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D.A. PENNEBAKER
AND THE POLITICS AND AESTHETICS
OF
MATURE-PERIOD DIRECT CINEMA

by

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Submitted for the qualification of
Doctor of Philosophy in Film Studies

School of Media, Film and Music
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September 2015

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

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D.A. Pennebaker and the Politics and Aesthetics of Mature-Period Direct Cinema

Summary

In this thesis, I offer a reappraisal of direct cinema through a study of documentarian D.A. Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. This is an unexamined period in Pennebaker's career that offers new perspectives on an often-maligned form of documentary. The period under study ranges from 1968 to 1970 and encompasses a range of films, commercials, abandoned projects and personal works. I focus on three films: *Eat the Document*, *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.* By shifting the critical focus away from the early and classical period of direct cinema, as well as its 'canonical' films, I ask: How does direct cinema engage with the world in its later stages? What can be understood about direct cinema by examining works that do not circulate in 'the canon,' and how does this analysis change our perception of it?

Two further questions guide my study of Pennebaker: What are the aesthetic properties and ideological preoccupations that characterise Pennebaker's mature period? What is the political address of this set of films and how does that reposition the politics of direct cinema as a whole? Methodologically, I employ a close textual analysis of the films and an historical analysis of the period, conduct personal interviews with Pennebaker, and engage with intellectual debates within documentary studies to answer these questions. My study builds upon recent trends in direct cinema scholarship, which have opened up new critical horizons by returning the critical focus to the film texts themselves and the cultural and social contexts in which they were produced.

I contribute knowledge to documentary studies by focusing critical attention on a neglected period in a key documentarian's career. Additionally, I perform a textual analysis of the period's films that focuses on the materiality of sync sound – the crucial, but largely neglected, aesthetic characteristic of direct cinema – as a means of investigating my ideological and political line of questioning. I also develop two key concepts: the performative documentary, which builds upon existing definitions by Waugh ([1990] 2011), Nichols (1994) and Bruzzi (2006; 2013) and furthers the concept through an application of Brecht's alienation effect; and 'kinetic progressions,' which, I argue, is Pennebaker's cinematic process of signification that exploits classical direct cinema's emphasis on present-ness and found symbolism to further formally evolve the language of direct cinema in a way that fulfils its potentiality for political discourse.

Acknowledgements

First of all, and most of all, to Cathrin, for her love, unwavering support, infinite patience, and for never losing faith in me or us. You are my rock. I hope I make you proud.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Thomas Austin and Professor Ben Highmore, for their support and motivation throughout the research and writing process. Their feedback was always insightful and encouraging, and this thesis has absolutely benefitted from the detailed attention given to me and the many chapter drafts they saw.

This project is indebted to the support of the University of Sussex School of Media, Film and Music and the University of Sussex Doctoral School for funding a research trip to New York City that allowed me to interview D.A. Pennebaker and Albert Maysles as well as several international conference trips where I tested early versions of this research before audiences.

My most sincere thanks to D.A. Pennebaker and the late Albert Maysles for taking the time to speak with me so candidly about their contributions to direct cinema, sharing their ruminations on documentary as a form, and providing me with access to some of their rarer films. Our discussions launched this project in a direction it would not have otherwise gone. Special thanks to Julia Wrenn at Pennebaker Hegedus Films and Kay Dilday at Maysles Films for arranging these interviews. Thanks also to Carrie Hintz at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University for allowing me access to the Maysles brothers paper archive. Additional thanks to Pennebaker Hegedus Films and the Columbia Oral History Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University for allowing me special permission to read and quote from 'The Reminiscences of Donn Alan Pennebaker.'

Thanks to Dr. Keith Beattie and Vince Farinaccio for our many exchanges about Pennebaker and Bob Dylan, respectively, which have greatly informed this project. I am especially grateful to Rick Ritter for providing me with a couch to sleep on during my chaotic New York research trip in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy; to Robert Algeo for some last-minute Photoshop work; and to Dr. Ryan Burns, Dr. Michael Lawrence and Dr. Ajay Verghese, whose friendship, support and motivation helped me through the bleaker parts of the past four years.

To Mom and Dad, who encouraged and nurtured my creative and scholarly endeavours from before I could even walk and made innumerable sacrifices over the years to support them. To Gabrielle and Steven, whose own achievements make me proud to be their brother.

Finally, to Annie, whose waggy tail, big smile and undying love of playing ball always reminded me of all that is pure and good in this world when I needed it most.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

D.A. Pennebaker and Direct Cinema's 'Search for New Structures'

Introduction

When embarking on a re-evaluation of direct cinema, Brian Winston is usually a productive starting point. The following quotation concludes his 1983 article, 'Direct Cinema: The Third Decade,' and – although this excerpt is hardly indicative of it – the essay actually contains his most sincerely complimentary analysis of direct cinema:

They [direct cinema filmmakers] are not careful about the continuing effect of their work on the people they use as subjects. They are unprepared to address the paradox of their own reputations as filmmakers (or artists) against the supposed transparency of their fly-on-the-wall techniques. They will not acknowledge the essential work of fictionalization that goes on in the cutting room. The result is that direct cinema has been sailing away on whaling expeditions without proper charts, seeking quite the wrong sort of beasts. The crisis of documentary is therefore deepening. The danger is that film's ability to tell us anything of the world will be lost in the wreck of the direct-cinema idea. (Winston, [1983] 1988, p.529)

In these closing comments, Winston returns to a colourful whaling metaphor first evoked in the essay's opening to effectively summarise the ongoing problem of direct cinema, whose complications, according to Winston, only seem to accrue with the passage of time and are expediting a crisis of the documentary form. Winston's contributions to the critical literature on direct cinema are field-defining (and are charted in the following chapter), but the enormous shadow cast by his influential stature has perhaps closed off more critical avenues than it has opened. It is also worth noting that Winston's perception of direct cinema – like that of most scholars – is based on a specific and limited set of films and filmmakers; this thesis aims to change that.¹ His conclusion here prompts questions about the legacy of direct cinema and what it is based in – today, more than five decades later – and highlights the necessity of reopening debates about the form from new critical perspectives.

The Purpose of the Present Study

This introduction provides an overview of my analysis of the politics and aesthetics of D.A. Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. Here, I outline the purpose of the project and my approach. Then, I argue its relevance by specifying the

gap in knowledge that it fills, and define my own intervention. Following a brief chapter breakdown, I establish crucial groundwork in several key areas. Firstly, I argue for the periodisation of direct cinema and define Pennebaker's 'mature period' direct cinema and situate his aesthetic approach within it. I then offer an analysis of the economic and commercial context of Pennebaker's mature period so that its distinctiveness can be better understood.

What can be understood about direct cinema by examining works that do not circulate in 'the canon,' and how does this analysis change our perception of it? Early and classical direct cinema has a modernist edge in which it revels in its present-ness and 'the thrill of the new.' However, what comes after 'the new'? How does Pennebaker's direct cinema engage with the world when the new is no longer enough? As Pennebaker says, 'possibility, to me, is the key to film. That you're showing a reality, and people get into it, but what's interesting is not the picture that's there, but the possibility of what's to come' (1983, p.92). This thesis represents one attempt at re-evaluating the effect of the canon and bringing to light an unknown direct cinema through an investigation into the politics and aesthetics of the mature-period direct cinema of D.A. Pennebaker.ⁱⁱ

Pennebaker: Gaps in the Literature

Pennebaker is experiencing a surge in critical attention at the moment. In 2011, Keith Beattie published the first book-length study of the filmmaker, which was followed up with a volume of collected interviews co-edited by Beattie and Trent Griffiths in 2015. My own interview with Pennebaker was published in *Studies in Documentary Film*, vol. 9 no. 3 in November 2015, and Beattie is also currently at work on a forthcoming monograph on *Dont Look Back* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967) to be published in July 2016. However, there is a distinct lack of scholarly attention paid to Pennebaker's aesthetics akin to the key scholarship on Wiseman by Nichols (1978) and Grant (1992). While Rothman (1997) and Hall (1998) are examples of close, critical readings of a specific Pennebaker film, *Dont Look Back*, neither author works towards the structural underpinnings of his work, as Nichols does with Wiseman's when drawing out his films' 'mosaic' structure. This is something that this project attempts to remedy – especially in chapter three, where I examine the mechanics of Pennebaker's mature direct cinema style.

Previous studies – most especially the recent work of Dave Saunders (2007) – have considered direct cinema within the social, political, and counter-cultural context of its era, while decades of previous critical attention have been devoted to its ethical and aesthetic problems, such as its pretence of objectivity and authenticity, its supposed unsophisticated rhetoric and practice, lack of self-reflexivity, and propensity towards voyeurism.ⁱⁱⁱ This study will not sustain the latter, well-worn school of thought that persisted well beyond the era to which it was relevant. While this theoretical approach was relevant and innovative in the 1970s into the 1980s, E. Ann Kaplan signalled a sea change in the critical reception of direct cinema in 1982; she advocates a more progressive theoretical approach from a perspective that ‘sees realism as a *possible* mode given that we now know more about the way it operates [. . .] and understand[s] it as a system of representation, not truth’ (Kaplan, [1982] 1988, p.96; emphasis mine). This is the direction that more recent scholarship, such as the work of Jeanne Hall (1998), Stella Bruzzi (2006) and Saunders (2007), has taken. It demonstrates a movement away from the preoccupations with the rhetoric of direct cinema and focuses critical attention back to the films themselves. The following chapter charts the field’s critical landscape in detail.

My Intervention: Exploring the Unknown Direct Cinema of D.A. Pennebaker

In this thesis, I offer a reappraisal of direct cinema through a study of documentarian D.A. Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema. This is an unexamined period in Pennebaker’s career that offers new perspectives on an often-maligned form of documentary. The period under study spans 1968 to 1970 and encompasses a wide range of films, commercials, abandoned projects and personal works. I focus on three films: *Eat the Document* (Bob Dylan and Howard Alk, produced between 1966 and 1968, released 1972), *Sweet Toronto* (D.A. Pennebaker, produced between 1969 and 1970, released 1971), and *One P.M.* (D.A. Pennebaker, produced between 1968 and 1969, released 1972). Methodologically, I have employed a close textual analysis of the films and an historical analysis of the period, conducted personal interviews with Pennebaker, and engaged with intellectual debates within documentary studies to answer these questions. My study builds upon recent trends in direct cinema scholarship, which have opened up new critical horizons by returning the critical focus to the film texts themselves and the cultural and social contexts in which they were produced.

This study aims to take a number of distinctive approaches to its analysis of D.A. Pennebaker and direct cinema to distinguish it from previous studies. Firstly, I want to challenge and re-direct the discourse of authorship surrounding direct cinema filmmakers. For example, Tinkcom (2011) asserts that the ascension of direct cinema coincided with the ‘simultaneous discovery that the white male “universal” observer/filmmaker was not exempt from having an identity politics’ (p.16).

Throughout my analysis, I want to draw out an understanding of Pennebaker’s identity politics, an approach largely ignored in the study of direct cinema, and write about him in a way not usually afforded for documentarians (for more on this, see chapter four). Pennebaker’s is a direct cinema that involves ‘integrating a deeply subjective personal perception of life with the objective reality of what is seen’ (Marcorelles, 1973, p.32).^{iv}

Pennebaker is not often considered in relation to his outgrowth from avant-garde cinema; in fact, his early, developmental years as a filmmaker were spent collaborating with such notable avant-documentarians as Shirley Clarke and Francis Thompson.^v Intriguingly, specific modernist preoccupations of the avant-garde reassert themselves in this period of Pennebaker’s career (such as his disavowal of informationalism), and this project considers their function in the evolving aesthetic of direct cinema. In his mature period, Pennebaker also demonstrates a more politically urgent direct cinema. It is well-known that the early direct cinema of Robert Drew embodied a type of American liberalism in which the presentation of the ‘truth’ of a situation was considered a sufficient act of social advocacy. However, Pennebaker’s direct cinema – and especially in his mature period – shows the limitations of this liberalism by pushing the form beyond the Drew approach through a new kind of signification practice (Chanan, 2007, p.180).

Two questions guide this study of Pennebaker: What are the aesthetic properties and ideological preoccupations that characterise Pennebaker’s mature period? What is the political address of this set of films and how does that reposition the politics of direct cinema as a whole? I contribute knowledge to documentary studies by focusing critical attention on a neglected period – and the unorthodox collaborations that define it – in a key documentarian’s career, and, placing it within its proper economic and industrial context, which is rarely considered in existing analyses of the form. In addition, my textual analysis chiefly focuses on one aspect of direct cinema most of the existing scholarship ignores, the materiality of sync sound – the most crucial, but largely neglected, aesthetic characteristic of the form – as a means of investigating my

ideological and political line of questioning. Across the thesis, I develop two key concepts: the performative documentary, which builds upon existing definitions by Waugh ([1990] 2011), Nichols (1994) and Bruzzi (2006; 2013) and furthers the concept through an application of Brecht's alienation effect; and 'kinetic progressions,' which, I argue, is Pennebaker's cinematic process of signification that exploits classical direct cinema's emphasis on present-ness and found symbolism to evolve further the formal language of direct cinema in a way that fulfils its potentiality for political discourse.

Pennebaker says:

[W]hat I wanted was not to fix on a series of pictures or of cuts or of images, but to have something that would start here and just keep moving. Keep moving in some inexplicable way [. . .] You just find yourself tumbling along. Just when you're about to grab ahold of it and say, 'I see what that's about,' you'd be at the next thing. So it would always elude you, and lead you further into it. And just when you felt you had comprehended it, it would surprise you with opening up and moving in some other way. (Pennebaker, 1983, p.93)

Throughout this thesis, I explore what identifying this device in Pennebaker's work does and explains about Pennebaker as a filmmaker and the broader legacy and understanding of direct cinema.

In this thesis, I argue that: *Eat the Document*, embodying my intervention to the concept of performative documentary, presages the amplification of poetics and the gestural embodiment of voice that characterises Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. *Sweet Toronto*, the key film of Pennebaker's mature period, represents a fulfilment of the potentiality promised by early direct cinema. Here, Pennebaker pushes the established conventions of direct cinema into more complex configurations – which I have termed kinetic progressions – that amplify the voice of the filmmaker as well as direct cinema's status as a personal cinema. Pennebaker's mature-period interventions are taken to their limits in *One P.M.*, where Pennebaker's cynical criticism of Godard's politics and dissent from his methodology is a significant political gesture that demonstrates the political potential of direct cinema, and, at the same time, auto-critiques it. In *One P.M.*, Pennebaker's kinetic progressions take on a new form; his dialectical formal approach evolves from *Sweet Toronto* into one that showcases and privileges unified conceptual space over unified diegetic space.

Structure of the Thesis

The most effective way to explore this line of argumentation is through a thematic analysis of D.A. Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. Therefore, each chapter's methodological enquiry is built around a one particular film text that serves as a major case study and is supplemented by the analysis of films that support and further the organising principle of each chapter. For example, my discussion of the stage as a space of utopic fulfilment or denial in chapter three centres around Bob Dylan and the Hawks' live performances in *Eat the Document*, but is also furthered by the discussion of the manifestation of this concept in *Sweet Toronto* and *Monterey Pop* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968). *Sweet Toronto* itself is the major case study of chapter four, where elements of *Daybreak Express* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1953-57) and *Breaking It Up at the Museum* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1964) are also drawn to the fore. While, for the most part, discussion of each major case study is limited to its headlining chapter, specific thematic concerns – particularly aesthetic and ideological issues raised by Pennebaker's deployment of sync sound in this period – are sustained, progress and develop across the entirety of this thesis. As will be discernable from the outline below, an emphasis on the aesthetics, politics and ideological effects of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, broadly speaking, unifies the three case study chapters.

I begin my study of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema in chapter three with a discussion that draws together the thematic strands of the stage, utopia, and performance through what at first may seem like an outlier – a film for which he provided the cinematography, yet did not edit, conceptualise or 'author,' *Eat the Document*. *Eat the Document* is an effective catalyst for my study, as it opens up a discussion of the way in which classical direct cinema was being critiqued in this period. There is a peculiar tension in the Pennebaker-filmed actuality footage and the Howard Alk and Bob Dylan-authored critique inflicted upon it. It represents a working upon the classical model of direct cinema, thus signifying a move into a post-classical phase. In this chapter, I draw upon Marin (1984) to argue that *Eat the Document* marks a utopic intervention within direct cinema that engenders a reconceptualisation of this particular form of documentary. It amplifies certain latent characteristics of direct cinema, particularly in its production of a scopic regime, its potential for political address and its embodiment of a performative form. Furthermore, it anticipates the amplification of documentary poetics, the gestural embodiment of documentary voice, and dialectical form that characterises Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. My work here also draws upon Waugh (1990), Nichols (1994) and Bruzzi (2013) to

formulate a new definition of the performative documentary to argue that *Eat the Document*, with its disruptive structure, foregrounds film's status as a performance enacted by its makers. Brecht's alienation effect, the defining characteristic of *Eat the Document*'s performance (at work in the film's formal disavowal of unity and emphasis on rupture), is further manifested within the diegesis of the film (the self-consciously alienating presentation of Dylan and the Hawks' confrontational stage performances). Lastly, this chapter bridges the gap into Pennebaker's mature period by tracing the ways in which his formal engagement with countercultural, utopian themes in *Monterey Pop* and *Sweet Toronto* are either supported or undercut by his exploitation of direct cinema conventions (gestures that Marin broadly calls utopic interventions). Here, I am concerned with the political address of both films in relation to *Eat the Document*, which I explore through an analysis of all three films' treatment of sync sound and its particular ideological effects. This opens an ongoing analysis of sync sound in Pennebaker's mature period that is sustained throughout my further discussion of *Sweet Toronto* in chapter four and *One P.M.* in chapter five.

In chapter four, I examine the modernist edge to Pennebaker's work in a study that is concerned with the themes of machinery, labour and the cinema of attractions. I argue that direct cinema can be understood as a continuation of Gunning's concept of the cinema of attractions and explore the ways in which *Sweet Toronto*, a characteristic example of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, represents a fulfilment of the potentiality promised by early direct cinema. I attempt to do for Pennebaker what Nichols has done for Wiseman: drawing upon the work of Cohen (2012) and Alsop (2014), I perform an analysis of the mechanics of his direct cinema and argue that what I have termed 'kinetic progressions' are the key conceptual and structural component in Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. I use this newly-developed concept to counter existing arguments from scholars such as Waugh ([1977] 2011) who accuse direct cinema of apoliticality by demonstrating how Pennebaker structurally engages with the political through his authorial exploitation of the ideological effects of sync sound in direct cinema. *Sweet Toronto* is a particularly useful case study for this analysis; it is a post-classical refinement of direct cinema in which certain stylistic and ideological trends have been amplified and structurally reconfigured. For example, this thesis will explore how Pennebaker's mature-period films depend upon dialectical structures to produce meaning, which is a significant shift from his classical period.

In chapter five, I explore the most distinctive film of Pennebaker's mature period: *One P.M.* Here, Pennebaker's kinetic progressions evolve from *Sweet Toronto* into a new form that privileges unified conceptual space over unified diegetic space. I conceive of *One P.M.* as an updating of the city symphony film and conceptualise Pennebaker's structural approach to it as a form of cognitive mapping; Pennebaker remaps Godard's cinematic topography as a *dérive* that transforms the film itself into a new conceptual and utopic space of political exchange. Concurrently, Godard embeds within the film a critique of direct cinema, which I explore through a study of *One P.M.*'s critique of direct cinema's fetishisation of sync sound. This final analysis brings this thesis' overarching discussion of sync sound in Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema to its logical conclusion, and considers the implications for Pennebaker's aesthetic development and engagement with direct cinema ideologies in following years.

Direct Cinema

Direct cinema is a form of observational documentary that was developed in the early 1960s predicated on the use of emerging lightweight, handheld cameras and portable synchronous sound recording equipment.^{vi} Revolutionary technological breakthroughs developed by Pennebaker and filmmaking colleague Ricky Leacock under the auspices of producer Robert Drew in the early 1960s allowed for sound and image to be recorded in complete synchronisation independent of any physical connectivity. This provided filmmakers with a new manageable mobility, which positioned them to observe and interact with the world in a new way in pursuit of a new cinematic realism.^{vii} The rhetoric of the handheld, 'wobbyscope' camera, grainy film, whip pans, occasional out-of-focus shot and muffled audio track became a codified aesthetic that came to signify 'realism.' There was a 'truth' in these flaws; they 'in themselves seemed to guarantee authenticity and thus became desirable, eventually developing into an aesthetic in their own right' (Macdonald & Cousins, 1998, p.250). Of course, direct cinema goes beyond any kind of superficial, codified aesthetic; Mamber (1973) distinguishes between a direct cinema look or style and a direct cinema approach or method (p.11).

The significance of the sync sound system to the idea, ideology and practice of direct cinema cannot be overemphasised; as previously stated, this thesis' analysis of

Pennebaker's mature period emphasises the ideological effects of his deployment of sync sound. Like Marcorelles (1973, p.63) and Chanan (2007, p.166), I argue that the direct cinema revolution is primarily one of sound. Sync sound enabled direct cinema filmmakers to pioneer new filming techniques that indicated a clear break with established methods of documentary filmmaking. Instead of filming 'in the same old way – shooting cutaways,' the sync sound system allowed filmmakers to move 'with the logic of what was being said' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.228). One of the early challenges the direct cinema approach posed was 'figur[ing] on shooting long sync shots because nobody shot sync'; everyone was accustomed to the established conventions of filming under the non-sync system, in which cameramen were 'trying to fabricate film, like gathering pieces to make a mosaic or something, where you put it together later. And everybody knew how cutaways fit' (*ibid.*).

Pennebaker's Mature-Period Direct Cinema

My intention in periodising Pennebaker's direct cinema is not to distort or reduce a complex and often arbitrary historical process into a neatly-structured historical narrative or to present it as an exercise without consequence, but to facilitate further critical debate by complicating the present understanding of Pennebaker's intervention in direct cinema and documentary in general. Of course, any act of periodisation is inevitably an invention, construction and distortion, just as the field of 'history' is in relation to the actual historical process. However, it is my hope that my intercession is not needlessly intrusive, or simply dresses up a body of work with a decorative flourish, but draws out and illuminates new historical meaning in an area of critical neglect.

