could personally deal with it internally, to ensure my own part in the process in order to move away from it’s trauma. It was also important to me that the audience underwent that same process in order to understand mine.

Authors Ellis, Adams and Boschner explain that “autoethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyze experience,” or to validate their own narrative, but they must also use these experiences to bring familiarity with a situation to outsiders.⁷⁴ Autoethnography can be extended for the purpose of sociological understanding and empathy, generating a feeling of support rather than one of alienation.⁷⁵ In the situation of Hillsborough, where there is already animosity and feelings of “self-pity” from outsiders, this is crucial.⁷⁶ Secondary to this it also inevitably aids in the healing process.

Throughout the filming process I was constantly faced with personal grief and trauma and the question as to whether the trauma I experienced was unique as an

⁷³ André Bazin and Hugh Gray, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (Summer, 1960): 8.

⁷⁴ Ellis et al, 3.

⁷⁵ Wall, 38.

⁷⁶ Bolland, 357.

individual, or whether it also belonged to the collective city of Liverpool. My hypothesis is that it would take a direct insider to actually tell the story truthfully and ethically and an insider, or someone closely linked to the disaster, to truthfully portray what I believed was a collective experience. All of the previous literature of documentaries on Hillsborough have not informed as to the extent of individual trauma suffered over the twenty-five year period. They do not explain how the brain, or my brain in particular, was affected psychologically by the trauma or how survivors of the trauma have learned to cope. Nor do they show how the current inquests are finally allowing family members to finally grieve and let go of their own individual guilt and trauma. Many may know of Hillsborough in theory, in thought, but have never truly felt it.

Methodology

There were two main considerations in making this film, the historical documentation of what was to become the longest inquest in British history, and the use of documentary film for traumatic healing. Truth and justice are two themes that have influenced me heavily throughout my adulthood. I am honest and truthful in my daily life and wanted to employ those qualities aesthetically in my film. Philosophically, the concept of truth is quite complex and subjective, making it a challenging topic to broach in documentary filmmaking. Because of this I tried to utilize Gerbaz's technique of direct address in order to show my truth.

The technique of direct address—when a character looks in the direction of the audience—is an example of how the film camera brings a social

*dimension into its perception, so that it not only faces a social world but is also literally faced by it.*⁷⁷

Using a “direct cinema” approach allowed me to capture reality and represent it in an honest way.⁷⁸ Minimal editing in sequence within scenes was an ethical consideration for the purpose of accurate representation of subject matter and transparency in the film was key in keeping it authentic.

Where certain elements of a scene would have had more impact if they were shifted, I purposefully chose to keep a chronological order within scenes, for example, in the scene at my brother’s grave, there is a point where my Mum walks away from the camera to go get some water.⁷⁹ Given the content of the scene, it would have been more aesthetically pleasing to see Mum walk away at the end of the scene, suggesting some underlying trauma. Although this would have been ethically true, it was more important to me to keep the chronological aspect of the scene in tact. I wanted to keep the truth of the journey in tact and not be suggestive for purposes of filmic conventions. The audience’s journey with me as a filmmaker is authentic, and with this they become a witness within the film. In making this film both my Mum and I become “bearers of witness,” or survivors of trauma, which is shared with the audience. It also gave us the opportunity to share our personal story, which accounts for the “historical gap” often experienced between an event and the recounting of it.⁸⁰

As a family member I was assigned status as “person of interest” and subject to confidential information that other media members were not. This gave me access to

⁷⁷ Alex Gerbaz, “Direct Address, Ethical Imagination and Errol Morris’s Interrotron,” *Film-Philosophy* 12, no.2 (2009): 18. Accessed April 2, 2015 at <http://www.film-philosophy.com/index.php/fp/article/view/55/40>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Fox, *Our Steve*, 15:02.

⁸⁰ Laub, 69.

meetings, evidence and documents that otherwise would have remained concealed. While the inquests took place in Warrington, UK, my geographic location in Toronto allowed me to ‘skype’ into meetings and record situations that would otherwise not have been documented. This was a unique situation that was unlikely to ever be repeated. I was privileged to be able to document this as I experienced it. Authenticity was a priority to me and I was a witness to the process of the inquests – a position no other filmmaker had the privilege of experiencing along with me rather than through me. In addition, filming in this way allowed some degree of objectivity within what was otherwise, a very subjective film. I was not attempting to ‘convince’ anyone of anything, rather, events unfolded within a timeline that allowed for their seamless inclusion. This filming of events as they unfolded however also became an ethical and complex issue for this film.