It is necessary to periodise direct cinema for several reasons, all of which relate to the overwhelming critical focus on early and classical direct cinema. Critical attention needs to be drawn to the relatively untapped middle period, which produced experimental works that expanded the notion of direct cinema by building upon and surpassing the conventions established in the early and classical periods. Attention must also be drawn to the sheer diversity of direct cinema. Marcorelles famously boasts that 'direct cinema has as many styles as it has filmmakers' (1973, p.96). Similarly, James Blue notes that direct cinema 'has its orthodoxies, its heresies, its unitarians and its fundamentalists' (1964, p.22). Direct cinema often gets painted with such a broad

brush; typically, criticism of the failings and limitations of the Drew Associates films is levied against direct cinema as a whole.

My gesture here is nothing new. Stella Bruzzi, for example, recognises distinct ‘stages’ of observational documentary that extend up to the present moment (2006, p.120), while Michael Chanan classifies direct cinema by schools (he places Pennebaker within the ‘New York version’ of direct cinema, whose nexus is Drew Associates) (2007, p.177). Early direct cinema is generally agreed to refer to the body of work produced by the various Drew groups in the early 1960s, with the subsequent convention-defining, mid-to-late 1960s work of Leacock, Pennebaker, the Maysleses, Wiseman and their disciples as its classical period. What constitutes direct cinema’s late period is a bit more indeterminate, although I define it as interventions made to the form in the 1970s concurrent with the ascension of the politically reflexive documentary; the Maysles brothers’ *Grey Gardens* (1976) is a representative film.^{viii}

To this three-act configuration I add a fourth designation, the ‘mature’ period, between the classical and the late periods in order to distinguish works that represent ‘peak’ direct cinema. There is clear cause to treat this period as a time worthy of analysis and re-appraisal within the wider discourse that has defined direct cinema and continues to do so. Mature-period direct cinema is a post-classical phase in which the now-established conventions of the mode are taken as a starting point and are worked upon; thus, it can be considered convention-refining and a fulfilment of the direct cinema idea.^{ix} According to Stephen Mamber, the development of direct cinema ‘can best be seen as a search for new structures’ (1974, p.251). This thesis analyses the effects of the ‘new structures’ explored and constructed by Pennebaker at the peak of his career in a highly experimental – yet critically undeveloped – phase of filmmaking that follows the period that saw him establish the codes and conventions of his version of direct cinema. Pennebaker’s classical period is best represented by *Dont Look Back*. While I also place *Monterey Pop* within this period, it can perhaps be best understood as a transition film; there is a clear progression in Pennebaker’s direct cinema approach – especially in its deployment of sync sound – as chapter three will explore in detail. Accordingly, I identify Pennebaker’s mature period as being between the years 1968 and 1970.

The following is a comprehensive inventory of Pennebaker’s projects from the late 1960s into 1970, which includes films, television programmes, political commissions, commercials and unreleased personal works (I have drawn back slightly

into 1966 and 1967 to illustrate some works that inform and carry over into the period under study). Although the scope of this thesis accounts for only a fraction of the works on this list, it is important to situate those films within the broader expanse of Pennebaker's work as a filmmaker.

Title	Production Year	Release Year	Details
<i>You Know Something Is Happening</i>	1966	unreleased	Co-edited with Bob Neuwirth; see chapter three
<i>Eat the Document</i>	1966-68	1972	Cameraman for Dylan/Alk; see chapter three
<i>Wild 90</i>	1967	1967	Cameraman for Norman Mailer
<i>Monterey Pop</i>	1967-68	1968	See chapter three
<i>RainForest</i>	1968	1968	Segment for <i>PBL</i> special on the 1968 Buffalo Arts Festival, <i>Who's Afraid of the Avant-Garde?</i> for producer David Oppenheim; airs 21 April
<i>Beyond the Law</i>	1968	1968	Cameraman for Norman Mailer
<i>McCarthy</i>	1968	1968	Cameraman; commission for Senator Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign
<i>Two American Audiences</i>	1968	1968	Cameraman for Mark Woodcock; see chapter five
<i>One. P.M.</i>	1968-69	1972	See chapter five
<i>Awake at Generation</i>	1969	unreleased	Hendrix, Joplin, B.B. King, Buddy Guy and others at all-night wake for Martin Luther King, Jr. at New York's New Generation Club
<i>Moscow – Ten Years After</i>	1969	1969	An attempted experimental travelogue filmed on visit to screen <i>Monterey Pop</i>
<i>Lindsay for Mayor</i>	1969	1969	Cameraman; commercials for John Lindsay mayoral campaign
<i>Ramblin'</i>	1969-c.1975	unreleased	Footage shelved; later completed by Chris Hegedus
<i>Maidstone</i>	1969-70	1970	Cameraman for Norman Mailer
<i>Sweet Toronto</i>	1969-70	1971	See chapters three and four
<i>Alice Cooper</i>	1969-70	1970	Toronto Rock and Roll Revival set
<i>Original Cast Album: Company</i>	1970	1970	Made during dissolution of Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.
<i>John Glenn</i>	1970	1970	Cameraman; commission for Glenn for Senator
<i>Robert Casey</i>	1970	1970	Cameraman; commission for Casey for Governor
<i>Lampman's</i>	1970	unreleased	Cameraman; details unknown

<i>Boogie</i>			
<i>Eclipse</i>	1970-c.1979	unreleased	Attempt at reconnecting with estranged son Frazer through film; Hegedus later assists with editing
<i>Untitled Jojo Project</i>	1970-	unreleased	Ongoing project for son Jojo; one 400 foot roll of film shot on birthday every year

For example, the list illuminates a number of facets of Pennebaker's filmmaking practice that rarely receive critical consideration. Firstly, the commissioned political commercials and films serve as a reminder that running an independent filmmaking company can often be a less-than-glamorous operation that often necessitates taking on mundane work-for-hire simply to stay solvent. They ground Pennebaker's practice in the economic everyday. At the other end of the spectrum, highly personal works, such as *Eclipse*, the ongoing, untitled film project for his son, Jojo, and even *Moscow – Ten Years After* can be classified as works of artists' film that significantly revise and expand the established conception of Pennebaker as a filmmaker. Situated as both work-for-hire and artistic experimentation is the Norman Mailer film cycle, an intriguing, almost impenetrable set of films that expanded the vocabulary of Pennebaker's spontaneous camera in situations beyond traditional conceptions of direct cinema (see Beattie, 2011, pp.63-68 for a brief discussion). However, the focus of this project is not any of those strands – although they all inform a discussion that follows from my analysis of *One P.M.* in chapter five (and, furthermore, Pennebaker's personal films would make for a fascinating future study) – but the direct cinema films of this period.

There is a reciprocal relationship – both in this period and especially in the one that immediately follows, after Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.'s declaration of bankruptcy – between his company's financial state and the films produced by Pennebaker that is evidenced in their subject matter, aesthetic approach and ideological effects. I have demarcated the three-year period between 1968 and 1970 as a discrete and specific phase of filmmaking in which particular aesthetic and ideological shifts in Pennebaker's engagement with the practices that characterise direct cinema manifest themselves in his output. The period, which saw key transformations in the way in which direct cinema was distributed and exhibited, is marked by crucial economic turns for both Pennebaker and his company, Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., and direct cinema as a whole. Before turning to the films themselves, I want to consider the economic and commercial

context of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. To focus attention on economic matters is to gain an understanding of their function as structural forces that, as a matter of course, influenced and impacted Pennebaker's creative practice during this time. Therefore, a brief analysis of the shape of the market and the management of Leacock Pennebaker's business operations in this period is critical to defining my object of study.

The years 1968 through 1970 were a singular period of boom and bust for the corporation. Economic trends at Leacock Pennebaker saw the company plunge from peak growth to bankruptcy and dissolution. There are three key factors that progressively contributed to the collapse of Leacock Pennebaker: the rapid expansion of the company in the wake of *Monterey Pop*'s box office success (including the company's September 1968 corporate restructuring), the downturn in business in 1969, and the mismanagement and ultimate failure of the company's operations – most especially its foreign film distribution division. A closer examination of their relationship is required.

Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.: From Boom to Bust in the Late 1960s

The overwhelming commercial success of *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop* not only opened the theatrical market to direct cinema, but it was also thought to have heralded a new, alternative production and distribution paradigm that would initiate an era of popular independent cinema centred in New York (Christgau, 1970, p.94). A full-page trade ad in the 7 June 1967 *Variety* (Figure 1.1) reports *Dont Look Back*'s box office totals from its first commercial exhibition, which was at the Presidio in San Francisco, to be \$20,100 in the first week and \$24,000 in the second (Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., 1967a, p.19). According to another ad that ran on 20 September 1967 (Figure 1.2), the film's New York opening at the 34th St. East was just as successful, where it broke a house record previously held by *The Dirty Dozen* (Robert Aldrich, 1967) over the week of 6-16 September (Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., 1967b, p.21). *Monterey Pop* was an even greater triumph; by the time of its release, Leacock Pennebaker's distribution arm was stronger, experientially and financially, and the film received widespread exhibition in 17 of the country's 24 largest markets – and in 20 theatres overall – by the end of May 1969 (Anonymous, 1969f, p.26). In New York, it enjoyed an extended run at the Kips Bay, where it was grossing in excess of \$10,000 a

week after seventeen weeks (*ibid.*). Ernest Callenbach came away from *Monterey Pop* learning that ‘lesson of this film, as of Cassavetes’ immensely successful *Faces* and the

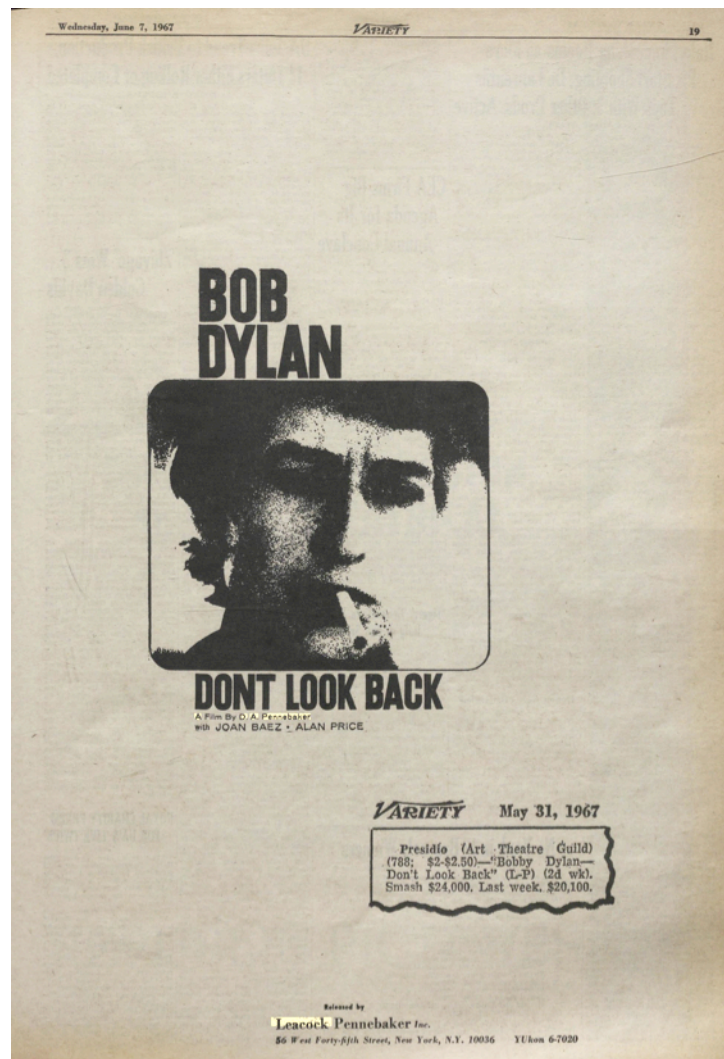


Figure 1.1. Advertisement for *Don't Look Back* announcing its box office success. From the 7 June 1967 edition of *Variety*.

Maysles brothers' *Salesman*, is that 16mm is here to stay as a method of making feature films' (1969, p.52).

While Leacock Pennebaker can certainly be credited with shifting the market for direct cinema from television to theatres and demonstrating to the majors (like Warner Brothers, who distributed *Woodstock*) that both the counterculture and direct cinema could be highly profitable, their further role in any emerging independent cinema market would subsequently be minimal.^x In the meantime, the Maysles brothers, in particular, benefited from Leacock Pennebaker's pioneering enterprise in the theatrical market and enjoyed considerable box office success into 1971 with *Salesman* (1969)

and *Gimme Shelter* (1970). *Salesman* was released at the peak of *Monterey Pop*'s theatrical run; after five weeks at the 68th Street Playhouse in New York, it was grossing \$10,000 a week and was about to open for six-week guaranteed runs in a further five

Wednesday, September 20, 1967 VARIETY 21

"AN ABSORBING FILM! THIS LOOK INTO THE LIFE OF A FOLK HERO IS LIKELY TO BE BOTH ENTERTAINING AND OCCASIONALLY DISTURBING! Many scenes stick in one's mind. Fast cuts and purposely crude editing keep the pace lively. A SPECIAL, HIP FUN!" —New York Times

"PURE CINEMA VERITE! AN ENGROSSING FILM!...IT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING!" —Life Magazine


"AN ESSAY IN CINEMATIC TRUTHTELLING!" —Time Magazine

"THERE ARE SCENES BETWEEN DYLAN, BAEZ, AND PEOPLE IN DYLAN'S WORKING GROUP, THAT CATCH SOME MOVING ESSENCE OF BEING YOUNG NOW! Imparts the flavor of free-wheeling friendship. PENNEBAKER... ALLOWS THINGS TO OCCUR BEFORE THE CAMERA AS RICHLY AS THEY CAN IN LIFE!" —The New Yorker

"ENDLESSLY FASCINATING FILM!" —Newsweek

"THE FILM PULLS NO PUNCHES! As enigmatic, controversial, and honest as its subject!" —The Christian Science Monitor

"...SO MEMORABLE THAT IT RINGS IN THE MIND FOR A LONG TIME AFTERWARDS! THE PICTURE IS A MUST FOR DYLAN FANS! A FASCINATING PICTURE!" —New York Post



BOB DYLAN
DONT LOOK BACK

A Film By D.A. Pennebaker
with JOAN BAEZ
Released by Leacock Pennebaker Inc.

THE 34th ST. CAST
NO. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 11

"BOB DYLAN DONT LOOK BACK"...

BROKE HOUSE RECORD...

During the week of September 6-16, 1967 at the 34th Street East Theater in New York. The Record Held Previously by "Dirty Dozen".

For local bookings contact:

Fred Biersdorf, Jr. Dal-Art Film Exchange 2017 Young St. Dallas 1, Texas	Elmer Hallander Hallander Film Company 8400 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, California
Marvin Friedlander Marvin Films 233 W. 49th St. New York, N. Y.	Ross Wheeler Wheeler Film Company 306 H Street NW Washington, D. C.
Ellis Gordon Gordon Films 513 Starline Office Building Boston, Massachusetts	Jack Zide Allied Film Exchange 1026 Fox Building Detroit, Michigan

National Distributor
Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.
56 W. 45th Street
New York, N. Y.

Next in Release
WARRENDAL
Prize Winner:
CANNES, MONTREAL FILM FESTIVALS
Currently
NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL

Figure 1.2. Advertisement for *Dont Look Back* from the 20 September 1967 edition of *Variety*.

big-market cities (Anonymous, 1969d, p.23). The film's success is an even more significant public validation of direct cinema as a form than that of *Dont Look Back* or *Monterey Pop*, as it could be argued – as Pennebaker does – that the latter two films appealed to a built-in audience that their pop culture subject matter brought with them regardless of the films' specific formal properties.^{xi} In the case of *Salesman*, however, without a pop star in sight, direct cinema itself was on display more prominently as a key attraction.^{xii} For theatrical audiences, *Salesman* brought with it 'the thrill of the new'; this high degree of novelty was perpetuated by an extensive and calculated

marketing campaign that promoted the film as a cinematic equivalent to Truman Capote's 'non-fiction novel' and promised a new kind of cinematic experience carved from the everyday.^{xiii} While *Salesman* certainly traded on this novelty, it does not detract from the film's role in further validating the commercial viability of direct cinema in the theatrical market.

The commercial success of direct cinema brought its own problems. According to Pennebaker, the fiscal windfall that *Monterey Pop* brought to Leacock Pennebaker eventually led to the corporation's bankruptcy and dissolution. Leacock Pennebaker was simply poorly managed; according to Pennebaker, the company operated 'at about 5 per cent efficiency where everyone else is operating at 75 per cent' (cited in Levin, 1971, p.248). No one at the company was keeping too keen an eye on accounting to track precisely what was owed them by exhibitors, chiefly because there was so much money to go around in the peak years that it did not matter how much their profits were being skimmed. *Monterey Pop* 'made so much money that people robbed us blind [. . .] But it still made money' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.577).

The key figure in the corporation's decline is David McMullin, then Leacock Pennebaker's chairman and president. McMullin was initially hired at Pennebaker's behest because he could no longer run the company's day-to-day operations himself. He accuses McMullin, whom he calls 'a buffoon' and a 'disaster' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.448), of being seduced by 'dreams of glory' and blames him for taking on excessive staff and expanding the company's operations – which included venturing into foreign film distribution and screenplay publishing, and purchasing film rights to novels – too rapidly (*ibid.*, p.578).

The corporate restructuring that Leacock Pennebaker underwent in September 1968, which saw Thaddeus Holt, a Washington, DC lawyer, named president fulfilled two objectives: it injected additional capital into the operation as well as much-needed legal acumen (Anonymous, 1968e, p.26). McMullin was retained solely as chairman of the board, and Peter Hansen remained executive vice-president. Robert Christgau's January 1970 profile of Leacock Pennebaker – a singular snapshot of a company in its twilight, before the collapse – also paints a less than flattering picture of McMullin. He cites his failure to acquire feature film production work in his three years with the company (Christgau claims that all of the features, from *Monterey Pop* to the Norman Mailer film cycle to *Sweet Toronto*, have been generated by Pennebaker's contacts and reputation), characterises his aborted expansion into screenplay publishing as an

imprudent attempt at generating a quick dollar, and cynically casts doubt on the company's prospects of taking any of the recently-acquired properties into production (Christgau, 1970, p.93-94). On the other hand, Christgau counters those failings with McMullin's two pivotal accomplishments: establishing Leacock Pennebaker's distribution arm, which enabled the success of *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop* in the first place; and being responsible for introducing Jean-Luc Godard to the Leacock Pennebaker fold by brokering the deal for the company to distribute *La Chinoise* (1967) in the US. The deal not only signalled Leacock Pennebaker's move into foreign film distribution (at the time when *Dont Look Back* was breaking house records at the 34th St. East), but also opened up a relationship with Godard that resulted in a number of further collaborations (Anonymous, 1967a, p.20). The company arranged Godard's 1968 cross-country lecture tour, which begot the documentary *Two American Audiences* by Leacock Pennebaker cameraman Mark Woodcock; it ran with a second film the company distributed for Godard, *Un film comme les autres* (1968), in 1969 (Anonymous, 1969b, p.23). There was also matter of the *One A.M./One P.M.* project, which is the subject of chapter five.

Thus, it is evident that distribution is where McMullin had the most significant impact. His breakthroughs not only made the company profitable and allowed their product to be screened fairly widely, but also offered a production/distribution model for other independent filmmaking outfits to follow. Had Pennebaker continued to attract feature film work to the company, the criticism of McMullin's failure to do so himself would perhaps be irrelevant, especially given his strengths in other areas of the business that were essential complements to the production side. However, the reality of the situation was that, by late summer 1969, the production work had dried up – thus severely curbing incoming cash flow – and McMullin's ill-considered initiatives were bleeding money. To keep Leacock Pennebaker solvent, he sold 42% of its stock to a mutual funds company (Christgau, 1970, p.94). In the end, though, Pennebaker singles out the corporation's foreign film distribution arm as a significant contributor to their dissolution, and narrows his blame to the failure of a single film – *The Wanderer* (originally released in France as *Les Grand Meaulnes* [Jean-Gabriel Albicocco, 1967]), released in the US in June 1969. McMullin's failure to deliver on his ambitious vision for the company and, in particular, his promise of riches for its figureheads depressed Leacock, who felt misled and betrayed. When offered the opportunity to build MIT's

film programme with Ed Pincus, he resigned from the company. Pennebaker describes the sad, final days of Leacock Pennebaker thusly:

[S]uddenly I was just shorn of all this kind of wonderful aura that had collected from *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey*. We [Leacock and Pennebaker] were just princes, you know, moving forward to conquer all the world. Suddenly, it was just really over.

And it was a very tough thing. It's a very tough thing to preside over your own auction [. . .] Watching people come [. . .] to pick your bones. (Pennebaker, 1983, p.86)

In Leacock Pennebaker's twilight months, just before bankruptcy and liquidation, Pennebaker was left alone at the company to finish off its obligation to PBS, *One P.M.*, as well as *Sweet Toronto*, which would soon present a problem of its own.^{xiv}

Pennebaker's Post-Collapse Aesthetics

As the above historical analysis indicates, one of the contributing factors to Pennebaker's diversification, experimentation and risk-taking during his mature period is that he could financially afford it. Likewise, bankruptcy also affected his creative practice. Due to the box office disappointment of *Keep on Rockin'*, '[w]e didn't have a big successful theatrical film going making a lot of money, so we had to kind of claw our way along' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.643). As a result, what manifests in Pennebaker's late-period direct cinema after Leacock Pennebaker's financial collapse is a decidedly more cautious and distinctly less ambitious filmmaking than characterised his mature period – from the type of project taken on to his aesthetic approach. To simplify matters further (and reduce costs), Pennebaker even began shooting films by himself, covering his own sound (*ibid.*). The scale of his projects diminished considerably; the films themselves are characterised by a stripped-back approach that marks a return to a more straightforward, classical direct cinema. At the same time, however, his body of work in this period is notable for its highly diversified subject matter.