This technique of filming the “skyped” conversations, brought with it an ethical consideration – do I declare that I am recording these lawyer/client privileged conversations and risk being excluded from them altogether, or do I record them for my own sake and records and using them only for reference? I opted for the latter, but upon review of the footage realised that these scenes were key moments in the process. When starting the meetings with the lawyers I had no idea what would transpire. These scenes became pivotal in the transparency of the film and the documentary process.

The transcription process was therapeutic in that it allowed me to directly engage with content I had long avoided. There were times when I had been so engrossed in the process of the engagement as a family member and as a little sister that I stopped being a filmmaker. Having visual records of the process that I was forced to go through meant I was able to digest the subject matter in a more clinical manner, forcing me back into my role as a filmmaker. The benefits of this were twofold: I was able to deal with the trauma

directly which also allowed the audience to gain direct experience through my experiences, and I was able to return to the experience and pull out what was relevant to the subject matter.

Although the film was edited by me, an obviously subjective family member, it is purposefully devoid of personal opinion on key individuals who were responsible for the disaster and evidence presented at court. This is for two reasons: one being that at the time of filming the Coroner had placed the Contempt of Court Act over the Hillsborough Disaster restricting public opinion, and two, a desire to appear to remain somewhat objective, or at least, subjectively truthful when showing evidence. I appreciate that I have earned the right to the subjective use of “I” in my film, but without being able to show a lot of the visual evidence that the film is based around, it would not have had the same depth. It was imperative to me to first ‘earn’ the audiences trust in order to delegitimise any of the predeterminations viewers held.

*The Film, Our Steve*⁸¹

I didn’t know what was going to happen or what my film would include when I began the process. Other than an intended trip for my brother’s individual inquest, I had no shooting scheduled or storyboard outline in place. The inquest timetable was in constant flux and I found myself booked for a trip home to the UK in May 2015 for my brother’s case, which subsequently got moved to October. I went home in May regardless and during that trip I filmed many scenes that eventually formed the opening chapter of the film and laid the foundation for what would follow.

⁸¹ Fox, *Our Steve*.

Chapter One – History and Character Development (00:00 – 18:30)

The film itself is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with character building and the history of Hillsborough up until the opening of the new inquests. There is a build-up of character for both my brother Steve and my Mum, allowing the audience insight into the person who died and a sense of the mother who loved him. The footage used from the recording of Mum reading out Steve's 'Pen Portrait' cut with archival images of my family shows development in my brother's character despite his physical absence and also introduces the relationship I have with my Mum and our family's shared sense of humour (02:35).

It was important to me to remain light hearted with some scenes such as the one introducing both Mum and I in an interview immediately after the opening sequence (02:28) and the scene at my brother's grave in order to prevent the risk of losing my audience to the weight of the subject matter. Humour was and still is a huge part of my upbringing and my family and I wanted this to show throughout the film in an equally authentic way. The graveyard scene is followed by a defining scene within the film where my Mum talks about how waiting for justice and the truth to come out has made her feel like she's been "standing guard over a grave"(14:45). This is a pivotal moment as it introduces the audience to the personal element of the prolonged trauma that has been suffered over the years.

The interweaving of the early stages of the inquests with archival footage that outlines the disaster and what happened is purposefully short within the film. Other investigative documentaries on Hillsborough have intentionally and accurately covered this and although the history is needed to understand why the inquests have been re-opened, it's relevance is limited only for the purpose of understanding the premise of this

film. This historical documentation within the film gives the disaster context; it covers in a broad sense what actually happened on the day and introduces both the facts and the mistruths surrounding the disaster. It also lays the visual foundations for the later part of the film where my brother's movements are covered. The lack of visual evidence relating to this forces the audience to rely on this visual knowledge when listening to the narration of his final movements.

The history of the trauma and injustice is highlighted within a speech given by David Cameron, British Prime Minister in 2012, where he states that what took place in the wake of the disaster "was wrong" on many levels (13:01). Purposefully chosen in order to show the scale and longevity of the disaster, as well the political implications of the inquests, this scene introduces the narrative of what was to come at the new inquests. The first chapter of the film ends with a very poignant scene with Bill Kenwright, Chairman of Everton Football Club, Liverpool FC's neighbouring Club, who introduces the concept of a collective "fight" and it's uniqueness to Liverpool as a city (17:52). This opening chapter stages the private, public and political topics that are addressed throughout the film.

Chapter Two – The Forensic Investigation (18:31 – 34:36)

The second chapter the film moves into a more investigative role as the viewer takes part in the scouring of evidence presented to both Mum and I in an effort to locate my brother Steve within the Hillsborough stadium on the day of the disaster. The audience is directly confronted with disturbing and horrific footage as Mum and I search to find my brother amidst what can only be described as a 'pile of bodies' (23:15). The whole process of an inquest is very evidential and it would be easy as an observer to get

caught up in depersonalisation of the evidence; the scouring through footage of the disaster to find for a foot, a head of hair, or some identifiable trait belonging to my brother is both intriguing and disturbing. Ownership, on my part to the difficult imagery shown in the film is not that obvious, in fact, my approach to such footage is somewhat clinical. However, in the last skype session within this chapter, the trauma caused by this process finally becomes apparent to both myself and the audience (23:31). The fact that I am able to allow the audience to take part in this is imperative in my aim to earn their trust as a filmmaker and narrator. This scene is a pivotal point as I not only acknowledge the extent of the trauma of Hillsborough but also include the audience in this process.

Not knowing the full extent of what happened at the disaster for over two decades has been the impetus in the fight for justice. The audience participates in the emotions that shaped this experience. I had considered this scene to come at the final arc of the film as it is one of the most pivotal ones to the overarching theme, but the chronological order within the film was paramount to the film's transparency.

The final part of this chapter ends with Steve's individual inquest. Cameras were not allowed inside the court, so I portrayed this scene by having the audience travel with my family and I to the inquests, waiting just as we had, listening to expectations, experiencing our trepidations and feeling our silence as they became direct witness to our story. This is the pinnacle of the film and the reason why the film exists - all of the previous scenes build up to this point where everything we know about the last day of my brother's life is pulled together into a chronological order and laid out on a linear timeline. Although there is no visual evidence for Steve between 3:02pm and 4:27pm, you learn through narration and images exactly what happened to my brother on the last day of his life (32:43).

Chapter Three – Moving on (34:37 – 47:50)

The final chapter of the film documents the reality of my life here in Canada, the results of the inquests and the more positive effects Hillsborough continues to have on me. Starting with a scene at Wembley stadium, you again see the collective spirit of the Liverpool fans along with the emotions of bereavement felt for my brother even 25 years later. As I attend an FA Cup semi-final, where Liverpool is playing against Aston Villa, I am very conscious of reliving the last moments of my brother's life. This scene juxtaposes the horror of soccer in the 1980's where people were herded like cattle into pens, compared to present day where there are all-seated luxury football stadiums. As I approach the ground within a jovial crowd of people, I see a fan holding a poster that says "Never buy the Sun," highlighting that it is not just the families that have been damaged by Hillsborough but also an entire community (35:03). It was through the collective strength of Liverpool fans that Hillsborough was brought back into the political arena and this scene is my personal (silent) nod to all of the Liverpool fans that aided that process.

The film then moves on to another speech by Andy Burnham highlighting how the people of Liverpool have "made this city stronger," how they "will make our country fairer," and how they "have given hope to people the world over" (38:31). The results of the Hillsborough Independent Panel Report and subsequent re-opening of the Hillsborough Inquests have led to questions regarding how police monitor their own and how an Independent Panel may be the only way to uncover truth surrounding other injustices from the 1980's, such as 'Orgreave' and the 'Birmingham Six' where despite

widely known ‘truths’ in relation to the events no police officers have, to date, been held accountable.⁸²

Following Andy Burnham’s speech the film then moves back to the inquests where the results of the long awaited verdict of “Unlawful Killing” is surmised and the vindication of the Liverpool fans is given.⁸³ The scene is an emotional one, and again highlights the community of the families as they gather outside the courthouse for a spontaneous rendition of the adopted Liverpool Football Club anthem “You’ll Never Walk Alone” (40:26). This chapter ends with a poignant game of local soccer where you slowly begin to realise that the main focus is a player who is wearing a top with the number 96 and that player is me. This scene pays tribute to the collective community I have managed to foster here in Toronto and how soccer has continued to be a positive force in my everyday life, a direct influence of my brother Steve’s passion for the game.