This backwards-looking return to a classical form of direct cinema is especially evident in *Original Cast Album: Company*, where Pennebaker goes so far as to deploy the Drew-era crisis structure he despised so much to present the tension of Broadway performer Elaine Stritch's repeated inability to nail a perfect take of 'The Ladies Who Lunch' for the cast recording of the Stephen Sondheim musical. Two further projects that define this period are *Dancers in School* (with Kate Taylor, 1971) and *The*

Children's Theater of John Donahue (1972) (the latter is particularly reliant on the crisis structure, as well). Both films, which were funded by a grant of \$100,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts, are indicative of this period's community focus, yet they still embody a spirit that can be considered countercultural (*Donahue*, for example, pursues a success/failure narrative for a community children's theatre production of Donahue's original musical *Jerusalem*, a 'provocative' and very much of its time critique of Christianity).

However, Pennebaker's late-period direct cinema is not the focus of the present study. To return to the industrial context of his mature period, I want to consider the market for direct cinema in the mid-to-late 1960s, the distribution and exhibition options beyond the theatre, and the effect this had on the films.

Late 1960s Television: A Growing Market for Direct Cinema

Although direct cinema films had broken into the theatrical market and enjoyed a certain amount of box office success in the late 1960s and early 1970s, television remained the medium that most consistently provided the documentary form a home.^{xv} According to Waugh, 'the importance of television both in providing the economic stimulus for its development and the forum for the public assimilation of the new idiom it entailed cannot be overemphasised' ([1977] 2011, p.104). Two of the films under study in this project, *Eat the Document* and *One P.M.*, have roots as commissions for television, so it is important to gain an understanding of the wider industrial trends that facilitated their production.

Back in 1963, at a time when Drew Associates' rudimentary yet pioneering direct cinema programmes were generously supported by Time, Inc. but were broadcast sporadically in syndication to little critical attention or viewership, television critic Jacques André observed that, for direct cinema, '[T]elevision has offered a new economic means of production and exhibition; and its increased need for informational material must in the future still more favour "Cinéma Vérité"' (1963, p.260).^{xvi} André's statements neatly encapsulate the reasons for television's sustained patronage of direct cinema. The economics favoured it, and the demand for content, particularly from network executives, was there.^{xvii} Television was where the money was, and that sponsorship afforded filmmakers a certain degree of security – facilitating, as André says, means for both production and exhibition.

On the other hand, with exhibition in the theatrical market, the cost of 35mm distribution made turning a profit for independent companies like Leacock Pennebaker extremely prohibitive. Despite their relative success with *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, the long-term sustainability of 35mm distribution was impractical for an operation of its size. A pessimistic Pennebaker details the problem of exhibition for an independent distributor in 1970, just prior to the collapse of Leacock Pennebaker:

[T]here are about ten thousand theaters in this country, and a reasonably good Hollywood movie is going to get into half of them, a third of them, without too much trouble, but we're lucky to get into five hundred [. . .] It just doesn't pay. The cost of opening a film theatrically in the city is between thirty and fifty thousand dollars. That's quite an investment, to me anyway, and it hasn't got much chance of making it back in New York. You don't start to make it until you get into those other ten thousand theaters, and we aren't going to get in anyway. (Levin, 1971, pp.248-49)

An alternative distribution method for direct cinema films that Pennebaker and the Maysles were experiencing some sustained success with – and hoped to grow – was in 16mm, especially in the college market. Advances in 16mm projection and sound made it a competitive option well-suited to short theatrical runs. There was also television.

André's prescient latter remark, highlighted above, had proved accurate throughout the 1960s, and its sentiment was the impetus behind the rolling out of two weekly series whose objective was to redress the lack of 'quality' programming on television: the controversial contemporary affairs-focused *PBL* (1967-69) and the arts and culture showcase, *ABC Stage 67* (1966-67). The networks had consistently faced 'an avalanche of criticism' for the 'incredibly low state of TV today,' whose 'Hollywood manufactured TV series' failed to cultivate an informed and cultured public (Anonymous, 1966b, p.1). According to executive producer Hubbell Robinson, *ABC Stage 67* represented 'a totally conscious and thought-out effort to organize a creative environment that will permit entertainment's major talents to work for genuine excellence in television' (*ibid.*). The NET's *PBL* disavowed the potential of commercial programming completely; its directive was 'to provide a practical demonstration of what Public Television could be [. . .] to show that there is a meaningful complement and a meaningful alternative to commercial television' (Anonymous, 1967b, p.1). For both series, a number of direct cinema filmmakers offered producers the progressive, relevant and 'meaningful' voices they had sought. *PBL*'s diverse and, at the time, daring programming included direct cinema fare such as *Birth and Death*, which chronicles a young couple's childbirth in its first half and the

death of a cancer patient in its second; *Fathers and Sons* (Don Lenzer, 1969), on the Stanford University chapter of SDS's campus activism; and *Free at Last* (Greg Shuker, Nick Proferes and Jim Desmond, 1968), charting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s activism on the Poor People's Campaign during the last three months of his life. Direct cinema films came to dominate the American television landscape throughout 1960s, which produced an interesting ideological effect: '[T]hese filmmakers seemed responsive in their various ways to the new documentary vision and cohered, at least on the home screen, into something like a *vérité* movement' (Jacobs, [1971] 1979, p.377).

Of course, television could also be unfriendly to more idiosyncratic voices – as in the cases of Dylan and Alk (see chapter three), Shirley Clarke (*Ornette: Made in America* [1985] had begun as a *PBL* project but was rejected as a work-in-progress), and even Pennebaker (ABC had rejected *Monterey Pop*, originally a commission for the network) – so the situation was not without its disadvantages and complications. *One P.M.* and *Eat the Document* were, respectively, commissions for *PBL* and *ABC Stage 67*. Robust analysis of both films, including giving further consideration to television as patron of direct cinema in the late 1960s, takes place in chapters three and five. In September 1970, when asked about television as a potential method of distribution, Pennebaker admits that 'TV is pretty much closed off to us' (cited in Levin, 1971, p.254). It is unclear if this comment alludes to a blacklisting by the networks (possibly related to contract disputes with PBS over *One P.M.* – see chapter five) or a decision made of his own volition (again, possibly related to his regrettable experience with *One P.M.* and the mishandling of *Monterey Pop* by ABC). Pennebaker most likely felt spurned by a perceived pattern of sustained dismissive treatment by the networks dating back to the Drew groups in the early 1960s.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the purpose of this study of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema and the structure of this thesis, highlighted the critical space and need for my intervention into documentary studies, and stated the ways in which this study contributes knowledge to the field. Furthermore, I provided working definitions of both direct cinema and my own designation of mature-period direct cinema. To that end, I established the economic and industrial factors that contributed to enabling Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. Before embarking on close studies of the

films that anticipate and characterise this period – *Eat the Document*, *Monterey Pop*, *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.* – it is important to consider the role that 55 years of scholarship has played in constructing direct cinema as it is presently understood. Thus, the following chapter surveys the field of literature written on direct cinema and further clarifies the methodological approach of the present study.

ⁱ Though, to be fair, Winston seems to have a more expansive perception of the form than most. He consistently brings British direct cinema filmmaker Roger Graef into the conversation, which few other scholars do.

ⁱⁱ For a concise biography of Pennebaker prior the period this study is concerned with, see Beattie, 2011, pp.3-21. Brief biographical notes are also incorporated into this thesis where appropriate.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Waugh ([1977] 2011), Ruby ([1977] 1988), Sobchack (1988), Pryluck ([1976] 1988) and Winston ([1983] 1988; 2008).

^{iv} Of course, Marcocelles' use of 'objective reality' is problematic for obvious reasons, but I have interpreted it to mean the surface reality captured by the lens onto the film stock. A discussion of surface and depth, and the embodiment of particular ideologies in the moving image's gestural surfaces is key to chapter four's development of the concept of kinetic progressions.

^v For an exception, see Beattie, 2011, pp.14-21.

^{vi} For a detailed technical overview of the developmental direct cinema equipment, see Issari & Paul, 1979, chapter 12. For a highly technical explanation of how the sync sound system was engineered and functions, see Pennebaker, 1983, pp.165-69.

^{vii} Marcocelles (1973) and Mamber (1974) remain the definitive accounts of direct cinema practice and ideology, as well as its revolutionary interventions in documentary filmmaking. See the following chapter for a comprehensive review of the field's critical literature.

^{viii} For clarity's sake, my usage of 'direct cinema' differs from Bruzzi's use of 'observational cinema' within this argument in that direct cinema refers to a historically-situated mode of the broader documentary tradition of observational cinema (likewise, French *cinéma vérité* would also be considered a particular mode of observational cinema).

^{ix} To clarify, my use of 'classical direct cinema' and, subsequently, 'post-classical' to describe the work of mature-period direct cinema here and throughout the thesis is distinct from and unrelated to David Bordwell's classical Hollywood cinema or classical realist cinema.

^x For further discussion of the practicalities of theatrical distribution for Leacock Pennebaker, including the inefficiency that comes with being a small operation, the economics that make it extremely prohibitive to turn a profit in 35mm distribution, and 16mm distribution as a potentially profitable way forward, see Levin, 1971, pp.248-49.

^{xi} In his extensive oral history, Pennebaker is asked by Barbara Hogenson if he believes part of the appeal of *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop* to young audiences was what could be considered the anti-establishment style of direct cinema. Such considerations, he says, were not a part of his creative process and that 'I assumed that people who were interested in Dylan wouldn't worry about the form. I didn't think that they'd accept one form better than another necessarily' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.546). While Pennebaker's remarks suggest that young audiences would not challenge or question the films' terms of representation and would not be any less receptive of more traditionally-presented documentaries on said subjects, I disagree, and would argue that it was the fusion of countercultural subject matter with what was perceived at the time as a more authentic, anti-establishment and hipper style that resonated with young, countercultural audiences (of course, it goes without saying that direct cinema is just another system of representation equally as constructed, problematic and open to critique as mainstream cinema, but I am speaking of a specific audience's perception in a particular historical moment).

^{xii} Lewis Jacobs called the new, feature-length direct cinema that appeared 'on the screens of first-run motion picture theaters in large cities [. . .] a more exciting use of the technique' than its television-based forerunners ([1971] 1979, p.377).

^{xiii} While *Salesman* is certainly responsible for popularising direct cinema's intervention into the everyday life of ordinary social actors and making it a success, the *Salesman* phenomenon is more accurately characterised as the culmination of a particular trend than a pioneering new take. James Arnold points to several examples of direct cinema from 1968 – mainly television films – whose

engagement with the everyday points towards *Salesman: Titicut Follies* (Frederick Wiseman), *Birth and Death* (Arthur Barron and Gene Marner) and *The Great American Novel* (Barron), *Don't Count the Candles* (Lord Snowdon), *Hear Us, O Lord* (Elizabeth Farmer) and *One Step Away* (Ed Pincus) ([1970] 1979, p.487).

^{xiv} Pennebaker had granted John Lennon final cut privileges for *Sweet Toronto*, and, in an extremely drawn-out process, the two parties could not come to an agreement ahead of a commercial release. Therefore, Pennebaker cut the Plastic Ono Band's closing performance from the film, retitled it *Keep on Rockin'*, and released it in 1972. At a time when the company desperately needed a hit to help pay off their debts, '[i]t was not as big a success as we'd hoped it would be' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.579).

^{xv} Examples of direct cinema films that received theatrical distribution in 1968 include *Monterey Pop*, *A Journey to Jerusalem* (Michael Mindlin), *One Step Away* and *Warrendale* (Allan King); in 1969, *Salesman* and *King, Murray* (David Hoffman and Jonathan Gordon); in 1970, *Gimme Shelter*, *Johnny Cash! The Man, His World, His Music* (Robert Elfstrom), *Let It Be* (Michael Lindsay-Hogg), *A Married Couple* (King) and *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh).

^{xvi} Here, André is speaking of both the French and American traditions of observational cinema, hence his use of the misnomer *cinéma vérité*.

^{xvii} For a rigorous – and highly critical – discussion of direct cinema's television origins, see Bluem, 1965, chapter six.

Chapter 2

Directions: Critical Perspectives on Direct Cinema

Introduction

This chapter has three goals. The first is to provide an overview of the historical thought of direct cinema and trace the development of the direct cinema canon. Here, I want to outline the historical landscape of the field to better contextualise my own intervention and also evaluate the uses and limitations of revising the canon. The second is to lay the critical groundwork for the thesis' analysis of Pennebaker as a practitioner of direct cinema and the films under study – *Eat the Document*, *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.* This will expose the gap in the literature that necessitates my study. Lastly, this chapter will outline the intellectual thought and critical approaches that have informed the thesis' enquiry into Pennebaker's direct cinema. This will outline the methods of my study in a more direct manner by showing how and where my intervention connects to existing debates within documentary studies and opens up new areas of enquiry in the study of direct cinema.

Revising the Direct Cinema Canon

One of the objectives of this project is to curate an alternative or 'counter-canon' to what is traditionally perceived as the direct cinema canon, which is dominated not only by a select few 'canonised' filmmakers – Robert Drew, Ricky Leacock, David and Albert Maysles, Frederick Wiseman and D.A. Pennebaker – but also by a particular type of direct cinema film. The contemporary understanding of direct cinema is the result of decades of ongoing and intersecting scholarly, industrial and technological interventions that reflect shifts in the preoccupations and concerns of the cultural, social and intellectual moment. However, the direct cinema canon has remained relatively stable since the mid-1970s. Three crucial book-length studies are responsible for this stabilisation: Louis Marcorelles' *Living Cinema: New Directions in Contemporary Film-Making* (1973), Stephen Mamber's *Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary* (1974) and M. Ali Issari and Doris A. Paul's *What Is Cinéma Vérité?* (1979). It is worth noting that these scholars are writing a few years after direct cinema's peak, which perhaps allows for some critical distance in their evaluation of the field.

Marcorelles overwhelmingly emphasises Leacock's formal innovations and their ideological effects, and recognises a 'radical originality' in his technique that places him above his peers as the father of direct cinema (1973, p.63). For Marcorelles, Leacock's two most crucial contributions to direct cinema are *A Happy Mother's Day* (1963) and *A Stravinsky Portrait* (1966). Therefore, only brief attention (just over a page) is paid to Pennebaker's *Jane* (1962), *David* (1961), *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, as well as the Maysleses' *Showman* (1963), *What's Happening! The Beatles in the USA* (1964) and *Salesman*.

Mamber's monograph, on the other hand, is the first study to establish the Drew, Leacock, Pennebaker, Maysles and Wiseman oligarchy and their key work in the establishment of the direct cinema canon. Structuring his study by filmmaker, Mamber offers detailed analyses of films that have come to be seen as their major works alongside several that have receded into relative obscurity. His study of Pennebaker, for example, not only covers the above-mentioned films, but also *Elizabeth and Mary* (1964), Pennebaker's experiment in direct cinema's potential scientific applications for physiatrist Dr. Arthur E. Gillman, the *Keep on Rockin'* edit of *Sweet Toronto*, and *The Children's Theatre of John Donahue*. Mamber does not justify or explain his selection of these five filmmakers (his introduction states that 'we shall concentrate on one relatively distinct branch' of 'cinema verite [*sic*],' but this is in order to distinguish the American school from the French and Canadian versions), so it must be assumed that he recognised a singular quality to their pioneering work that other direct cinema practitioners of the period, like William C. Jersey, Arthur Barron and Ed Pincus, lacked; of course, it is also plausible that he was simply unfamiliar with their work (1974, p.1).

Issari and Paul's study, some five years later, is less authoritative (for example, they problematically admit to using the terms *cinéma vérité*, direct cinema and living camera interchangeably [Issari & Paul, 1979, p.7]), and suffers from ill-informed research, inaccurate generalisations and a narrow and restrictive definition of what constitutes a successful direct cinema film (dismissing *Jane* because it does not 'fit the framework of a successful' direct cinema film [*ibid.*, p.93]), but does present a critical approach to the form reminiscent of Marcorelles. Thus, it is an intriguing study for its deviation from Mamber's model, its less 'oligarchical' critical methodology and the attention paid to more obscure filmmakers (in many ways, it feels as if it was written nearly a decade earlier). Like Marcorelles, Issari and Paul divide their monograph into separate studies of the French and American schools and foreground Leacock as the *de*

facto head of the American practice. Pennebaker and Wiseman are not mentioned at all, and the Maysleses are singled out in an ‘Other Pioneers and Practitioners’ chapter along with the now-obscure William C. Jersey.

Richard M. Barsam’s definitive 1986 study, ‘American Direct Cinema: The *Re-Presentation of Reality*’ (emphasis in original), further consolidated the canon through a return to Mamber’s oligarchical structure in its neat presentation of a ‘Selected Checklist of Major American Direct Cinema Films,’ which, again, only listed works by the five filmmakers in the above roll call, and has perhaps inadvertently come to be more definitive than its ‘selected’ nature originally intended (p.148).ⁱ The titles shared in common by both Mamber and Barsam are *Primary* (1960), *On the Pole* (1960), *The Children Were Watching* (1961), *Adventures on the New Frontier* (1961), *On the Road to Button Bay* (1962), *Eddie* (1961), *Susan Starr* (1962), *Jane*, *The Chair* (1962), *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1963) – all produced by Robert Drew and made by his various associates – *A Happy Mother’s Day*, *A Stravinsky Portrait*, *Dont Look Back*, *Monterey Pop*, *Salesman*, *Gimme Shelter*, and Frederick Wiseman’s *Titicut Follies*, *High School* (1968), *Hospital* (1969) and *Basic Training* (1971). Aside from both scholars’ overreliance on minor Drew films (in addition, Barsam includes *Grey Gardens*, which had not been produced at the time of Mamber’s publication), the commonly-accepted direct cinema canon appears to be in place across both lists.

However, if one returns to more contemporaneous writings on direct cinema, such as Klugherz ([1967] 1979), Barron ([1968] 1979), Arnold ([1969] 1979), Haskell ([1970] 1979), Jacobs ([1971] 1979), Mamber (1973), filmmakers William C. Jersey, Arthur Barron and Ed Pincus are discussed amongst the names that history has elevated above the rest of the field and into synonymousness with direct cinema – Leacock, Pennebaker, the Maysleses and Wiseman. On the one hand, perhaps posterity favours some names over others for good reason – we could say that the films speak for themselves and that it is clear why, for example, *Salesman* survived the ravages of history while *A Time for Burning* (William C. Jersey, 1966), *Birth and Death* and *One Step Away* – all high-profile films in their time – did not. Such is the case with *Johnny Cash! The Man, His World, His Music*, which, though a competently-made, if anodyne, portrait film (though fans of the artist probably find it entertaining and insightful), is not much more than a forgettable imitation of *Dont Look Back* and is therefore redundant. On the other hand, by several accounts, including Klugherz ([1967] 1979), Barron ([1968] 1979) and Goldman (1979), *A Time for Burning*, especially, is singled out as a

landmark direct cinema film of exceptional craft, maturity and urgency. Why, then, is this film an unknown quantity today? For all of the praise that Goldman lavishes on it, he readily admits that, by 1979, the film, which engages with tangled race relations in Omaha following the pastor of a white Lutheran Church's attempts at integrating his parish community with the congregation of two neighbouring black churches, was woefully dated and effectively rendered meaningless by the contemporary concerns of the civil rights movement (1979, p.445). *A Time for Burning*, according to Goldman, is so embedded in the social concerns of its particular historical moment that its immediacy is transformed into irrelevancy a decade – let alone five decades – later. Barron, however, disagrees; he argues that the film centres around not a topical social issue, but the dramatic human struggle of its protagonist, Reverend Youngdahl, and, as a result, exhibits a timelessness and ongoing relevancy ([1968] 1979, pp.496-97).

This negotiation of *A Time for Burning*'s ongoing relevancy embodies what Stephen Mamber recognises as the principal tension in direct cinema films: that between the personality-oriented film and the issue-based film (1973, p.9). With such a construct in mind, it then becomes very obvious that the majority of the direct cinema canon – *Dont Look Back*, *Grey Gardens*, *Salesman*, and so on – can be classified as personality-oriented, with the very notable exception of Frederick Wiseman's *oeuvre*. In the case of *A Time for Burning*, however, I suspect that Goldman's assessment is the more accurate one and the most likely explanation for its diminished stature within the direct cinema canon.

History, though, is an ongoing negotiation with the past in which particular trends and objects are amplified and diminished based on both the needs of the moment and the evaluation and re-evaluation of said trend or object's reach and impact in the broader scheme. It offers a perspective not available in the historical moment. Film history is littered with works like *King*, *Murray* and *Marjoe* (Howard Smith and Sarah Kernochan, 1972): trendy, attention-grabbing, somewhat gimmicky variants on a popular movement or genre, which were in vogue upon release but are so of their moment that they are almost immediately dated, whereupon they quickly fade into a status beyond obscurity. Both *King*, *Murray* and *Marjoe* are examples of direct cinema that won awards (Semaine de la Critique selection at Cannes and the Academy Award, respectively), generated considerable press and critical attention at the time of their release, had less-than-successful commercial returns in limited theatrical runs, and were subsequently forgotten. Perhaps their kitschiness offers little beyond being a dated

novelty, which canonical films like *Salesman* and *Dont Look Back* somehow manage to transcend (despite being very much of their historical moment). Both *King, Murray* and *Marjoe* have been recently released on DVD (the restored *Marjoe* was also screened in 2005 at New York's IFC Center as a part of their 'Stranger Than Fiction' documentary strand), which has brought with it some renewed attention (see Hesse, 2014) and also presents the possibility for further reappraisal within a direct cinema context.