Throughout the history of Hillsborough there has been an uninvited silence and it was important to me to try to reflect that in the film. The choice to have specific music included was considered and purposeful. I didn’t want to ‘fill’ silence with music that had no personal meaning to me, or to Hillsborough, and I didn’t want to use it to ‘hide’ any technical issues I may or may not have had with any audio. I wanted to remain true to my craft. I am first and foremost a sister before filmmaker and I’m ok with not making the ‘perfect’ film.

Peoples ‘demand’ for the memories of victims to never be forgotten is often not so the survivors can remember, but so the ones who never experienced the event do not

⁸² Dr Bharat Malkani, “Policing the Police,” *University of Birmingham*, accessed on June 15, 2016, <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/policing-the-police-bmalkani2.aspx>

⁸³ “General Questionnaire for Jury Determinations,” *HM Coroner for South Yorkshire (East) and West Yorkshire (West)*: 13. https://hillsboroughinquests.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/General-jury-questionnaire-FINAL-54004274_1.pdf

forget. "...the demand to never forget is not directed at survivors, who can never forget, but at those who never experienced the event."⁸⁴ In that sense, the various tribute songs written about and for the victims of the Hillsborough Disaster are a call to never forget. Billy Bragg, a well know British political song writer and singer, wrote a tribute song to the people of Liverpool highlighting their boycott of News International's Sun Newspaper after the Hillsborough Disaster.⁸⁵ Bragg's political, social and creative approach to the issue inspired me to include his words. Michael Nyman, an accomplished music composer with A CBE, who has a list of successful film musical scores to his name, wrote a piece of music called "Symphony No 11: Hillsborough Memorial". The piece, "The 96" represents the disaster both audibly and visually on a musical scale. Both Bragg and Nyman have used their music to prevent people from forgetting and I made a conscious decision to use both of these pieces within the film.

The film ends with the final piece of (moving) music "Angels and Anchors", by London (ON) based artist Sarah Smith. Within the film there is reference made to Steve watching from above and this song honours his continuing presence. The visuals seen accompanying Smith's song sat with me for many months. I always knew that I wanted to acknowledge all of the 96 victims in some way but was never sure how. To scroll though their names on screen felt too impersonal and to combine them into one single image felt too underwhelming. I decided to fade into each image of each victim as the last image faded out. I used a mosaic of the 96 faces that has appeared on many social media sites and in the press. The mosaic itself features the victims in alphabetical order left to right, top to bottom. I wanted to place the faces in the position on screen in which

⁸⁴ Andrea Liss, introduction to *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust* (U of Minnesota Press, 1998), xiii.

⁸⁵ "Liverpool was right about News International all along," *Guardian*, accessed on June 16, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jul/13/billy-bragg-never-buy-the-sun>

they appear in the mosaic, but I didn't want them to come up in an organised way. Each victim was assigned a number, which is referred to many times throughout police documentation as their “body” number; this is the number they were identified with at the time of the disaster. It was this order that I used for the closing sequence. The names used under the 96 images in this final piece were also as deliberate choice. As a family member myself, it is important to me how Steve is referred to, so I wanted to give the same consideration to the other families. In researching the lists of all of the victims there were many different ways in which the person was represented. ‘Our Steve’ for instance was mostly referenced as Thomas Steven Fox, sometimes just Thomas Fox and sometimes Steve or Steven Fox. Shortly after the disaster, Liverpool Football Club decided to put up a memorial to all of the victims outside of their ground. I recalled them writing to my parents to ask what “name” we would like on the memorial for Steve. Each name on the memorial has been considered by the family members, so it was these that I chose to use in the final piece.