Howard Alk and Shirley Clarke are two figures who both produced highly individualised and acclaimed works, yet have somehow been marginalised in the historical discussion of direct cinema. Like *A Time for Burning*, Alk's politically radical direct cinema, exemplified by *American Revolution 2* (1969) and *The Murder of Fred Hampton* (1971), is very much issue-based and of its historical moment but does not suffer from the former's dated, naïve politics and speaks to contemporary political concerns. Similarly, Clarke is an intriguing figure in direct cinema history for her pre-direct cinema collaborations and associations with Pennebaker and Leacock, and her *Portrait of Jason* (1967) offers alternative perspectives on a performative direct cinema. In the case of these two filmmakers, whose work, I would argue, is more significant and substantial than either *Marjoe* or *King, Murray*, other factors must be at work. In that regard, accessibility is crucial. Recent DVD reissue campaigns have made both filmmakers' seminal work commercially available and offer hopes for renewed critical reappraisal and a widening of the terms of the discourse of direct cinema. Although the deserved in-depth study of these filmmakers is beyond the scope of this project (Alk, however, does receive some crucial attention in chapter three), this is the line of thinking that instigated the present study.

What is the effect of the disappearance of these films from the historical narrative of direct cinema? Are they suppressed because they do not fit the story of direct cinema and therefore fall out of the conversation, or was it because they were forgotten from the beginning that they were omitted from the inception of that narrative, which resulted in the familiar, neat and unified story of direct cinema that persists to this day? Surely historians are missing some part of the direct cinema story by relying on repeated, recycled and unchallenged narratives of technological determinism, and truth claims derived from an immutable canon of films and filmmakers?

Perhaps the most crucial of the complex intersection of factors that contributed to the shaping of the canon is the role played by the entrepreneurial direct cinema filmmaker in guaranteeing the longevity of his/her creative output. Pennebaker, the

Maysles and Wiseman are extremely business-minded filmmakers, and their self-sufficient operations have enabled the enactment of three factors that, together, have established and maintained a direct cinema legacy: one, the filmmaker is the owner of his or her films; two, original film elements are properly preserved (Pennebaker's preservation initiative, Living Archives, stores his elements, as well as Leacock's and the Maysleses', among others, in the upstate New York's cold-storage warehouse, Iron Mountain); and, three, the filmmaker is able to control the distribution of his or her films. I recognise two phases of distribution: the time of a film's original release and, broadly speaking, everything thereafter. In both phases, Pennebaker, the Maysleses and Wiseman have succeeded. Leacock Pennebaker, Inc. operated its own theatrical distribution arm, the Maysleses, for example, self-distributed *Salesman* through Maysles Films and opted to distribute *Gimme Shelter* through Don Rugoff's Cinema V, and Wiseman enjoyed a lengthy and favourable business relationship with public television that allowed him control over the further distribution of his films through his distribution company, Zipporah Films. The second phase of distribution, which is crucial to establishing longevity, maintains and furthers the visibility of the films. Again, the established distribution apparatuses facilitated this in the college market and repertory circuit, and, in the last thirty years, commercial home video releases have opened up an entirely new distribution market (the key Pennebaker and Maysles films are available on DVD from major distributors, such as the Criterion Collection in the US; Pennebaker Hegedus Films directly distributes on DVD Leacock's catalogue and those of Pennebaker's that are not on one of the majors; likewise, Zipporah Films directly distributes Wiseman's films on DVD).

Direct Cinema: The Need for New Critical Directions

Stella Bruzzi's revisionist take on direct cinema in *New Documentary* (2006) signalled the emergence of the new critical thought that has drawn out new areas of enquiry in the study of direct cinema over the past decade. The spirit, if not direct influence, of Bruzzi's declaration that '[i]f one strips the films of the theoretical baggage they come burdened by, they offer less stifling, more exciting possibilities' has been taken up by contemporary interventions in the study of the form, such as Rhodes (2006), Saunders (2007), McElhaney (2009), Druick (2010), Beattie (2011), Taylor (2011), Tinkcom (2011), Tyree (2012) and Rogers (2015) (p.78). This is not to suggest

that this scholarship represents an uncritical advocacy of direct cinema or ignores its overtly contentious critiques that were prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s; rather, having assimilated that scholarship – such as Pryluck ([1976] 1988), Ruby ([1977] 1988), Waugh ([1977] 2011) and Winston ([1978] 1988) – contemporary research is strategically situated to produce more nuanced and multifaceted understandings of what direct cinema was – understandings that are also informed by the preoccupations of the historical moment and evolving conceptions of documentary film, history and politics. These contemporary enquiries into direct cinema are rooted in an epistemological and ontological perspective advocated by E. Ann Kaplan – namely, one that understands realism to be ‘a system of representation, not truth,’ which loosens it from the shackles of the Winston and Ruby school that attacked direct cinema’s superficiality and accused its filmmakers of inadequately engaging with the epistemological, ethical and political implications of the form ([1982] 1988, p.96). There is no longer a need to perpetuate tired debates about its truth claims, or to obsess over decades-old ideas of self-reflexivity ‘given that we now know more about the way [realism] operates’ (*ibid.*). Note my above usage of ‘loosens’ as opposed to ‘removes.’ Contemporary scholarship on direct cinema has not erased or ignored the previous generation of critical perspectives; rather, it has been subsumed into the ongoing critical discourse that continues to define and redefine the form and will always be a part of it. The new scholarship, however, is thus freed to consider direct cinema, the object – an ever-evolving object – from other angles and perspectives. Bruzzi’s work is the axis upon which I orient my study. I will use her re-evaluation of direct cinema in *New Documentary* to first outline the critical thought on the form to which her intervention responds and establish my own critical address of this literature; in many respects, this thesis aims to be a corrective to the ongoing influence of the Pryluck, Ruby, Waugh and Winston school and follow Bruzzi’s lead in developing new critical directions for direct cinema. I will then explore the significance of Bruzzi’s intervention and examine the critical landscape since.

Bruzzi’s intervention is framed within a discussion of the effect of direct cinema’s problematic legacy on the evolution of documentary theory and practice. She argues that the problem with direct cinema has more to do with ‘what its exponents *said* about what the films did, not necessarily what the films themselves achieved,’ and, as a result, ‘theorists and practitioners alike have tackled direct cinema in accordance with how it has defined itself’ (2006, p.73; emphasis mine). Thus, much of the reactive

criticism by Winston and Arthur (1993) and practitioners such as Emile de Antonio and Errol Morris, which characterised the form as ‘naïve, simplistic and misguided idealistic,’ has addressed the gulf between the overzealous and overenthusiastic pronouncements of its pioneers – particularly Robert Drew and Albert Maysles – and the film texts themselves (*ibid.*, p.76).ⁱⁱ Consider, for example, this statement by Maysles:

Our obligation is to be honest with what we are filming [. . .] We have faith that by filming a thing as it happens and without imposing our judgement, even if we film something that obviously shows the person to be ‘bad,’ then, because we are letting it happen out of itself, everything from which to judge will be right there on the screen. (cited in Blue, 1964, p.27)

Statements like these by Maysles (particularly early in his career when it is clear that he is selling the novelty of his technique – a tactic that collapses when interrogated by academic scholars) and Drew made direct cinema an easy target for critics arguing on a more intellectually rigorous level, such as Waugh, whose criticism encapsulates this strand of critical thought: ‘The movement’s most serious liability was [. . .] its persistent pretense of impartiality’ ([1977] 2011, p.96).

Beattie has pointed out that these critics seem unaware of the practical function that Drew’s discourse of objectivity served in ‘secur[ing] a place for the new form of direct cinema within the broadcast schedules of television networks during a period of reassessment and realignment within the industry’ (2011, p.9).ⁱⁱⁱ Beattie argues that Drew’s rhetoric purposely employed language that would curry favour with the newly-appointed chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Newton Minow, who famously attacked broadcast television as a cultural wasteland, and meet the dictates of the FCC’s Fairness Doctrine, which required networks to provide equal and balanced (i.e., ‘objective’) coverage of controversial issues of public interest.^{iv} While Drew’s reputation as a filmmaker and journalist is certainly debateable, his impact was undeniably as a producer, where he demonstrated time and again his success at negotiating the politics of the network television game.^v Drew was trying to sell a product, and it worked. The trade press, always too willing to milk the latest novelty, bought it, as well, and played a significant role in generating direct cinema’s discourse of objectivity and reputation as a new ‘Cinema truth.’ However, even after cutting through *Variety*’s dated jargon, it becomes apparent that journalists reporting on early direct cinema had no idea what they were talking about. ‘This phenomenon goes by various designations – “Cinema truth,” “Cinema As a Witness,” “Living Camera” and

“Free Cinema” ’ (Moskowitz, 1963, p.110), reports one, while another writes that ‘ “Cinema Truth” pix are a return to on-the-spot abilities of cameras, not used much since silent film days’ (Anonymous, 1963b, p.27). A third incoherently describes how the technique is made possible ‘by the miniaturization of the photographic equipment and its machining to perfect silence so that the subject is not aware that the camera is grinding away’ (Anonymous, 1963a, p.27).

Before moving forward into outlining other schools of thought in the discourse against direct cinema that Bruzzi does not address but also inform this thesis, I want to briefly point out one problematic aspect of her analysis of direct cinema in *New Documentary*. Bruzzi’s attempt at drawing totalising generalisations about the form is indicative of a particular way of writing about direct cinema to which this thesis aims to draw attention and rectify in its own small way. In her assessment of the critical literature, Bruzzi also perpetuates one of its problematic trends, which is the sustained treatment of direct cinema as a unified movement or monolithic object. While she does acknowledge that ‘one of the failings of documentary theory has been to sideline [direct cinema’s] dissenting or questioning voices,’ her own deviation from this trend in the established literature is not further developed (2006, p.74). In fact, her own insistence that, like classical Hollywood cinema, direct cinema ‘demonstrate[s] a desire for certainty or the desire for narrative closure’ falls into the same reductive generalisation from which she advocates dissent (*ibid.*, p.82). While her claim is true for the formative direct cinema films overseen by Drew (whom she cites) or even *An American Family* (Craig Gilbert, 1973), such a generalisation discounts the developments of later direct cinema periods by more accomplished filmmakers. As this thesis will explore, Pennebaker’s mature-period films certainly offer no narrative closure, nor does his classical period, as demonstrated by *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, for that matter (I would argue that there is a distinction between formal closure, which is present in these films, and narrative closure); however, his return to the Drew-era crisis structure in his late period direct cinema, as exemplified by such films as *Original Cast Album: Company* and *The Children’s Theater of John Donahue* does. Pennebaker once described his role as a filmmaker as representing ‘the truthful possibilities of the event’; such a description seems to acknowledge the quantum uncertainty inherent to the position occupied by the direct cinema filmmaker (Appendix).

Similarly to Bruzzi, Paul Arthur is satisfied with treating the ‘extensive bodies of interviews’ with direct cinema filmmakers as ‘a collective text that remains the best

theoretical account of direct cinema’ which hold in common a ‘set of shared assumptions [. . .] around issues of technology, immediacy, and mediation’ (1993, p.118). To some extent, this is true – to unify direct cinema practitioners through a ‘set of shared assumptions’ is fair, and Winston (2006) convincingly weaves together a series of statements by Drew, the Maysleses, Leacock and Pennebaker to this effect – but to frame them as working from some ‘collective text’ – or Winston’s ‘direct cinema dogma’ (2006, p.84) – produces a reductive and inaccurate twofold problem. Firstly, as Marcorelles famously recognises (as pointed out in the previous chapter, as well), ‘direct cinema has as many styles as it has filmmakers’ (1973, p.96). Pennebaker’s direct cinema is distinct from Drew’s (and this will be discussed in chapter four), and Wiseman’s from King’s, and so on. Likewise, it is ludicrous to hold Pennebaker accountable for the ‘misguidedly idealistic’ pronouncements of Maysles or Drew. Secondly, any discourse that unifies direct cinema into a monolithic theory perpetuates a reductive practice that does not take into account the evolution of the form over decades and the corresponding perspectives of its filmmakers. It is a bit disingenuous to extract a 1964 quotation from an early-career Albert Maysles – just after the conventions of classical direct cinema had been established with *What’s Happening! The Beatles in the USA* but considerably before the peak and later maturity of the brothers’ work – to represent Maysles’ definitive perspective on the impartial effect of his filmmaking style (though, to be fair, Maysles consistently underestimated the effect of the apparatus throughout his career, but his understanding of the process did become more nuanced over the years).

The Case Against Direct Cinema

While the naïve idealism of direct cinema practitioners, especially in its early days, is certainly true and indeed problematic, the extent of the case against direct cinema is much more pervasive than Bruzzi presents it. To provide some sense of its broader scope, there are two further critical perspectives whose ideological effects must be outlined and shown to be ways of thinking about direct cinema that this thesis works to revise.

Firstly, the contemporaries of Winston whose criticisms of direct cinema are, in fact, textually-based, must be accounted for. Waugh, who is notably critical of direct cinema’s failure to advocate the politically and socially progressive struggles at the

centre of the 1960s and 1970s and accuses its filmmakers of being distracted with what he considers the periphery or ephemera of the decade, issues no formal critique of direct cinema – merely of its textual focus (see, for instance, Waugh, [1976] 1988 and [1977] 2011, which will be critiqued in detail in chapters three and five).^{vi} This perspective is shared by David Denby, who explicitly calls out *Monterey Pop*, *Woodstock* and *One Step Away* in his advocacy of the locus of Wiseman’s practice as opposed to the likes of Pennebaker, Wadleigh and Pincus: ‘[A]s long as Wiseman keeps his camera pointed toward the center of our society and not toward hippie communes and rock festivals, his work will be the cause of anger and contention’ ([1970] 1979, p.482).^{vii}

Waugh locates the failure of direct cinema in its inability to engage with radical leftist politics, both materially and rhetorically. In a 1977 article that cuts direct cinema down to ‘the idiom of a decade ago’ ([1977] 2011, p.94) in order to build up Emile de Antonio as the embodiment of the mid-seventies’ ‘new documentary sensibility’ (*ibid.*, p.95), Waugh accuses direct cinema practitioners of failing to ‘meet the increasing need for explicit sociopolitical analysis to support the momentum of the alternative politics,’ despite their own left-leaning reputations and commanding a like-minded, ‘potentially activist’ audience (*ibid.*, p.96-97).^{viii} He ties the fate of direct cinema in with that of the counterculture; however, their connection is incidental at best and, beyond sharing general political sympathies, limited to the business opportunities that films on counterculture subjects provided. Waugh sees the counterculture’s failure ‘to base [their] new consciousness in concrete change’ and the immensity of the Vietnam war machine as a two-pronged ‘fatal test’ it was unable to overcome – a test that ‘proved equally fatal’ for direct cinema (*ibid.*, p.96). He furthers:

Cinéma vérité [note: Waugh uses the misnomer *cinéma vérité* to refer to direct cinema] per se had nothing to contribute to the real job that faced the counterculture; it merely reflected and reinforced a mood that in itself was not enough. As the [Vietnam] war escalated and escalated, the cinéma vérité people were preoccupied with rock concerts. (*ibid.*)

By criticising direct cinema for what it is not, he demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the films themselves, which were never intended to be polemical texts. In addition, assuming that documentary inherently owes some kind of social responsibility to a particular ideology due to a convenient Griersonian narrative of documentary history (whose ‘legacy’ Waugh also invokes) is restrictive and discriminatory ([1977] 2011, p.97). Despite this, however, his dismissal is tempered by the concession that direct cinema filmmakers ‘often provided undeniably profound and

touching works of art' and 'developed an expressive and flexible language that was available for radical social criticism even if they themselves declined to use it in that direction' (*ibid.*).

In addition to the scholars who deconstructed direct cinema's 'discrepancy between execution and ideal' and those who resented the textual content of the films themselves, a third critical ideology attacked the formal properties of the form and frequently produced complex polemical critiques that implicated the aesthetics of direct cinema as ethically problematic (2006, p.76). This third branch of thought includes Pryluck ([1976] 1988), Ruby ([1977] 1988), Winston ([1978] 1988) and Sobchack (1988). Both Pryluck and Winston are concerned with the ethical implications of the direct cinema aesthetic enabled by the development of its hallmark lightweight, portable camera and sync sound equipment. Winston claims that the pioneers of direct cinema erroneously assumed that the problem of documentary was, firstly, a question of actuality – what Bruzzi identifies as 'the traditional concept of documentary as striving to represent reality as faithfully as possible' (2013, p.49) – and, secondly, that it could be resolved with their advances in technology; however, he suggests that they were asking the wrong question, and that the problem of documentary is one of ethics – in which case, they had pushed it 'back to basics' ([1978] 1988, p.24). To that end, Pryluck argues that, just as the lightweight equipment reconfigured the act of looking in documentary and thus its aesthetics, so, too, did it reshape ethical relationships in documentary ([1976] 1988, p.261).^{ix}

Ruby furthers Winston and Pryluck's line of critical thought by asking questions regarding the epistemological, moral and political implications of direct cinema and the technology that enabled it through a critique of the form's failure to engage with concepts of reflexivity ([1977] 1988, p.71). He criticises what he recognises as direct cinema's formal transparency, which problematically masks the process of production and denies an engagement with the way in which the film produces meaning. Ruby contends that any reflexivity in direct cinema is accidental; reflexivity 'depends on intentionality and deliberateness' and is motivated by questions and concerns about its effects and implications (*ibid.*, p.74). Furthermore, he vehemently attacks direct cinema filmmakers for 'lack[ing] a sufficiently sophisticated philosophical, moral, aesthetic, or scientific motivation for a rigorous exploration of the consequences of reflexivity for documentary cinema' as well as for their 'obliviousness' to the extensive tradition of reflexivity in the social sciences (*ibid.*). As a result, Ruby sees these films as

‘narcissistic, superficial, self-indulgent’ (*ibid.*). Ruby’s take is representative of critiques of reflexivity in direct cinema. In chapter five, however, I present the case for a revised understanding of reflexivity in Pennebaker’s practice through an analysis of the self-reflexive elements of *One P.M.*, in which Pennebaker implicates himself in the ethical space of Godard’s production and established codes and conventions of direct cinema – particularly regarding sync sound – are critiqued.

Contemporary Perspectives on Direct Cinema

Bruzzi has commented that ‘[i]t is the critical possibilities of the observational mode that have been historically downplayed, but which have been taken up in the modern era’ (2006, p.75). She speaks of the aforementioned contemporary studies of direct cinema that include Rhodes (2006), Saunders (2007), McElhaney (2009), Beattie (2011), Tinkcom (2011) and Tyree (2012). While Saunders’ wide-ranging study of direct cinema is quite conservative, in that it reinforces the Mamber-Barsam direct cinema oligarchy and canon and reads like a compendium of existing critical approaches that champion the form, his analyses of the films themselves are deep and open to the form’s ‘critical possibilities’ of which Bruzzi speaks. This is particularly evident, for example, in his discussion of Leacock’s *A Happy Mother’s Day* (2007, pp.33-39). This shift in the understanding of the way in which the observational form is utilised in direct cinema that this scholarship demonstrates represents a rethinking of the critical and political potential of the films themselves, as well as the way in which the direct cinema filmmaker is thought of as an active participant and subjective critic of the events unfolding before him or her. My study of Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema is aligned with this shift in thought. For example, in chapter four, I argue that, in this period, Pennebaker deploys an ideological direct cinema that amplifies his cinematic voice in order to enact an active critique of his subject.

Surprisingly, even Winston advocates such a critical approach. He observes that ‘the current [1983] fashionable theoretical approaches to the documentary’ insist ‘on the ideological complicity of the idea of observation,’ and, thus, ‘fail to take account of the social context in which these films and tapes exist’ ([1983] 1988, p.529). However, he contends that ‘to argue that, say, the effects of [these films] are an accident, since the films’ obsession with surface leaves no possibility of analysis, is to deny the audience the chance for such analysis’ (*ibid.*). Winston here reinforces Bruzzi’s claim about the

‘interpretive possibilities’ of direct cinema by emphasising the significance of the films’ reception and the work done upon them on that side of the ‘equation.’ The present study is an exploration and critical examination of such possibilities. This is first accomplished, as previously discussed, by returning to Pennebaker’s direct cinema and developing new critical perspectives, first and foremost, from the films themselves – critical perspectives that free the form from limited and repressive schools of thought and open it to new interpretive possibilities.

D.A. Pennebaker

The primary objective of this thesis is to address the gap in literature dedicated to the study of Pennebaker’s aesthetics, their politics, and the ideology of his direct cinema. Despite his enduring recognition and relevance (critics named *Dont Look Back* the ninth best documentary of all time in a 2014 *Sight & Sound* poll; filmmakers ranked it eighth), Pennebaker has not prompted the scholarly attention afforded to his direct cinema contemporaries, the Maysles brothers and Frederick Wiseman, who are the focus of several book-length studies, such as Vogels (2005), McElhaney (2009) and Grant (1992), including monographs dedicated to a single film by Tinkcom (2011), Tyree (2012) and Anderson & Benson (1991). In recent years, however, Keith Beattie has been labouring nearly single-handedly to counteract this oversight – first with a 2005 article on direct cinema and performative display in which Dylan’s offstage performance in *Dont Look Back* is framed as a shift away from a ‘pure’ direct cinema, then onto the article’s expansion into 2008’s *Documentary Display: Re-Viewing Nonfiction Film and Video* and a profusion of Pennebaker-focused works: the first book-length study of the director in 2011, an edited collection of interviews with Pennebaker in 2015, and his current project, a forthcoming monograph on *Dont Look Back*.

From the beginning, Beattie’s work on Pennebaker, as his 2005 article indicates, has emphasised revising the terms on which he and his films are evaluated. His earlier rethinking of Pennebaker’s practice as transgressing a ‘pure,’ observational direct cinema (which I would argue does not exist) culminated in his 2011 monograph on the filmmaker, where Beattie developed the way in which John Corner’s concept of ‘performing the real’ – that is, the coalescence of ‘the performance by the filmmaker and the performance by documentary subjects’ – is developed across Pennebaker’s

career body of work (2011, p.20).^x His incisive and detailed emphasis on the gestural practices of Pennebaker's camerawork as a form of display and critique has been particularly influential to the present study, and is a concept that is key to my own analysis of his work throughout this thesis. He argues: 'The effect of handheld camerawork is, as noted by the critic Scott MacDonald, the result of the conscious incorporation of a filmmaker's personal gestures into the imagery recorded' as well as 'an expressive display of a bodily presence' (*ibid.*).

Beattie's study is divided into the development of four themes that he traces across Pennebaker's body of work: the concert film, collaborative productions, portraiture, and rehearsal. Although the study's expansive remit means that analysis of individual films is lean and concise, Beattie succeeds in developing his thesis, bringing much-needed critical attention to Pennebaker's mature and late-period direct cinema work, and, most importantly, presenting a new, more personal narrative of Pennebaker the filmmaker that goes beyond the tired presentations of direct cinema filmmakers that propagate the misconception that their films do not explore or reflect their personal preoccupations. Chapter four of this thesis, in particular, will explore the ways in which Pennebaker's personal preoccupation with kinesis and the machine – first truly explored in his modernist pre-and early direct cinema work – reassert themselves in his mature period. This presentation of Pennebaker's direct cinema as a more personal cinema directly follows from Beattie's work here.

The scholarly work on Pennebaker that pre-dates Beattie is limited in scope and depth, but, nevertheless, seminal work has been produced that has influenced all subsequent scholars of Pennebaker and direct cinema. Blumer ([1969] 1979) represents an early dismissal of his work as 'sloppy' (p.472). Marcorelles' (1973) assessment is equally brief but recognises an incendiary quality to his style that makes him as 'equally important' as Leacock; his insightful analysis of Pennebaker's interest in 'rhythm and rhythmical relationships' provides the groundwork for my discussion of the concept of kinetic progressions in chapter four (p.63). As with Marcorelles, Barsam (1986) frames Pennebaker through his relationship to Leacock; he claims that 'Pennebaker's work lacks the originality to be as enduring as Leacock,' but he nevertheless 'makes an important contribution to the overall development of 1960s American nonfiction films with an intuitive approach to subject matter that is uniquely his' (p.145). Mamber (1974), as previously mentioned, provides a wide-ranging overview of Pennebaker's work, both canonical and obscure, and very clearly outlines his engagement with direct

cinema concepts across them (his comparison of *Monterey Pop* and *Sweet Toronto* is particularly effective in this regard and will be returned to in chapter four) (pp.187-91).

In works that focus on a single film text, Pennebaker scholarship overwhelmingly favours *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, and perhaps rightly so; both are rich, open texts of clear industrial significance and revolutionary impact. Romney (1995) considers the association of ‘backstage’ with ‘authenticity’ (and its relationship to the ideology of direct cinema) that infuses *Dont Look Back*, which establishes the conventions of rock documentaries (and their parodies) to come. Rothman (1997) provides a detailed close reading of the film that benefits from knowledgeable production details, but, unfortunately, favours summary over analysis. Its postscript, a somewhat shorter reading of *Monterey Pop*, is considerably more incisive. It insightfully connects the new colour filming techniques that Pennebaker developed on *Eat the Document* to the film and analyses the film’s intersection of performance, framing and patterns of colour. Hall’s 1998 analysis of *Dont Look Back* is equally as detailed as Rothman’s, but also more complex; her contention that Pennebaker enacts a critique of old media and reportage through Dylan’s onscreen performance establishes the critical possibilities of direct cinema. It remains the definitive reading of the film. Saunders (2007) expands on Hall’s analysis of the film; he explores the ways in which direct cinema is formally political, if not overtly confrontational. However, like Rothman, his reading of *Monterey Pop* is more insightful and original. He is especially interested in Pennebaker’s looking practices, and recognises in Pennebaker’s ‘telescopic observation’ an uncritical distance that also raises questions about scopophilia and the male gaze through his emphasis on physical movement and the fragmentation of the body (p.87). Although his enquiry into the politics and ethics of Pennebaker’s gaze opens up a much-needed discussion on the film, Saunders too easily dismisses the voice of the film as uncritical. In chapter four, I produce a reading of the film that considers two separate performance sequences, the two distinct filmmaking styles that characterise their construction, and the critical and ideological implications of this.

As this brief review indicates, existing scholarship on Pennebaker is narrow in focus and, as a result, produces a limited understanding of both his contributions to documentary film as well as the characteristics, politics and aesthetics of direct cinema as a whole. The lack of critical literature dedicated to the study of this thesis’ case studies indicates an unwritten history of not only Pennebaker’s direct cinema, but the

whole of the form. This thesis hopes to redress that and draw critical attention to a previously-unexplored phase of direct cinema. In such a landscape, there is considerable freedom to establish the direction of the critical discourse.

Eat the Document

Jonathan Cott, in his review for *Rolling Stone*, established the basic vocabulary that all who discussed *Eat the Document* in subsequent decades would follow. He described the film's structure as following a 'quasi-methedrine logic' whose elusiveness 'is a near visual equivalent of some of the songs Dylan was singing on *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*' (1971). Most distinctive of all, however, is his bestowal of the moniker 'anti-documentary' on the film, which I take to its logical conclusion by discussing the way in which the film intervenes in direct cinema (*ibid.*). Lee (2000) devotes a chapter of his monograph on Dylan's films to *Eat the Document*, which, in its extensive close reading of the film, attempts to draw out the film's elliptical meanings, but is more successful at stabilising the film's disorienting whirlwind of movement through the United Kingdom and Europe by clarifying the spaces it passes through and the unnamed social actors who pass through it. Farinaccio (2013; 2014) is more thorough, and works towards unpacking the film's complex authorship in a study that analyses Pennebaker and Alk's prior works to draw out their cinematic ideologies and aesthetics; he also produces a close reading of Dylan and Alk's second collaboration, *Renaldo and Clara* (1978), which he sees as a more confident and controlled exploration of their intentions for *Eat the Document*. Farinaccio, as in Heylin (1987), also brings much-needed critical attention to the films of Howard Alk, an under-appreciated and fascinating maker of politically progressive direct cinema.

While hard analysis of *Eat the Document* may be in short supply across the literature, information on its troubled production history is certainly plentiful – especially in critical biographies of Dylan himself. Because the film captures Dylan at what is arguably considered his artistic peak and was assembled during one of the most enigmatic periods of his life, the fan-driven demand for facts that cast light on this crucial era ensures that it remains a period that is constantly probed for new revelations by Dylan scholars. Shelton (1986), Bauldie (1987b), Livson (1987), Sounes (2011), Wilentz (2011) and Heylin (2011; 2014) provide detailed historical accounts of Dylan's

radical new sound and its reception on the 1966 British and European tour, his conceptualisation of the film and working relationship with Pennebaker, and his collaboration with Howard Alk on the film's design and editing during his recuperation from his infamous motorcycle accident. As no single text offers a definitive history of *Eat the Document*, one of my goals in chapter three is to synthesise piecemeal accounts into a coherent narrative that not only produces a new understanding of this period of Dylan's life, but also addresses the conceptualisation of collaboration in direct cinema and the effects on the film text of interventions made by three filmmakers who were not entirely in sync.

Sweet Toronto

For a film that Pennebaker once referred to as 'the best film I ever made' and predicted would be 'the most revered and the most interesting' of all his films, *Sweet Toronto* has received very little critical attention (1983, pp.808-09). While Pennebaker certainly misjudged its legacy, it is not necessarily the fault of the film itself. In addition to the legal obstacles its release faced, as outlined in the introduction, *Sweet Toronto* is likely largely forgotten because, unlike the above trilogy, it does not capture a particular historical or cultural moment that fits the mythic narrative of the 1960s (although the festival did gain traction at the time for being 'the concert that broke up the Beatles,' this is little more than an obscure fact these days – nor is this detail even made evident in the film [Goddard, 2009, p.IN02]).

Sweet Toronto is largely ignored in the neat historic narrativisation of the 1960s that the direct cinema rock festival documentary provides – as espoused by Saunders (2007) and Kitts (2009) – with the triumvirate of *Monterey Pop* (beginning), *Woodstock* (middle) and *Gimme Shelter* (end). Elsewhere, such as Schowalter (2000), simply the first and last of these are positioned as antipodes for the same purpose, but largely rely on mythologised generalisations. Wright (2013), on the other hand, examines the ways in which *Woodstock* and *Gimme Shelter* have informed the opposing historical narratives of the events they depict. The Toronto Rock and Roll Revival is likewise ignored in Gebhardt's 2015 otherwise wide-ranging discussion of the ideological effects of the 1960s countercultural rock festival.

Mamber (1974) and Beattie (2011) – which heavily draws upon Mamber's reading – offer the most sustained analyses of *Sweet Toronto*. I draw upon Mamber's

reading of the film as ‘a very able critique of [*Monterey Pop*]’ (p.188) in which the experiential nature of direct cinema, through its commitment to imparting ‘a sense of duration, of lived experience,’ is reaffirmed following *Pop*’s more fractured and impressionistic presentation to rethink the ideological deployment of sync sound in both films and identify *Sweet Toronto* as a work of post-classical direct cinema (p.189). Auslander’s (2006) turn to the film is particularly distinctive for its specificity; in a discussion of theatricality and authenticity in rock performance, he explores the negotiation of rock’s past, present and future in the Plastic Ono Band’s performance as compared to nostalgia act Sha Na Na’s in *Woodstock*. Whereas Auslander focuses on the first half of the Ono Band’s set, I am more interested in the confrontational aesthetics of the avant-garde second half, connecting them to Dylan and the Hawks’ performances in *Eat the Document* and analysing direct cinema’s remediation of their alienating effects.

One P.M.

Marcorelles (1973) recognises *One P.M.* as ‘unique of its kind’ and recommends that it ‘should be analysed in detail’ for its ‘technical and human implications of both direct cinema [. . .] and “*cinéma d’auteur*” ’ (p.154). Furthermore, he characterises the film as a confrontation between Leacock and Godard’s approaches, whose synthesis ‘recreates direct cinema through a particular sensibility’ (*ibid.*). My own analysis of the film in chapter five draws upon the basic exploratory strands that Marcorelles lay out here in his brief yet concentrated appraisal. I am particularly interested in Godard’s radicalisation of direct cinema techniques and the implications it has for the evolution of this particular form of documentary.

Unfortunately, very little critical work on the film followed Marcorelles’. In Mamber, (1974), *One P.M.* is relegated to a passing mention in the notes of the Pennebaker chapter, which, given the critical attention devoted to two lesser, more lightweight works, *Original Cast Album: Company* and *The Children’s Theater of John Donahue*, indicates that he had no firsthand knowledge of the film. Considering the significance of Mamber’s text in the development of the direct cinema canon, *One P.M.*’s omission was crucial to perpetuating its obscurity and denying it the attention that may have positioned it in as significant a role as Marcorelles envisioned. Mauldin (2008) contains a lengthy reading of the film in a broader analysis of French

filmmakers' use of the Black Panthers in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a device to explore their frustrations at the failed French revolution of May 1968, after which they turned to the Panthers for a new leftist revolutionary ideology. Her close reading of *One P.M.*'s interview with Eldridge Cleaver and Godard and Rip Torn's provocation of a classroom of African-American middle school students critiques Godard's failure to situate his 'provocations' in a local political context. I further develop this track in a critique of what Pennebaker calls Godard's 'revolutionary pose' as just that – a pose (1983, p.626).

Keith Beattie (2011) offers a sustained overview of the project and brief analysis of the film text, as does Brody (2013). Beattie places his analysis in the broader context of the collaborative exchange in Pennebaker's direct cinema, in which he includes the contemporaneous cycle of films with Norman Mailer and Pennebaker's later, long-term filmmaking partnership with Chris Hegedus. The rather unorthodox collaborations that characterise Pennebaker's mature period are discussed in chapters three, five and six. MacCabe (2003), Brody (2008), de Baecque (2010) discuss the production and abandonment of the project from the perspective of Godard scholars authoring career-spanning overviews of the director. Godard is a filmmaker whose career lends itself quite easily to periodisation, and, unsurprisingly, all three authors situate the project originally known as *One A.M.* at the start of his revolutionary period.

Pennebaker's 'Voice' as Authorial Perspective and Ideological Point-of-View

The major critical narrative explored throughout this thesis is one that traces the development of the 'voice' of Pennebaker's films, transitioning from his classical period (from the *Dont Look Back* era to *Monterey Pop*) into and throughout his mature period (from the authorial multiplicity evident in *Eat the Document* to *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.*). Here, I consider 'documentary voice' as both an authorial perspective and ideological point-of-view embodied by the film itself and enacted through its address, organization, and style – in short, the way it behaves as a performance. Bill Nichols' concept of the documentary voice lays the theoretical groundwork for this study. He defines a documentary's voice as 'that which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organizing the materials it is presenting to us' and is 'formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes' (Nichols, [1983] 1988, p.50). Thus, the enactment of a documentary's voice can

be understood to be a performance in which the authorial imprint of the filmmaker reveals itself. Nichols points to the documentary as a dialectic between argument and evidence (or, as Bruzzi later articulates: ‘all documentaries are a product of a dialectical as opposed to a synchronous relationship between [. . .] the truth that existed before filming began’ and the interventions of the filmmaker [2006, p.222]). He argues that meaning is not inherent in sounds and images (indexical signs that ‘bear the inescapable trace of their particular historical origins’), but is ‘conferred upon them by their function within the text as a whole’ ([1983] 1988, p.52). It is by this process, according to Nichols, that the voice of a text is produced. It is this authorial and ideological ‘voice’ that I am interested in identifying and analysing across Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema.

Pennebaker’s ideology as a filmmaker in his mature period is defined by his reflexive appropriation and exploitation of discourses of documentary authenticity in a way that privileges mood over information. Levin, for example, quotes him as saying: ‘The mood is what interests me solely in film. I’d throw away all information’ (cited in Levin, 1971, p.269). This particular perspective is rooted in his practice as far back as *You’re Nobody Till Somebody Loves You* (1964) and its follow-up, *Dont Look Back*. Pennebaker says:

The problem [with *Dont Look Back*] was to make that into a really working musical, not a documentary. Most people look at it and say it’s documentary. It is not documentary at all by my standards. It throws away almost all of its information and becomes purposely kind of abstract and tries to be musical rather than informational. Many people complained about the movie – it didn’t tell about the life-style of the hippies or dope or something like that [. . .] They felt it wasn’t informational, although I broke my neck trying *not* to be informational because it wasn’t something I should tell you about. What I want to tell you about is the mood, I guess, not the information. (cited in Levin, 1971, p.243; emphasis in original)

The formal development of what I term ‘kinetic progressions’ in Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema allows for the cinematic foregrounding of his ideological voice in a way that differs from his classical direct cinema (exemplified by *Dont Look Back*). I identify kinetic progressions as a cinematic – as opposed to rhetorical – process of cinematic signification that utilises direct cinema’s emphasis on present-ness, the found symbolism within its study of surfaces, and the exploitation of the form’s discourses of authenticity to evolve the aesthetic language of direct cinema to fulfil the form’s potential for political discourse. Kinetic progressions are cinematic structures unique in

direct cinema to Pennebaker's mature period in which an ideographic direct cinema – enacted through his emphasis on kinesis – embodies the ideological voice of the filmmaker. I propose this concept in chapter four and further its scope in chapter five using *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.*, respectively, as case studies. The idea of kinetic progressions evolves from material I establish and develop in chapter three on Dylan and Alk's rejection of Pennebaker in *Eat the Document* as well as the concept of the performative documentary, where I build upon work by Nichols and Stella Bruzzi in this area. Bruzzi notes that, historically, assumptions that the 'repression of the author has been necessary to the implementation of objectivity' have reigned, but the rise of the author-performer-based documentary over the last two decades has begun to dispel some of these notions (2006, p.158). It is particularly necessary to reassess Pennebaker, whose direct cinema practice has long been associated with certain controversial discourses of objectivity that have limited fresh approaches to the study of his work, in light of this new shift in thought.

Methodological Approaches to Pennebaker's Mature-Period Direct Cinema

To conclude this chapter, I will briefly outline my approach to the analysis of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. Textual analysis of Pennebaker's films is the research method that has driven this project. It has always been my intention to make this thesis about the films themselves – to study their formal qualities and ideological address, to place them within specific intellectual traditions and cultural trends, and to arrive at an understanding of how this process might revise pervading assumptions about direct cinema and documentary history.

My study utilises two components unique to this project. One is a personal interview with Pennebaker, conducted by myself at his New York office on 8 November 2012.^{xi} Here, he was able to address my specific questions about this set of films and period of his career. The interview, which is included in full in this thesis' appendix, was also instrumental in developing my overall critical approach and re-evaluating some of my prior hypotheses. The second is Pennebaker's comprehensive oral history, 'The Reminiscences of Donn Alan Pennebaker' (1983), a massive, 800-page manuscript transcribed from a series of 11 interviews with Barbara Hogenson conducted over four years, held by Butler Library's Oral History Archive, Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University. Special permission, which I have

obtained, is required to read, cite and quote its contents, and, to the greatest extent of my knowledge, the only other scholar to have previously utilised it in any published research is P.J. O'Connell in *Robert Drew and the Development of Cinema Verite in America* (1992). However, O'Connell only draws upon a discrete portion of interviews that pertains to Pennebaker's history with the subject of his monograph, which leaves the vast majority of this expansive resource untapped.

First and foremost, my research within this thesis is positioned as an intervention into documentary film studies. Accordingly, it strongly engages with documentary theory, where it builds upon existing concepts and develops new theoretical approaches to direct cinema. I want to briefly address the documentary theory as well as intellectual thought that have informed the study that follows, as it will better situate its position within the field.

It is my contention that the sync sound system's significance to the very concept and definition of direct cinema is not adequately addressed in the existing literature (with the exception of Marcorelles, and, to an extent, Nichols). In my re-evaluation of its role in direct cinema, my research here develops and sustains a rigorous engagement with sync sound as deployed in Pennebaker's mature period, with an emphasis on its aesthetic designs and ideological effects. For this, it was imperative to consider the existing work on documentary sound, such as Braudy (1968), Callenbach (1968), Bonitzer ([1975] 1986), MacCabe, Eaton, & Mulvey (1980), Williams (1982), Nichols (1991), Ruoff (1993), Kahana (2008) and Smith (2013). The most significant concept in the study of film sound to this study, however, is that of the sound hermeneutic as proposed by Altman (1980). What Altman develops with applications to classical Hollywood cinema, I adapt for documentary sound with amplified political effects across my discussion of *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.*

My analysis of *Eat the Document* draws upon existing conceptions of the performative documentary – namely, Waugh ([1990] 2011), Nichols (1994) and Bruzzi (2013) – to develop my own definition that best characterises a film such as this. My concept of the performative documentary is characterised by a confrontational aesthetic informed by the alienation effect as described in Brecht ([1951] 1964). The following chapter's discussion of *Sweet Toronto* expands upon Beattie's (2008) conceptions of the (direct) cinema of attractions and documentary display by exploring direct cinema as a continuation of Gunning's (1986) cinema of attractions as particularly seen in the film's fulfilment of early direct cinema's potentiality. The chapter's most significant

contribution to the field is the identification of the primary structure of cinematic organisation in mature-period Pennebaker, the concept I call kinetic progressions. As will be explored in chapter four, my definition is derived from Nichols' ([1983] 1988) work on the documentary voice as well as Cohen's (2012) and Alsop's (2014) work on kinesis in film and the practice of ideological principles being embodied in cinematic surfaces and gestural practices as opposed to rhetorical ones. In addition, two key interviews with Pennebaker were also instrumental in developing this concept: Pennebaker (1983) and Levin (1971). Finally, my analysis of *One P.M.* derives from spatial and urban studies. In this chapter, I frame the film as an updated city symphony (drawing upon Natter, 1994) in which my analysis of *One P.M.*'s process of cognitive mapping takes direction from Chanan (2007). I liken its cognitive mapping practice to Debord's (1955; 1956) concept of the *dérive*, and, furthermore, supplement Lefebvre's (1991) concept of phallic verticality with Castells' ([1976] 1982) thorough research into the urban crisis of the 1970s to develop an understanding of not only the film's anxiety of development, but also Pennebaker's reframing and critique of Godard.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the shape of the critical landscape shaped by the existing literature in the study of direct cinema and D.A. Pennebaker, exposed the gap in the literature the necessitates my intervention, and further clarified this thesis' position in the field of documentary film studies through a brief exploration of my research methodology. In the following chapter, I initiate the analysis of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema through my first cinematic case study – Bob Dylan and Howard Alk's *Eat the Document*.

ⁱ Only a handful of the films listed deviate from the consensus direct cinema canon. There is a disproportionate emphasis on minor Drew Associates films at the expense of more significant ones (*Adventures on the New Frontier* and *On the Road to Button Bay over Yanki No!* [1960] and Pennebaker's *David* [1961], for example), and the curious substitution of *The Store* (1983) over *Model* (1980) to represent then-contemporary Wiseman. Again, it appears that Barsam was not intending to be definitive and simply included what came to mind.

ⁱⁱ Bruzzi rightly singles out Drew and Maysles, who have both done much to complicate and problematise the legacy of direct cinema through their simplistic and idealistic – and very often contradictory – declarations about their practice. However, her quotation of Drew here, in which he is meant to damn himself in this regard, is not completely accurate. She quotes him as saying, '[T]he film-maker's personality is in no way directly involved in *directing* the action' (cited in Bachmann, et. al., 1966, p.292; emphasis mine), but ignores the rest of his statement, in which he then says, 'The film-maker's personality has much more effect in this form of reporting on what's being shown and how [. . .] His subjectivity is in *recording*, not in directing the scene' (*ibid.*; emphasis mine) and 'Shooting what happens as it happens is totally the film-maker's personality and sensitivity that enable him to do it'

(*ibid.*, p.293). While her point still stands – I agree that Drew had a problematically naïve understanding of the techniques that his group was developing and uttered many questionable declarations to this effect – that is not the case here, where he demonstrates an understanding more nuanced than usual. For more on the way in which direct cinema filmmakers construct their filmmaking practice in their own words, see Blue (1964), Haleff (1964) and Drew ([1981] 1988).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ruby (1988) connects early direct cinema's discourse of objectivity with the conventions of journalism, in which Drew's ventures were rooted.