Conclusion

Twenty-seven years after the Hillsborough Disaster the search for accountability continues but some peace has been reached through the inquest process that took over 319 days between March 31, 2014 and April 26, 2016. The final verdict “unlawful killing” was delivered with a narrative that finally gave blame to ex-Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield.⁸⁶ Stating that the match commander owed a “duty of care” to those who died that day, the jury found him in breach of that care which amounts to “gross

⁸⁶ “Jury Determinations,” *Hillsborough Inquests*, May 6, 2016, https://hillsboroughinquests.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/General-jury-questionnaire-FINAL-54004274_1.pdf.

negligence”.⁸⁷ Currently the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is formally considering whether any charges should be brought against any individual or corporate body based on all available evidence. It is hoped that by the end of 2016 criminal prosecutions will begin against many former officers of South Yorkshire Police as well as other corporate bodies who showed negligence on that fateful day.

Throughout my adult life I have taken every opportunity to educate people about the truth of Hillsborough but often I subconsciously neglect to mention that my brother died there. I was still at high school when Hillsborough happened and I distinctly remember walking through school on the Tuesday morning after the disaster and being the sister whose big brother hadn't come home. As I walked down the corridors I became acutely aware of how others perceived my grief, as if it were contagious and could be caught like a common cold. My parents struggled with their own trauma to such an extent that I didn't want to burden them with my own feelings and confusion about what had happened. I learned to cope by pretending that I was OK and it appeared easier for everyone that I continued that way. In actuality it took a move across continents, medication and many years of therapy to finally break through these habits I had adopted. Hillsborough wasn't just a disaster that killed 96 people, it was a thousand sleepless nights and almost three decades of grief for many, many, many people and a very difficult thing to convey to anyone outside of the collective community that experienced it directly. Hillsborough was trauma exacerbated by the decades of injustice that followed.

I chose to use autoethnography through documentary film as the vehicle to convey my story. Such a submersive and inclusive method, combined with the

⁸⁷ “Jury Determinations.”

experiences of such a distinctly traumatic event could have left my audience feeling completely overwhelmed by the final film; I was conscious in my choice to avoid this. I have always advocated that to truly ‘know’ Hillsborough it must be truly felt. I had lost a large part of myself to Hillsborough and I feared that a truthful and well-executed autoethnographic film may jeopardise how far I had come. However, this stylistic approach combined with intermittent “scouse” humour was the perfect combination to avoid losing my audience in the same way I had to the trauma of Hillsborough.⁸⁸ Throughout this project I advocated for objectivity but the reality of the circumstances are unavoidable – I am the sister of a victim of what turned out to be the biggest cover-up in British legal history.⁸⁹ It took me making this film to realise that it is ok to be subjective when it comes to Hillsborough.

Back in 2014 I knew I wanted to make this film but I had no idea what the final product would look like. In all honesty I did not know what the final result of the inquests would be or that I would find myself sitting at a computer at five-o-clock in the morning scouring through hours of footage of the disaster in order to find out what happened to my brother. Initially, even though I perceived my role as both participant and filmmaker, I didn’t fully appreciate the emotional impact or reality of what was happening. But, through the editing, review and transcription process I began to absorb the information as a sister, enabling myself to explore and experience the emotions surrounding Hillsborough for the first time in my life. There were many moments when I felt a range of emotions, including anger, loss, grief, and shock, emotions that I would never have experienced had I not been making this film. Documenting this process has been a

⁸⁸ Tony Crowley, *Scouse: A Social and Cultural History*, (Liverpool University Press, 2012): 87.

⁸⁹ Conn, *Deadly Mistakes*.

privilege but Hillsborough deserves a broader audience. By positioning myself as a filmmaker who is very passionate about the subject matter I dealt with, I feel it is my responsibility to share my own story to a wider audience.

When looking at trauma within the social context, and in particular as it relates to Hillsborough, the knowledge gained through the new inquests is exactly what we the families needed in order to put the pieces of the puzzle together. What society needed was to understand the fight it took to get there, to that final verdict. Questions have finally been answered in a way we can process and validate, allowing healing to take place. Both the making of *Our Steve* and the final film, through narrative and reflexivity, lends weight to this validation by showing the political within a personal context and how clarity can lead to final understanding and acceptance.

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