^{iv} Arthur (1993), saying that 'a stance of noncontrol neatly attached itself to the demands of the FCC's Fairness Doctrine,' cynically contests this view (p.120).

^v For an overview of Drew's role in early direct cinema and subsequent career, see O'Connell (1992).

^{vi} Waugh also disparages direct cinema for 'fetishizing the image,' but I disagree, and argue that the form's major formal obsession is not with the image, but with sync sound ([1977] 2011, p.104). Direct cinema's fetishisation of sync sound is a concept that I develop across the entirety of the thesis with all three cinematic case studies.

^{vii} As a corrective to Waugh and Denby, James Arnold takes the opposite stance and praises direct cinema's role in 'shattering some taboos' through its ability to 'detail the lives of marginal groups and social outcasts' precisely because it is focused on the margins of society ([1969] 1979, p.486).

^{viii} Waugh's reasoning here is logically suspect. Firstly, it bizarrely supposes that audiences were seeking out 'direct cinema films' in the same way that certain audiences are drawn to romantic comedies or the westerns; it is fallacious to assume that these audiences were responsive to purely the form of the films, regardless of their content. Furthermore, the suggestion that follows that assumption, that the films could be used to indoctrinate audiences in radical politics sounds dangerously fascist; it also assumes that the radical left is the only legitimate political ideology and the only subject worth advancing in documentary. He also ignores the scores of direct cinema filmmakers not named Pennebaker, Maysles and Wadleigh who produced a diverse body of direct cinema films for television and theatrical audiences as outlined in chapter one. Now, if Waugh was interested in critiquing the legacy of direct cinema for suppressing its more radical voices and interrogating the historical formulation of the direct cinema 'canon,' that is another area of enquiry entirely – and an intellectually worthwhile one at that – but it is one that Waugh's polemic denies the possibility of even engaging in.

^{ix} For an alternate take on the ethical implications of direct cinema that champions its ability to deconstruct the ideological effects of social apparatuses – in part by making the private public – see Rabinowitz, 1994, chapter 6.

^x See Corner, 1996.

^{xi} Also of note is a degree of primary research on the Maysles brothers carried out prior to the narrowing of this project's scope. Albert Maysles was also the subject of a personal interview on 6 November 2012. On the same research trip, I spent a week sifting through the Maysles brothers' paper archives at Butler Library's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. While the quantitative impact of that research within this thesis is perhaps negligible (some of Maysles' comments feed into chapter four's analysis of the production of meaning in direct cinema, and archive material is utilised in this chapter, as well), the research's intellectual stimulus on the overall project's reframing of direct cinema was crucial.

Chapter 3

Dislocating the Utopic in *Eat the Document*'s Spaces of Performance and Formulating the Politics and Aesthetics of Mature-Period Direct Cinema

Introduction

'I only feel a little sad about it, but, you know, some of the other things that come out of it overwhelm that. I don't really . . . It's not a big sore in my head now' (Appendix). When questioned in a personal interview about his falling out with Dylan in 1967 that condemned his sequel to *Dont Look Back*, entitled *You Know Something Is Happening*, to the inside of a vault, D.A. Pennebaker's regretful tone and resigned expression belie his nonchalant words. In fact, they exude a real sense of loss at what could have been – and at what was done. A sequel to *Dont Look Back* that bridges the gap to *Monterey Pop* is an intriguing 'lost' direct cinema artefact, but, had it been released in 1967, the history of direct cinema would look slightly differently without a film that pointed to alternative possibilities for the form: *Eat the Document*.ⁱ

Eat the Document, a film by Bob Dylan and Howard Alk, with cinematography by D.A. Pennebaker, is a radical 'anti-documentary' that deconstructs the musician's 1966 British and European tour, which introduced his confrontational and controversial electric, full-band sound to riotous audiences.ⁱⁱ It is 'a filmic version of where [Dylan] had arrived out of the crisis that Pennebaker had depicted in *Dont Look Back*' (Wilentz, 2011, p.158). This chapter considers the ways in which the film exposes a crisis in direct cinema's form and ontological status, which implicated the practice of Pennebaker and his fellow direct cinema filmmakers. It extends the space of performance beyond the stage, challenges that space as a utopian space, and, instead, presents it as one of hostility and provocation. Gaps, dislocation and rupture engender disconnection and discontinuity between performer and audience – both Dylan/concertgoer and filmmaker/spectator. The identity of specific proilmic spaces is apparently irrelevant, as Dylan and Alk experiment with montage in a way that refuses to orient the viewer. In the film's form and structure, a horizontal restlessness that emphasises movement, displacement and artificiality is foregrounded and the (re)presentation of reality is made unnatural. *Eat the Document* challenges the organisation of identification, knowledge and representation in a form of documentary that so often saw those concepts contested. It has a conceptual antecedent in *Land*

Without Bread (Luis Buñuel, 1933) and is akin to the contemporaneous *David Holzman's Diary* (David McBride, 1968), which also critiques direct cinema.

Eat the Document is conceptually intriguing as an idiosyncratic case study in direct cinema collaboration. Pennebaker's own work as a cinematographer is reappropriated and redeployed in a critique of his filmmaking practice. The tension between the incongruent approaches of its makers results in a fascinating film that refuses to cohere. In this chapter, I argue that *Eat the Document* presages the amplification of poetics and the gestural embodiment of voice that characterises Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema. Firstly, it outlines the much-neglected – and extremely convoluted – history of the *Eat the Document* project in order to present an understanding of the unorthodox collaboration involved in the film and the way it functions as a working upon and against classical direct cinema. I draw upon the post-structuralist philosopher Louis Marin to contend that the film represents a utopic intervention in classical direct cinema; by critiquing the form through the defamiliarisation of its aesthetics and ideology, *Eat the Document* adds a new dimension to classical direct cinema that disrupts the utopian and inclusive aesthetics inherent to its observational style. To that end, I perform a textual analysis of the film itself and identify in it a new theoretical construct of that documentary that lays the groundwork for my critical formulation of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema: the performative documentary. My work here builds upon Waugh ([1990] 2011), Nichols (1994) and Bruzzi (2013) to formulate my own definition of performative documentary to argue that *Eat the Document*, with its profilmic emphasis on the stage and staging and disruptive and alienating editing scheme, foregrounds documentary's status as a performance in itself enacted by its makers. This has significant implications for the way in which I formulate Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema in the next chapter, which uses Nichols' concept of the documentary voice as a starting point. I further explore the idea of *Eat the Document* as a utopic intervention in direct cinema by interpreting this gesture as a political one; the ideological implications of *Eat the Document*'s aesthetics are read against Pennebaker's ideological engagement with the countercultural, utopian aesthetics of *Monterey Pop* and *Sweet Toronto*, which are embedded in the films' editing schemes as well as their particular deployment of sync sound. *Eat the Document*'s disavowal of unity and emphasis on rupture – embodied by its structural and ideological imperative – is furthered by examining Brecht's alienation effect in Dylan and the Hawks' stage performances in the film, their confrontational

engagement with audiences, and the junction of these alienating aesthetics within the diegesis of the film and those produced structurally by film's dialectical montage. Lastly, it is worth noting that this chapter's analysis of sync sound is key to establishing this thesis' major argument: that Pennebaker's appropriation of sync sound in his mature period – and first displayed in *Monterey Pop* – is a capable tool of political critique, whose deployment is a self-aware exploitation of direct cinema's conventions and 'jargons of authenticity' and enacts his particular authorial and ideological voice.

Reframing Direct Cinema

In working towards defining Pennebaker's mature-period interventions, it is first necessary to draw upon the groundwork laid in the previous two chapters in developing an understanding of direct cinema. The theoretical perspectives and scholarly dialogue that have surrounded this particular form of documentary since the 1960s have made it essential to consider direct cinema not as a style, method, or movement, but as a set of discourses about both the films themselves and their relationship to the world they work towards representing. These discourses include:

- Realism
- Technological determinism and the 'feedback loop'
- Reflexivity and the ethical implications of its aesthetics and interventions
- 'Cinema truth': discourses of objectivity and evidentiary claims
- The politics of authenticity and the ideology of sync sound
- The politics of affect: subjectivity, immediacy and perceptual freedom
- The politics of the counterculture

To this I would add another: a counter-cinema, utopic discourse. Much like the utopic figure itself, as defined by Louis Marin, these films occupy an 'other' space. Richard Barsam conceptualises direct cinema as a heterocosm, as it represents such a radical split from the documentary tradition, due to two key characteristics: its disassociation from the Griersonian, socially responsible model of documentary, as well as its production process, in which there is a distinction between its uncontrolled profilmic aspect and the highly controlled finished film product (1986, p.137). Further, Louis Marcorelles claims that the entire action of direct cinema is based upon language and 'implies a new perception of reality' from which one has 'to reconstruct the entire cinema and invent a new dramaturgy (1973, p. 155). The name direct cinema alone

reflects a counter positioning to established cinema; this positioning gives direct cinema its meaning (*ibid.*, p. 37). However, I contend that *Eat the Document* marks a utopic intervention within direct cinema itself and thus represents a counter-counter-cinema. As Marin outlines it, utopic practice enters into a text vertically – interrupting it, and giving it another dimension (1984, p.144). It ‘does not continue the discourse of history, sociology or economics’; rather, it ‘distracts and deters it’ by forming a ‘figure outside this discourse’ (*ibid.*). Likewise, *Eat the Document* stands apart from the direct cinema ‘canon’ where it exists outside of the historical discourse of direct cinema. However, I argue that it works both against and upon classical direct cinema – critiquing it and adding dimension to it by defamiliarising its aesthetics (and, thus, its ideology) – and signals a shift into its post-classical phase.

Eat the Document: From Stage 67 to the Utopic Stage

Eat the Document began as a commission for ABC television’s *ABC Stage 67* programme, a short-lived, weekly arts and culture anthology series, and was filmed during the European and British legs of Dylan’s spring 1966 tour.ⁱⁱⁱ From the outset, Dylan intended his second collaboration with Pennebaker to be a significant departure from their previous effort, *Dont Look Back*, by hiring the filmmaker only as a cinematographer and making it clear that the project was under Dylan’s complete directorial control.^{iv} According to Pennebaker, Dylan wanted none of the yet-to-be-released *Dont Look Back*’s ‘artsy fartsy documentary cinema vérité shit’ (Heylin, 2011, p.252).^v ‘This is going to be a *real* movie,’ he insisted instead, implying that Dylan’s approach would be one that he considered more artistically legitimate than Pennebaker’s observationalism (*ibid.*). It would also be a film more attuned to his own interests and creative practice – a spontaneous cinema in the vein of the Beats, like Robert Frank’s *Pull My Daisy* (1959) and Ron Rice’s *The Flower Thief* (1960). However, he failed to translate his vague ideas into clear direction for Pennebaker: ‘He’d occasionally say, “Shoot that, shoot some of this over here.” That kind of direction. He would occasionally get people to say things or set up situations . . . I was never quite sure what I was meant to be doing’ (*ibid.*). Pennebaker filmed these ‘little scenes’ – one of which involved ‘a succession of people [. . . going into a] huge mirrored clothes cabinet [. . .] closing the doors and coming out’ at the Hôtel George V

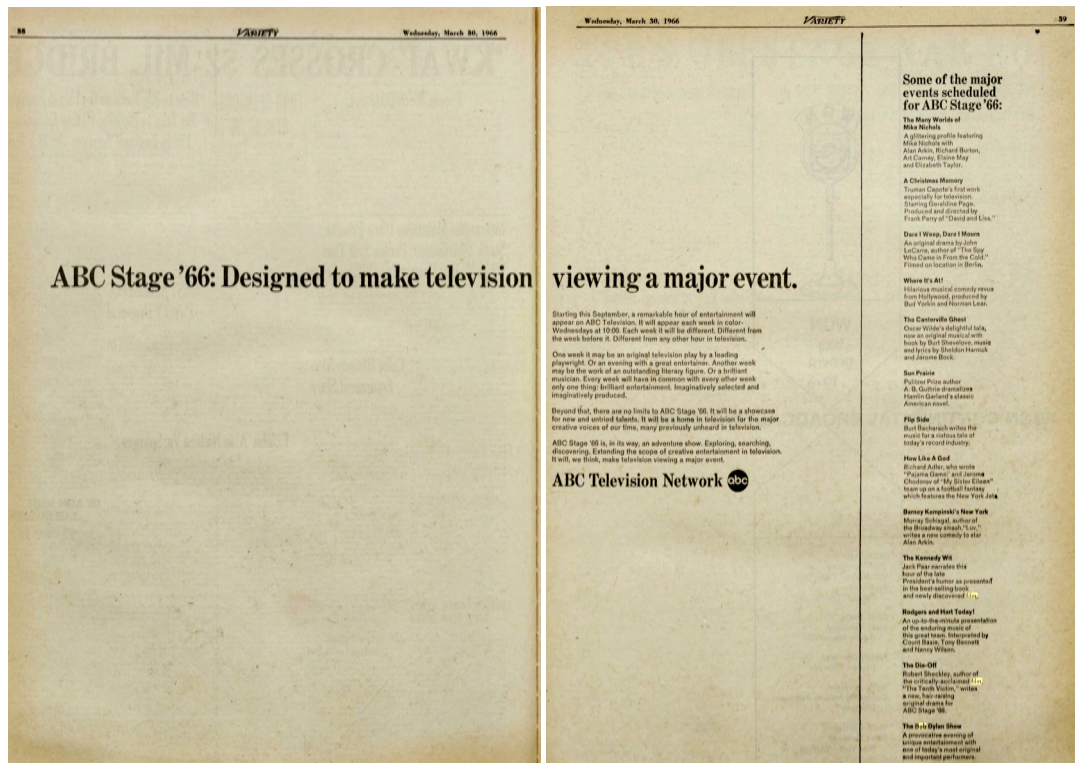


Figure 3.1. Advertisement for ABC Stage '66 (before delays necessitated renaming it ABC Stage 67) from the 30 March 1966 edition of Variety. Note the announcement in the bottom right of The Bob Dylan Show, which promises 'A provocative evening of unique entertainment with one of today's most original and important performers.'

in Paris – as they came to Dylan, but their sheer absurdity tested his patience (Livson, 1987, p.67). Although both men had no interest in making a concert film, Pennebaker found the aggressive interplay between Dylan, his band and their audiences far more engaging – and culturally consequential – than shooting 'other people's home movies,' and, on his own initiative, embedded himself among the band onstage and filmed Dylan's dramatic performances, beginning with the 20 May show at the ABC Theatre in Edinburgh (*ibid.*, p.68).^{vi}

Pennebaker envisioned a film of his own, parallel to Dylan's – one that 'centred on the stage,' (*ibid.*, p.75) where Dylan and his backing band, the Hawks, were playing, according to guitarist Robbie Robertson, 'very dynamic, very explosive and very violent' music (Heylin, 2011, p.246).^{vii} By the mid-1960s, Dylan had refined and mastered the talking, acoustic folk concert popularised by Woody Guthrie. However, on his 1965 British tour, he grew frustrated with the stagnancy and formula of this routine, and evolved his live performance beyond it mere months later. While the lethargic Dylan who opened 1966's concerts in a narcotic haze accompanied only by his acoustic guitar and extended, languid harmonica breaks challenged the prevailing image of Dylan as an affable folk singer, the Dylan whose electric ensemble explored

performative aggressiveness and the physicality of sound in the second set thoroughly dismantled it.^{viii} Although hostile audiences were confounded by Dylan's apparent betrayal of folk music and rejected his immersion into rock textures, others recognised the band's groundbreaking sound and the enormous influence it wielded.^{ix} Music critic Paul Cable described it thusly:

You hear a few vague footstomps and a just audible "one-two-three" and then suddenly they are all in together [. . .] absolutely simultaneously. From then on every instrument except Dylan's guitar is a lead. But nobody is upstaging anyone – it is totally integrated, inspired rock music. (cited in Heylin 2011, p.246)

According to Dylan biographer Clinton Heylin, 'the sound itself had a thousand precursors, but no precedent' (Heylin, 2011, p.246), while Pennebaker heard 'music [that] was generating all music everywhere' (cited in Livson, 1987, p.75).

Following the 27 May concert at the Royal Albert Hall, Pennebaker returned to his New York studio to process and synchronise the film, which proved to be a month-long procedure due to a lack of a sync track on all of the concert audio. With ABC seeking a return on their \$100,000 advance, Dylan, who was already under significant pressure to meet other contractual obligations, asked Pennebaker in early July to assemble a cut (Shelton, 1986, p.378).^x He cobbled together a 30-minute rough cut with Bob Neuwirth's assistance under the working title *You Know Something Is Happening*, which Pennebaker later described as a 'sketch: it's like a rough thing you do on a piece of paper – not a finished film' (cited in Livson, 1987, p.71).^{xi} Dylan criticised the cut as nothing more than a colourised *Dont Look Back*.^{xii} ABC subsequently rejected this footage in November 1966 as 'totally unsatisfactory' (Shelton, 1986, p.379).^{xiii} Meanwhile, a tired, taxed and irritable Dylan thought Pennebaker to be overstepping his bounds after encountering a review of Pennebaker's rough cut written by journalist Greil Marcus, who mistook it for a finished film and wrote about it as such. Although Pennebaker remembers Dylan already being generally 'pissed at everybody' following his 29 July motorcycle accident, Marcus' review seemed to spark a paranoia in Dylan that resulted in him apoplectically re-asserting his dominance as the project's alpha male over a perceived threat to his authority (cited in Livson, 1987, p.70). During a confrontation, Pennebaker alleges that Dylan 'said: "What the fuck is this? Whaddayou doing? You're not supposed to be making this film." And I *wasn't* supposed to be, you know' (cited in Dalton, 1999; emphasis in original). He insisted that any struggle for authorship and ownership of the film existed purely in Dylan's mind.

FRANK PERRY, PRODUCER OF "DAVID AND LISA" PRESENTS "A CHRISTMAS MEMORY" WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR TELEVISION BY TRUMAN CAPOTE STARRING GERALDINE PAGE COMING ON "ABC STAGE '66"	A SMASHING NEW MUSICAL! Music and lyrics by RICHARD ADLER (PAJAMA GAME, DAMN YANKEES) Book by JEROME CHODOROV COMING ON "ABC STAGE '66"
PULITZER PRIZE NOVELIST A. B. GUTHRIE WRITES A GLOWING ADAPTATION OF HAMLIN GARLAND'S "SUN PRAIRIE" EXPRESSLY FOR "ABC STAGE '66" <small>Watch television page for date and time</small>	A MUSICAL COMEDY ABOUT TODAY'S MUSIC INDUSTRY  MUSIC BY BURT BACHARACH PRODUCED BY JOE LAYTON ABC STAGE '66 <small>Watch television listing for date and time</small>
MURRAY SCHISGAL AUTHOR OF "LUV" writes a captivating new comedy about life in New York City PREMIERE NEXT FALL ON "ABC STAGE '66"	"ABC Stage '66" ★ PRESENTS ★ THE KENNEDY WIT AN UNFORGETTABLE HOUR <small>WATCH TELEVISION PAGE FOR DATE</small>
LAUGH LIKE CRAZY! A MAD HOLLYWOOD COMEDY REVUE BY THE MEN WHO BROUGHT YOU THE MOVIES "NEVER TOO LATE" AND "COME BLOW YOUR HORN" - BOB DYLAN AND NORMAN LEAR <small>WATCH FOR IT ON "ABC STAGE '66"</small>	TELEVISION! BROADWAY! HOLLYWOOD! THE MANY WORLDS OF MIKE NICHOLS JULIE ANDREWS • ALAN ARKIN ELAINE MAY ELIZABETH TAYLOR AND RICHARD BURTON in a scene from "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" <small>COMING ON "ABC STAGE '66"</small>
BOB DYLAN BOB DYLAN BOB DYLAN BOB DYLAN BOB DYLAN BOB DYLAN ABC STAGE '66 <small>WATCH TELEVISION PAGE FOR DATE AND TIME</small>	AN EVENING WITH  RODGERS AND HART <small>NEXT FALL ON "ABC STAGE '66" WATCH FOR DATE.</small>

Some of your best theatre-going this fall is also going to happen right at home.

This is just a sample of what's coming on "ABC Stage '66." What you always hoped television would be. Great theatre. Created by great writers, performers, artists. Many never before involved in television. And presented with the conviction that television, too, can be brilliant theatre, original, alive, compelling. Watch for "ABC Stage '66." All in color, starting this October. Executive Producer: Hubbell Robinson.

ABC Television Network 

Figure 3.2. Advertisement for ABC Stage '66 from the 3 April 1966 edition of the New York Times. Note the ambiguity in the ad's presentation for the Dylan special compared to the other advertised programmes.

At the same time, Grossman, obviously out-of-touch with his client's wishes, actually lambasted Pennebaker for not taking on an even more active role in the editing to help the recuperating Dylan. Compounding matters even more, ABC, who had apparently only agreed to the project on the assumption that Pennebaker, known for his professionalism, was responsible for the entire enterprise, also hounded him for the finished film (Bauldie, 1987a, p.25). He had been put in an impossible position, and he was not happy about it. An incredulous Pennebaker had to remind all parties that the film was not his to make, and never was. It was a mess, and he recognised that 'nothing positive' could come of the situation, should he continue his involvement (cited in Livson, 1987, p.70). With their professional relationship strained by the ongoing miscommunication over the rough cut and his role in the project, Pennebaker conceded his work print and all raw footage, which totalled approximately 40 hours, to Dylan to do with as he pleased.

Dylan's isolated convalescence at Hi Lo Ha, his Woodstock, New York home, following his accident afforded him ample time to review Pennebaker's raw footage on editing equipment on loan from the filmmaker alongside Howard Alk, with occasional assistance from Robbie Robertson. What he found, according to Dylan, was 'garbage. It was miles and miles of garbage' (cited in Rosenbaum, 1978). Nevertheless, from this process he generated a new concept for his film:

[Pennebaker and Neuwirth] had been concerned with the linear storyline [in *You Know Something Is Happening*].^{xiv} It was one plane and in one dimension only. And the more I looked at the film, the more I realized that you could get more onto film than just one train of thought. My mind works that way, anyway. We tend to work on different levels. So I was seeing a lot of those levels in the footage. But technically, I didn't know how to do what my mind was telling me could be done. (*ibid.*)

This is where Alk came in.

Alk had been an associate of Dylan's since 1963, and previously served as camera assistant on *Dont Look Back*. His role expanded in importance during the filming of the 1966 tour not only by operating a second camera that proved to be an invaluable counterpoint to Pennebaker's dynamic stage coverage, but also as a result of finding a creative ally in Dylan.^{xv} In addition to editing *Cry of Jazz* (1959) for Ed Bland, *Festival* (1967) for Murray Lerner, and the bizarre, of-its-time hippie power anthem *You Are What You Eat* (1968) for Barry Feinstein, Alk would later push the language of direct cinema into the service of radical politics with two collaborations with the Chicago Film Group: *American Revolution 2* and *The Murder of Fred Hampton*.

What eventually emerged from his collaboration with Dylan was a remarkable parallel text to *You Know Something Is Happening*, formed from the footage Pennebaker had rejected for inclusion in that cut. Dylan furthers:

What we were trying to do was to make a logical story out of this newsreel-type footage . . . to make a story which consisted of stars and starlets who were taking the roles of other people, just like a normal movie would do [. . .] And we were very limited because the film was not shot by us, but by 'the Eye' [Pennebaker], and we had come upon this decision to do this after everything else had failed . . . What we tried to do was construct a stage and an environment, taking it out and putting it together like a puzzle. And we did, that's the strange part about it. (cited in Heylin, 2011, p.270)

Pennebaker, perhaps unsurprisingly, has a more reductively pragmatic view of Dylan and Alk's methodology: 'Dylan made his film from the outtakes of the rough cut Bobby

[Neuwirth] and I had put together. They took these pieces of footage and jammed them together. They were trying to make a point by doing that' (cited in Dalton, 1999). That point, according Mel Howard, who would produce a later Dylan and Alk collaboration, *Renaldo and Clara* (1978), 'was that you could take the footage and make it say anything' (cited in Heylin, 2011, p.271). According to Pennebaker, Dylan was 'making a joke out of the idea of "the document" – that "the document" was not really as important as I had tried to make it in the first film' (Appendix). He calls the resulting film a 'put-down of documentaries' (cited in Dalton, 1999) that criticises 'the adverse aspects of this kind of filmmaking' – that is, direct cinema (Appendix). Al Aronowitz, a rock journalist friend who frequented Hi Lo Ha during this period, provided the film's on-point title.

C.P. Lee reports that Dylan and Alk's first step in assembling the film was to organise the shots or sequences into numbered piles by subject and theme (Lee, 2000, p.58), after which they 'attempted to "orchestrate" these sections as though each number represented a note or chord' (Hoskyns, 1993, cited in Farinaccio, 2013, p.74). Lee recounts their thought process: 'If they were put together in the right sequence the editor could create cinematic chords out of the harmonic juxtaposition of visual notes' (2000, p.59). Lee also suggests that the method evinced here has an antecedent in the automatic writing techniques of the Surrealists, although, strictly speaking, a more accurate progenitor is the cut-up technique of the Dadaists (and popularised by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs in the late 1950s and early 1960s), due to film editing's reliance on assembly and juxtaposition (*ibid.*, p.44). However, Dylan and Alk's method seems much too pragmatic and considered to be any kind of cinematic embodiment of either technique, both of which are predicated on chance and randomness. The mechanics of Dylan and Alk's working relationship during the editing process are unknown beyond Lee's claim, and even Pennebaker is left to speculate: 'How much of it is [Dylan's] film and how much was Howard Alk's film I don't know' (cited in Livson 1987, p.71). Still, he recalls that Dylan was 'not in his highest creative powers' at the time and 'was very influenced by Howard's film ideas' (*ibid.*).

Rolling Stone journalist Jonathan Cott, who coined the film's 'anti-documentary' moniker, calls the film 'a near visual equivalent of some of the songs Dylan was singing on *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*' (1971). Indeed, Dylan promoted the idea of a unified artistic practice across all media in which he was working in the mid-1960s – music, film, and literature. When pressed by a reporter at a

3 December 1965 press conference in San Francisco about the subject of a film he plans to make, a blasé Dylan responds with the dismissive: ‘It’ll be just another song’ (cited in Gleason, 1967). The same peculiar ‘Dylan logic’ also infects his other project at the time, *Tarantula*, a novel of stream of consciousness prose poetry. Many of the book’s chapter-poems are characterised by collisions of characters – sometimes fictional, historical or mythological – and bizarre situations that is reminiscent of what is known of Dylan’s original intention for *Eat the Document*. One particular passage in *Tarantula* captures in a clipped, amphetamine swirl the desire of a man to stop, to get off, in a way that anticipates the formal approach and thematic concerns of *Eat the Document*: ‘the opium ghost neath the ferris wheel – on the side of the highway – where nobody can stop – where he can cause no trouble – where the show must go on . . . this is where He wishes to die’ (Dylan, [1971] 2005, p.63).

In February 1967, just ahead of ABC’s official cancellation of the project in the spring, a determined Dylan attempted to work his way around the limitations of Pennebaker’s footage by filming new scenes, aligned with his more absurdist intentions, in which he acted with invited friends and various Woodstock hangers-on (Sounes, 2011, p.224).^{xvi} The footage went unused. While Dylan lore maintains that the network refused *Eat the Document* for being, in the words of Jonathan Taplin, tour manager for Bob Dylan and the Band, ‘a little too freaky for ABC at the time’ (cited in Cott, 1971), the network cancelled Dylan’s contract in April 1967 before Dylan had even completed the film (Shelton, 1986, p.378). The only footage ever delivered to ABC was Pennebaker’s rough cut, of which they were extremely critical. With any restrictions – deadline, content, or otherwise – from ABC no longer a concern, Dylan and Alk worked on the film intermittently throughout 1967 and finally had a finished product in early 1968, although it is unclear for whom it was being made (Heylin, 1987, p.146).

Eat the Document opens with what can be read as a thesis statement for the entire film. In a scene that is sutured together by jarring jump cuts, Dylan, whose hysterical laughter is interrupted by sputtering coughs, cups his hands over his nose and repeatedly tries to lift his head from the lid of a grand piano and compose himself, as the Hawks stagger around the empty restaurant and gleefully giggle like a cartoonishly bad trip and a waiter looks on, unamused. ‘Are we ready to move on?’ Dylan asks, after hammering out a frenetic chord progression on the piano. ‘Cut [. . .] fast on the eye’ (Dylan cited in Cott, 1971), the film pushes the spectator into a disjointed world of incongruous spatial and temporal arrangements in which Dylan and Alk have taken the

most insignificant outtakes of Pennebaker's footage, cut them into further fragments that rob them of contextual meaning, and assembled them into 'conversations unheld, events untranspired' (Alk cited in Shelton, 1986, p.366). In the film's first half, the idyllic Scottish countryside, Dylan's witness of the urban spectacles of downtown Glasgow, an antagonistic press conference in Mayfair, composing songs in a Glasgow hotel room, antics in Paris, and Dylan and the Hawks' confrontational stage performances are torn to shreds and pieced together again as a four-dimensional object.

Dylan's onstage musical performances take on the function of a Greek chorus and comment on the action that precedes it. This is more apparent in the film's second half, where particularly vitriolic versions of 'Like a Rolling Stone,' 'Ballad of a Thin Man' and 'Baby, Let Me Follow You Down' punctuate scenes of the audience expressing their (mostly negative) reactions to the electric Dylan directly to the camera, the monotony of backstage waiting and sound checks being twisted into a temporal labyrinth, Johnny Cash, Spencer Davis and John Lennon making cameo appearances, Albert Grossman and Robbie Robertson being made to look foolish through editing trickery, and, mostly, Dylan and the Hawks 'descending upon an unsuspecting Europe like exotic animals from an intergalactic zoo' (Lee, 2000, p.41). This is best exemplified in two highly absurdist sequences: one with a teenage couple in Denmark and another at a surreal dinner party with Dylan's entourage. The film's final musical number, a mellow and sincere impromptu hotel room rehearsal of 'On a Rainy Afternoon,' calms the furious, disoriented acceleration of the preceding 50 minutes. It concludes with an ending borrowed from *The 400 Blows* (François Truffaut, 1959): a freeze-frame on Dylan's furrowed brow.

Eat the Document and the Performative Documentary

Eat the Document challenges the evidentiary claims of the documentary film, and, further, critiques the mode of cinematic realism codified within direct cinema. While Richard Barsam asserts that direct cinema is a 'self-reflexive cinema, cinema about the nature and process of cinema itself, calling the attention of the serious viewer to its form and language, as well as to the process of its making' (1986, p.133), *Eat the Document* pushes this reflexivity to another level, with the idea, as Lerner articulated it, 'to fracture reality, to deliberately take a scene and strip it apart and deconstruct it' (cited in Heylin, 2011, p.271). If *Dont Look Back*'s gaze privileges the backstage as 'a

far more “real” space than the stage on which the artists do their work,’ then *Eat the Document*, with its emphasis on the stage, staging, and performativity, problematises this concept (Romney, 1995, p.86). In fact, the entire film, as stitched together with excessive, disruptive editing that refuses to cohere or unify, can be seen as a virtuoso performance that comments on the way in which filmmaking is a performative act. It disrupts the spectator’s expectations of and belief in film as presenting reality by drawing attention to the film apparatus as a performative machine. Cinematic distance and alienation effects are thus explored by assembling disparate elements to produce absurdist juxtapositions that contradict and challenge the assumptions of classical direct cinema, which are predicated upon immediacy and the spectator’s immersion in the diegetic world. I argue that *Eat the Document* foregrounds documentary film’s status as a performance enacted by its makers that embodies their authorial and ideological voice. I use a close textual analysis of the film to develop a new definition of the performative documentary that builds upon the theoretical framework provided by existing scholarship by Thomas Waugh, Bill Nichols and Stella Bruzzi.

Performance, as an alienating device, works across *Eat the Document* on two levels of the film text. Firstly, I want to consider performance at perhaps its most obvious level – that of social actors and style. Here, Thomas Waugh’s modes of documentary performance are especially useful for spatialising the relationship between *Eat the Document* and *Dont Look Back* and drawing out the former’s utopic discourse. The second – and most conspicuous and crucial performance of all – is *Eat the Document*’s editing scheme. It is a virtuoso performance that draws attention to itself through its blatant disregard for classical direct cinema editing (as advocated, specifically, by Pennebaker – the film is a response to *Dont Look Back*, after all) or anything resembling continuity editing, as well as its excessive tendencies that refuse coherence and unification. As a result, *Eat the Document* represents a utopic intervention (as defined by Marin) in classical direct cinema by critiquing it through the defamiliarisation of its aesthetics and ideology. This intervention adds a new dimension to direct cinema – one that anticipates the particular gestural embodiment of the authorial voice that characterises Pennebaker’s mature period – through its disavowal of the utopian gesture of participation invited by and inherent to the form’s observational style.

In the essay 'Short Description of a New Technique of Acting,' Brecht describes the way in which the alienation effect (A-effect), developed for the stage, can be applied to the practice of everyday life:

The A-effect consists in turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected. What is obvious is in a certain sense made incomprehensible, but this is only in order that it may then be made all the easier to comprehend. Before familiarity can turn into awareness the familiar must be stripped of its inconspicuousness; we must give up assuming that the object in question needs no explanation. (Brecht, [1951] 1964, pp.143-44)

This is the practice on display in *Eat the Document*, and, furthermore, I argue, at work in the performative documentary. On a profilmic level, this is demonstrated through the film's privileging of what Waugh considers the 'presentational' mode of documentary performance, which follows from a very intentional disavowal of *Dont Look Back*'s revelry in the representational mode.^{xvii} Waugh ([1990] 2011) historically positions the performance of social actors in documentary as a negotiation between 'representational' and 'presentational' modes. The representational mode refers to 'the documentary code of narrative illusion, borrowed from the dominant fiction cinema,' in which social actors perform as if unaware of the camera's presence, while the convention of 'presenting oneself explicitly for the camera,' which Waugh attributes to cinema's photographic lineage, is defined as the presentational mode (p.76).^{xviii} Waugh also aligns his presentational mode with Bill Nichols' reflexive mode of documentary representation, as outlined in *Representing Reality* (1990). Following the expository, observational, and interactive modes, the reflexive documentary provokes in the spectator an amplified awareness of 'his or her relation to the text and of the text's problematic relationship to that which it represents' (Nichols, 1990, p.60).

Spatialising the dynamic between the representational and presentational in terms of backstage (*Dont Look Back*) and onstage (*Eat the Document*) is an effective way of understanding both films' performance practices.^{xix} The social actors of *Eat the Document* transfigure spaces of the everyday into a stage; everyday life becomes a performance piece to the point where it no longer resembles the everyday. This is most clearly evident in the film's fragmentary vestiges of Dylan's spontaneous 'little scenes' that had irritated Pennebaker so much. Many gain an absurdity beyond the actors' carnivalesque behaviour by being completely stripped of context due to the anti-logic of their assembly, in which any kind of logical causality is rejected. For example, among

the component pieces of a particularly disorienting montage in the film's first half are a number of fragmentary glimpses of Dylan, wearing a white suit and, inexplicably, a serial villain's thin black moustache painted on his upper lip with eyeliner and bizarrely playing to the camera in his room at the Hôtel George V. The most sustained glimpse is a scene that is carved into slivers of fractured jump cuts: Dylan laughs maniacally as he playfully attacks a short-haired brunette who leans over the Juliet balcony; the jump cuts create a strobe effect in which it appears that the woman either jumps or is pushed off the balcony by Dylan (the play with cutting recalls the in-camera effects of Georges Méliès). In addition, three other fragments of the moustachioed Dylan cut into the montage a minute later are interrupted by two non-diegetic inserts to create the illusion of interaction between the spatially incongruous shots. A smiling blonde (a frequent insert in this montage), sourced from Dylan's 3 May press conference at London's Mayfair Hotel, spies on Dylan at the balcony; Dylan recoils defensively and shouts 'Get outta here!'; in a second insert, her expression changes to open-mouthed shock; lastly, Dylan is seen fiddling with the door of a wardrobe, muttering 'Old, crazy . . .'

In another scenario, at a raucous dinner party attended by Dylan's entourage, the camera tracks the movement of a slice of butter on a bread plate as it is passed from one person to the next amidst much shouting and pounding of fists and travels the length of the horseshoe-arranged tables before reaching Dylan, who sulks at the head of the table in sunglasses with his cigarette-grasping hand propping up his head. He does not look amused.

The final skit is the only such scenario to be preserved in its entirety, but it is no less absurd than the other clips that gain a level of absurdity from their fragmentary and non-sequitur nature. In it, Dylan and Manuel, carrying potted plants, prowl the suburban streets of Helsingør, Denmark, where they encounter two perplexed-looking teenagers, a dark-haired boy and a blonde girl, just outside Kronborg Castle. In a bizarre turn, Dylan goads Manuel into asking the boy if he would be open to trading his girlfriend for Manuel's jacket (see Figure 3.3). When they laugh, Manuel continues to barter and offers to sweeten the pot with a can opener, chapstick, cigarettes, and even his shirt. Although the girl looks increasingly uncomfortable, her boyfriend plays along and eventually asks for a sum of 2000 kroner, to which Manuel, looking at the bills in his wallet, responds, 'Will you take Australian money?' (Dylan's tour had stopped in Perth the week before playing Copenhagen). The absurd comedy of the scene is preserved with an immediate cut to a midshot of Manuel onstage at the piano playing a

jaunty yet concise solo that propels the spectator into the middle of a particularly raucous performance of ‘Baby, Let Me Follow You Down.’ The most important effect



Figure 3.3. *Manuel and Dylan’s absurd disavowal of direct cinema conventions.*

that the jump to an on-stage performance spotlighting Manuel achieves is the foregrounding of the performative nature of the scene that precedes it. There is no off-stage; the film is one unending performance (the song also continues the musical performances’ function as a Greek chorus commenting on the action that precedes it). Manuel plays the part of the ribald scoundrel with such natural authenticity that it challenges the spectator to question one’s orientation to the film text. The scene clearly begins as a gag, but, after witnessing Manuel’s persistence, cockiness and smug disregard for the girl, one begins to rethink that position. Questions of how much of his ‘authentic self’ is actually on display begin to creep in. As a result, the scene is highly effective at destabilising conventions of documentary performance in direct cinema. This is one example of Brecht’s alienation effect at work in the film.

Beyond the profilmic level and the work of the presentational performances of the social actors, the film’s editing scheme also produces an alienation effect. Here, the concept of the performative documentary as developed independently by Nichols and Bruzzi provides a particularly useful theoretical framework for my own conceptualisation of this mode of documentary as exemplified by *Eat the Document*. Consider the expansive, approximately 10-minute montage in the film’s first half to which I have previously alluded. The sequence is representative of the film’s highly peculiar montage theory. Deconstructing it (which, in this case, actually resembles a process of reassembly) and examining its component parts reveals not a random assembly reliant on chance as with the cut-up, but a tightly-organised pattern of repetition that produces the effect of the editors sculpting in time (Farinaccio calls this

‘cinematic sculpting’) (2013, p.70). Dylan and Alk utilise fragments of a discrete few places and events (as opposed to a random jumble from across all the available footage), which, due to their recurrent weaving in and out of the film text, produces a unique, four-dimensional, Cubist perspective of the profilmic events. However, it should be emphasised that the spectator is confronted with a variety of non-causal perspectives of a series of events that refuse to cohere; there is no attempt for any kind of gradual orientation or accrued, holistic understanding to be produced having consumed the montage in total. Again, Dylan and Alk are very purposefully working with the outtakes of Pennebaker’s footage; they are dealing in the marginal, the ignored and the meaningless – scenes and shots that were not ‘worthy’ of inclusion in Pennebaker’s rough cut, *You Know Something Is Happening*.

The sequence is composed of material from the following sources (I have also noted the frequency of cutaways to elements of said footage):

Scene	Frequency
The passing bucolic landscape filmed from the band’s tour bus as well as the band’s activity inside as they drive through the Scottish hillside	3x
The landscape (including the rear of the bus) filmed from a town car that follows it	3x
Street scene featuring a newspaper vendor outside the North British Station Hotel in George Square, Glasgow	4x
Scenes inside Dylan’s North British Hotel room (including off-the-cuff song demonstrations by Dylan to Robertson: ‘What Kind of Friend Is This’ and ‘I Can’t Leave Her Behind’)	7x
Visiting the site of a local boy’s drowning in the Scottish countryside	1x
Dylan and the Hawks performing ‘Tell Me Momma’ onstage (composite footage from Glasgow and Paris shows)	1x
The 3 May press conference at the Mayfair Hotel (from which the young blonde woman is sourced)	10x
Exterior shots of and around the Royal Albert Hall	4x
A steam train cutting across the countryside	2x
Inside Dylan’s room at the Hôtel George V with the young French woman	7x
A low-angle shot of a crowd with umbrellas grouped together in the rain (location unidentifiable)	3x

In the film, the sequence runs as follows:

1. Wide shot of the bus driving through the Scottish hillside.
2. Close-up of roadie smoking a cigarette inside the bus.
3. Wide shot of a newspaper vendor; pan up to the North British Station Hotel.
4. Dylan reading the newspaper on the bed inside.

5. Quick zoom onto the newspaper vendor's face.
6. More Scottish countryside, but from the perspective of the towncar.
7. A local man showing Dylan and the Hawks where a boy drowned by a wooded creek.
8. Quick midshot of the bus driver.
9. Zoom onto Dylan's sunglassed eyes in the towncar.
10. Composite performance of 'Tell Me Mamma' from Glasgow and Paris shows (multiple nonsynchronous cuts).
11. Quick close-up of a young blonde woman at the Mayfair Hotel press conference.
12. The band passing the time on the bus.
13. Wide shot of the bus driving through the Scottish countryside.
14. A cut back to the interior of the bus.
15. London – pan up from idling Routemasters to the Royal Albert Hall.
16. Press conference footage (including a lingering shot of the blonde).
17. Dylan and Robertson running through 'What Kind of Friend Is This' at the North British Hotel (one long take).
18. Fleeting close-up of the blonde.
19. Brief pan across Glasgow rooftops.
20. More activity inside the tour bus.
21. Bus interior audio persists over wide shot of steam train cutting across landscape.
22. Brief return to Dylan and Robertson's hotel room performance breaking down.
23. Two shots inside the Hôtel George V with the French brunette and Dylan's pencil moustache.
24. The press conference blonde smiles.
25. A cut back to the Hôtel George.
26. A cut back to the blonde.
27. Dogs being walked outside the Royal Albert Hall.
28. Dylan's antics in the Hôtel George with the French woman.
29. Wide shot of the Royal Albert Hall.
30. Two shots of an unidentified crowd watching some off-screen action in the rain.
31. Brief close-up profile shot of the vendor.
32. Whip pan across the crowd in the rain.
33. Zoom onto Robertson's face in the North British Hotel.

34. Dylan walking to the balcony in the Hôtel George.
35. A cut back to the blonde.
36. A cut back to Dylan, who 'reacts' to her spying on his antics with the French brunette.
37. A cut back to the blonde, who is 'surprised' at his reproach.
38. A fragment of Dylan struggling to open a wardrobe in the Hôtel George.
39. A cut back to the blonde.
40. Silent footage of Dylan and Robertson in North British Hotel.
41. Whip pan past the blonde at the press conference.
42. A cut back to Dylan and Robertson that begins silently, but audio begins after a few seconds over a close-up of Robertson's guitar, which accompanies Dylan on 'I Can't Leave Her Behind.'
43. A cut back to the Royal Albert Hall.
44. A close-up on the newspaper vendor's crossed eyes.
45. A cut back to a wide shot of the steam train.
46. Fade to black.

Again, it is important to firstly note that Dylan and Alk are drawing upon a limited number of scenes in this montage and not the entirety of the footage available to them, which enables the 'sculpture effect' to work. Portions of this sequence have been analysed previously (Dylan's antics at the Hôtel George V and its cutaways to the blonde from the Mayfair Hotel press conference who 'observes' his actions) or will be in a later section (a suite of shots from the beginning of the montage). Dylan and Alk cut these scenes into fragments that decontextualise their 'found' significance and reconfigure them into a many-angled time sculpture in which their function is recontextualised. The film's editing scheme contests the production of a subjective perspective, and, thus, knowledge, in classical direct cinema.

Eat the Document's textual operations result in the production of a documentary that promotes an alternative paradigm of spectatorship. This aligns with what Bill Nichols identifies as the performative documentary. In 1994's *Blurred Boundaries*, Nichols furthers his existing categorisation of documentary modes beyond the expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive (established in 1990's *Representing Reality*) with the addition of the performative, which he proposes 'marks a shift in emphasis from the referential as the dominant feature' (1994, p.94) to 'subjective aspects of a classically objective discourse' in which the spectator, and not the historical

world, becomes the principal referent (*ibid.*, p.95). Visually, Nichols' performative mode is characterised by '“excessive” use of style' (*ibid.*). The spectator is positioned at the referential centre of the universe; the acting out of the documentary is a performance that unfolds around said spectator. In denying the spectator an immersive (yet, of course, illusory) experience in the three-dimensional space and temporality of direct cinema that promotes identification, *Eat the Document* instead produces a disruptive, four-dimensional, Cubist perception of time and space. It is a many-angled perspective. This reorganisation of the referent also entails a shift in the kind of knowledge produced by the documentary and received by the spectator. It is less an epistemological knowledge and more a sensorial one. *Eat the Document* deliberately obscures any attempt at uncovering any notion of 'truth.' The film's refusal of perspective can thus be seen as a critique of the immersive subjectivity of classical direct cinema. Nothing is revealed. The backstage gaze of *Dont Look Back* that promises the production of a 'real' knowledge or the representation of an authentic experience is refused and critiqued as artifice through the presentational display of an impossible perceptual perspective in *Eat the Document*. Its tactics of destabilisation illustrate Bruzzi's contention of what the performative documentary is capable of:

Alternatively, the use of performance tactics could be viewed as a means of suggesting that perhaps documentaries should admit the defeat of their utopian aim and elect instead to present an alternative 'honesty' that does not seek to mask their inherent instability but rather to acknowledge that performance – the enactment of the documentary specifically for the cameras – will always be the heart of the non-fiction film. (2013, p.49)

The result is an alienation effect that invites a rethinking of the utopian operations of classical direct cinema.

Bruzzi (2006; 2013) formulates her own definition of the performative documentary that diverges from Nichols' in some respects but adds another dimension to my own definition that I am developing here. For Bruzzi, documentary represents a mediation between filmmaker and reality in a way that is, essentially, a performance. Influenced by Judith Butler and J.L. Austin's use of 'performative,' the documentary is an utterance or doing that 'comes into being as it is being performed' and 'is necessarily performative because it is given meaning by the interaction between performance and reality' (2013, p.49). Further, Bruzzi's performative documentary 'uses performance within a non-fiction context to draw attention to the impossibilities of authentic documentary representation' (*ibid.*, p.48). Here, the performative is an 'alienating,

distancing device' that complicates the spectator's response to the film's content (*ibid.*). The effect of this, then, is a conscious move away from the referential – as in Nichols' definition – that simultaneously labours towards representing reality – in keeping with documentary tradition – with a heightened awareness of 'the inevitable falsification or subjectification such representation entails' (*ibid.*, p.49).

The theoretical concepts of Waugh, Nichols, and Bruzzi brought to the fore in this discussion can be synthesised and configured in such a way to produce an understanding of the performative in *Eat the Document* and lay the groundwork for a new definition of the performative documentary. As previously stated, *Eat the Document* disrupts and problematises prevailing notions of documentary authenticity as advocated by direct cinema and embodied by *Dont Look Back*, in particular. This critique is evidenced in *Eat the Document*'s disavowal of *Dont Look Back*'s spaces of authenticity and in its alternative emphasis on the stage, staging, and performativity. Therefore, the primary effect of *Eat the Document* as a performative documentary is to function as an alienating device that challenges both the production and reception of what Bruzzi identifies above as 'authentic documentary representation.'

While Bruzzi and I share a common conceptual language in our respective definitions of the performative documentary, differences become apparent when those concepts are put into practice. Bruzzi's explication of her definition, which is conducted through a study of 'star director' Nick Broomfield (2013, p.50), hinges on the indexical presence of the filmmaker within the film, either on camera or in voiceover, in a role in which the filmmaker is literally 'acting out a documentary' (*ibid.*, p.49). My own definition, as exemplified by *Eat the Document*, has no such stipulation. The performative quality of the documentary derives not from the indexical presence of the filmmaker, but through understanding the enactment of the film – the way it unfolds before the spectator and thus 'comes into being' – to be a performance in and of itself. Rather than depend on an indexical presence, the filmmaker's 'authorial imprint' (Bruzzi, 2006, p.199) manifests itself as an embodied presence – what Nichols calls a documentary's 'voice' (Nichols, [1983] 1988).^{xx} This idea of enactment – which Bruzzi also champions – is crucial to my definition; it is through this act – the unfolding of the film in time – that this voice addresses the spectator through its material organisation and interaction of its signifiers. All documentaries – all films – can be considered a performance on the part of a filmmaker; after all, it is a work that s/he has put into motion. What the performative documentary does is foreground an awareness of the

high degree of performance inherent in documentary filmmaking, disrupt the dominant, epistemological-based discourse of the genre, and question the documentary's relationship to a historical referent.

The Ideological Effects of Sync Sound in *Eat the Document* and *Monterey Pop*

This analysis has yet to address the role of sync sound in the production of *Eat the Document*'s editing scheme's alienation effect, but this is a study best situated within a discussion of Pennebaker's own deployment of sync sound in his contemporaneous works. Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema deploys sync sound in complex, ideologically laden ways. In many respects, it develops from experiments and explorations made in *Monterey Pop*, which I have previously identified as a transition film due to the ways in which it retains formal elements of Pennebaker's classical style, yet points toward the freer engagement with direct cinema principles that characterises his mature period. One scholar who underestimates the creative use of sync sound in direct cinema as a whole is Thomas Waugh. In a 1990 essay, he specifies that it was direct sound that direct cinema practitioners neglected to push to its full democratic potential, and that activist groups, such as the New Left and the women's movement, who 'embraced speech and intercommunication as a political process, favored participatory and collaborative cultural forms [. . .] as an essential means of political and cultural empowerment,' seized ([1990] 2011, p.88). However, such an assessment is reductive and fails to recognise the creative use of the device in direct cinema's later stages. I now want to explore Pennebaker's ideological appropriation of sync sound in *Monterey Pop*, where its deployment is a self-aware exploitation of, in the words of Paul Arthur, direct cinema's 'jargons of authenticity,' and the following two chapters' discussion of *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.* will develop this starting point into a full analysis of sync sound in Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema (1993, p.78).

Waugh's confused appraisal of direct cinema and constrictive view of documentary in general blinds him to direct cinema's strongest political gesture – its participative receptivity. As Jonathan Vogels (2005, p.154) and Richard Barsam suggest, direct cinema's very structure is democratic, in that 'it is both the viewer *and* the filmmaker who establish the meaning [. . . direct cinema] asks the viewer to confront the inherent ambiguities in any subject' (1986, p.139; emphasis in original).

What Vogels and Barsam praise as an interpretive strategy, however, Waugh decries as ‘inarticulateness’ ([1977] 2011, p.96).^{xxi} However, there is some disconnect between both sides of this argument. While Vogels, Barsam and myself argue for direct cinema as a democratic cinema at the reception stage, Waugh is more concerned about a democratic production process. He argues that direct cinema ‘retain[s] the myth of Flahertian authorial control,’ while the New Left and the women’s movement aspired to an ideal where ‘the documentarist was the resource person, technician, or facilitator, and the subject-performer was the real steward of creative responsibility’ (Waugh, [1990] 2011, pp.88-89). Thankfully, he recognises the ‘aesthetic idealism and political naïveté’ loaded within even his preferred model, and the question of whether this mode of collective production is evaluated in view of such a naïve ideal, as direct cinema often is (and discussed in chapter two), is a matter worth exploring elsewhere (*ibid.*, p.89).

Waugh provides no such caveat in his repeated critiques of direct cinema, however. It is understandable that Waugh, in the fervour of the historical moment, might accuse direct cinema practitioners of being politically naïve in their assumed apoliticality; however, posterity may actually be the one to judge his hard-line leftist radicalism as more deserving of the charge. Although *Eat the Document* does not engage with expressly socio-political subject matter as befits Waugh, adopting the perspective espoused by Comolli and Narboni – that ‘*every film is political*, inasmuch as it is determined by the ideology which produces it’ – opens the film to wider, and perhaps more radical, critical possibilities in order to understand this film as a cultural and historical object ([1969] 2004, p.814; emphasis in original). The ‘real job of the counterculture’ – although perhaps not as Waugh would define it – can nonetheless be found within the rupture and tensions of its highly politicised form. It does not uncritically reproduce the classical direct cinema’s own codified re-presentation of reality; rather, by building a separate – and critical – model of reality that treats its subject like a four-dimensional object, it creates a new scopic regime. *Eat the Document* represents a utopic intervention in direct cinema as both a form and a discourse; this intervention’s status as a political gesture was initiated with my previous dissection of the film’s editing scheme and bears further investigation through an analysis of its deployment of sync sound.

However, it is useful to initiate my analysis of sync sound not with a sequence from *Eat the Document*, but with *Monterey Pop*’s closing performance, Ravi Shankar’s 17-minute ‘Dhun (Dadra and Fast Teental).’^{xxii} Throughout Shankar’s lengthy

performance, the camera wanders the crowd and records the rapturous attentiveness and collective ecstasy of the audience. Shankar even appears to unify the gap between performer and audience, as Jimi Hendrix, the Monkees' Micky Dolenz, and the Electric Flag's Mike Bloomfield are shown being mesmerised by the dhun not from backstage, but amongst the crowd. The sequence takes the form of a dialogue – between Shankar and his tabla player, Alla Rakha, as well as between the musicians and the audience. Jonathan Kahana recognises that 'the *cinéma vérité* style in which *Monterey Pop* [. . .] *Woodstock* [. . .] and other films of this cycle were made invited the viewer's participation in this community' (2008, p.166). This proved problematic for some critics, such as Thomas Waugh as well as Emile de Antonio, who found rock festival documentaries – and, indeed, direct cinema itself – removed from the '“anger and contention” they felt was the proper object of documentary in the 1960s' (*ibid.*). Kahana interprets this to mean that the films failed phenomenologically to reify the solidarity, grit and noise of the collective spirit that characterised such happenings, though he does not agree with the sentiment. He argues that 'the utopian scene of the rock festival in *Monterey Pop* does express the “anger and contention” of the Sixties in its evocation of the pure, liberated space of performance' (*ibid.*).

This 'utopian scene' extends beyond the film's coverage of profilmic events to Pennebaker's treatment of its formal properties. He reinforces the utopian theme of this final scene on a formal level; its considerable effect – and affect – is founded upon the unification of sound and image, and, in the process, demonstrates the strength of direct cinema's sync sound system. One concept that I would like to draw out of this analysis is that of 'utopian performatives,' conceived by theatre and performance scholar Jill Dolan to:

describe small but profound moments in which performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking and intersubjectively intense. (2005, p.3)

In this final scene of *Monterey Pop*, the utopian performative is at work not only in the profilmic event – the communal dialogue between Shankar and the audience – but in Pennebaker's participative and expressive camerawork, his inclusive editing, and, above all, the sync sound system. It is an aesthetic and ideological effect that we have seen denied in *Eat the Document* and will be raised again in a later discussion of *Sweet Toronto*.

Monterey Pop has been criticised by Stephen Mamber for ‘run[ning] counter to several key [direct cinema] concepts’; indeed, throughout the film, Pennebaker very uncharacteristically privileges a collage-like compilation of cutaways – candid glimpses of local colour – paired with the asynchronous musical soundtrack of a featured on-stage act instead of those shots’ accompanying, synchronous sound for a significant portion of the film (1974, p.188). The failure to engage with sync sound for a significant amount of the film, along with the ‘impressionistic’ (*ibid.*, p.187) and ‘fragmented presentation’ (*ibid.*, p.188) that comes with a relative lack of long takes and results in a loss of ‘a sense of duration, of lived experience’ (*ibid.*, p.189) and an editing style that ‘force[s] a specific interpretation’ (*ibid.*, p.188) displaces *Monterey Pop* from Mamber’s conception of direct cinema. While the majority of Mamber’s observations are accurate, his criticism, particularly of the film’s apparent renunciation of sync sound, is limited in that it is only applicable to select sequences, and, even then, when they are observed as isolated extracts; he neglects to consider the function of the parts to the whole. The affective impact of the ‘utopian performative’ embodied by Shankar’s film-closing performance succeeds precisely because the sequence so boldly showcases the sync sound system’s unification of sound and image juxtaposed against the dominant ‘impressionistic’ and collage-like treatment of the film’s formal elements the precedes it.^{xxiii} Thus, the film does not stray from some imagined direct cinema dogma, but expands the creative – and possibly political – possibilities of sync sound.^{xxiv}

A close reading of one of the film’s musical sequences, Country Joe and the Fish’s performance of ‘Section 43,’ reveals the prevailing treatment of the sound/image relationship for the majority of the film. The ominous psychedelic mood signalled by an eerie organ riff, chiming guitar and primal thumping of mallets that fades in like a thick haze after the distant howl of a man unify a series of candid shots of festivalgoers intended to foreground the scene’s drug culture (Pennebaker & Adler, 2002). Its execution can be classified as either exceedingly tame or highly suggestive. Set to such foreboding music, much of the camera’s survey of the campgrounds (assumed to be Albert Maysles’, who was tasked with wandering the crowds) unfairly transforms dishevelled, longhaired youths in knit ponchos and second-hand clothes (undoubtedly looking worse for wear after camping outdoors for three days) climbing out of sleeping bags, sharing cigarettes around a burn barrel, and weaving *Ojos de Dios* into something much more unsavoury than it actually was. Pennebaker’s assemblage of images is highly responsive to the song and answers shifts in mood and rhythm with his own; over

the course of the sequence, the accrual of imagery teases out its particular theme. There is a tonal shift: a lingering, haunting close-up of a young brunette's face obscured by colourful wind chimes dances in time with a repeated, languid, finger-picked guitar riff, a particularly esoteric passage of the song. After cutaways to the band onstage – showcasing Joe McDonald and Barry Melton's gentle and synchronous fingerpicking – the camera finds another face onto which to hold: a blissfully stoned audience member, looking decidedly straight middle America with his short, unstyled hair and neat flannel shirt. His head and the empty smile it holds is angled away from the stage – his eyes focus upwards, elsewhere – and attempts at conversation from the incredulous and equally straight-looking middle-aged man in the adjoining seat fail to register. After this young man holds the spotlight, the remainder of the candid crowd footage relies on close-ups of mellowed-out audience members, where it is evident that they are meant to be read as stoned. A solitary blonde awash in moody, low-key lighting reclines in shadow; smoke languidly flutters from the mouth of a redhead amongst the crowd; a young man in a green turtleneck, eyes closed and far away, sleeps on his back in the

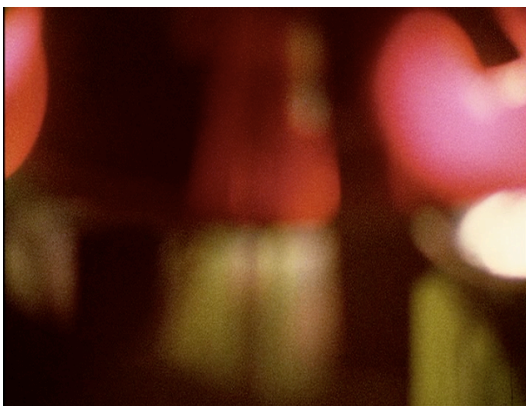


Figure 3.4. *The asynchronous mosaic of drug culture imagery during Country Joe and the Fish's 'Section 43' can be read as being inscribed with a particular ideological weight when compared against Ravi Shankar's 'Dhun (Dadra and Fast Teental)' sequence, which is constructed upon direct cinema's sync sound aesthetics and attendant 'jargons of authenticity.'*

grass. These candid shots are occasionally intercut with a profile shot of Melton playing an extended, languorous passage on the harmonica that zooms closer and closer with each cut. The last is followed by shifting patterns of colourful light; they remain out of focus, and, thus, obscured. Pennebaker's interest in the crowd is so overwhelming that footage of Country Joe and the Fish, which functions as cutaway footage from the primary object of study – the crowd – and not the other way around, is of secondary importance. The set closes with a pan up from an audience member's jittery, brown-loafered feet to her lap that holds a pair of still, folded hands before revealing a bob-haired dirty blonde peacefully sitting with a stoned smirk on her face, totally oblivious to the sea of bodies surrounding her offering the band polite applause. The placement here of a shot that echoes the earlier tripping young man reinforces the musical structure of the sequence's arrangement through the repetition of visual leitmotifs. In addition, by closing the set with a sustained look at this woman clearly lost in drugged ecstasy, Pennebaker quite emphatically underlines its intended theme.

In fact, it can be argued that the film is explicitly addressed to that which it displays, the counterculture; this sequence, in particular, makes a compelling case for such an argument. Pennebaker's treatment of the images, which involves shifts in rhythm and mood, is more musical than rhetorical. This sequence is not a sociological study of the drug culture; the spectator unfamiliar with the counterculture does not necessarily come away from the film with an epistemological knowledge of the scene (it may, in fact, reinforce unsubstantiated assumptions). Pennebaker's address is not informational; instead, his approach to developing a line of thought is suggestive. It is a study of surfaces – one that aestheticises them in the tradition of the 'distorted documentary,' such as *N.Y., N.Y.* (Francis Thompson, 1957) and *Bridges-Go-Round* (Shirley Clarke, 1958), the products of Pennebaker's former colleagues – that lacks the sync sound system's ability to probe intimate spaces as in a more revelatory direct cinema treatment of the counterculture lifestyle, Ed Pincus' *One Step Away*. By privileging mood over information and building a sequence upon that principle, the effectiveness of his evocative and highly sensorial approach to putting the drug culture on display relies on the successful transmission of specific cues that speak to those in the know.^{xxv} Thus, it should have been quite clear to such a spectator of the film how to read the assemblage of audience footage.

This study yields a number of findings. Firstly, by dissecting the way in which the typical musical sequence as a modular, self-contained entity operates, it, indeed,

supports a number of Mamber's observations about *Monterey Pop*. However, it also makes Mamber's neglect of the broad view apparent. Recognising the way in which Pennebaker deploys music recorded live under an impressionistic assemblage of asynchronous images for the purpose of developing a specific thematic line for a majority of the film produces an understanding of the impact of the film's final scene as a utopian moment due to its synchronous unification of sound and image in excess. Furthermore, and of most consequence for this chapter's object of study, it demonstrates how Pennebaker's own engagement with a 'fragmented presentation' differs in intent, technique and effect from Dylan and Alk's in *Eat the Document*. Following my emphasis in the preceding analysis on the significance of sync sound, it should come as no surprise that the determining factor here, too, is sound design. In fact, it is precisely Alk and Dylan's commitment to sync sound that produces the feelings of dislocation and alienation that characterise their film. In *Eat the Document*, sync sound works against its predominant usage in documentary and resists functioning in a way that is in-line with commonly understood theory.^{xxvi} Here, sync sound is a tool employed to rupture any sense of continuity or orientation. Nearly every sequence in the film bears this out. Sync sound anchors the image to a defined spatial and chronological positioning; it confers on it a weight, and grounds the spectator in the profilmic event. In *Eat the Document*, however, it is precisely this capability that is hijacked.

For example, consider the following sequence of three shots beginning just after the film's five-minute mark. Dylan, framed in a medium shot, reclines on his bed in Glasgow's North British Station Hotel and reads the *Evening Citizen* (the front page's headline reads 'DYLAN BLOWS IN . . .' above his full-page picture), which obscures his entire upper body. He sits up, drops the newspaper (revealing himself to be wearing sunglasses and a black button-down shirt with white polka dots), and swings his feet onto the floor before cutting to a zoom onto the face of the flat-capped, cross-eyed newspaper vendor, who is a recurring subject of cutaways throughout the film, for barely a second. That forward momentum is maintained as the spectator is thrust into a phantom ride on a winding road in the hilly Scottish countryside for eighteen seconds in the front seat of a bus. Sync sound accompanies each shot: the yammer of an offscreen voice, the creasing of the newspaper, and the ambient noise of the hotel room; the near-silent buzz of the outdoors; the hammering drone of the bus' engine and the warbling radio. The collision of these incongruous sounds – especially due to the quiet/loud dynamic at work – disrupts any kind of linear reading of these images. Because of sync

sound's ability to ground the spectator in a profilmic environment, this sequence's rapid cuts constantly displace the spectator, who is plucked in and out of non-contiguous spatial perspectives. Sync sound thus is an unstable axis that refuses to steady the spectator with a fixed perspective. In *Eat the Document*, sync sound gives the spectator not a three-dimensional perspective of a particular profilmic event, but a four-dimensional one.

On the other hand, Pennebaker, as exemplified by the above sequence, pairs a singular audio track – a performed song recorded live – with a series of disparate images unrelated by any spatial continuity. The effect is one of coherence; the soundtrack unifies the images and creates a relationship between them that allows them to be read as developing a thematic line. The soundtrack is a fixed axis that orients the spectator and is crucial to establishing the film's scopic regime. Had Pennebaker synchronised each individual shot with its accompanying audio track recorded in the field and presented a true audio/visual tapestry, the result would likely be as thoroughly disorienting as any sequence in *Eat the Document*. Moreover, if one refers back to Alk and Dylan's method of assembly revealed earlier in this chapter, it will be clear that Pennebaker's thematic arrangement of the material shares much in common with the duo's approach. Formally, the distance between the two films is not as wide as they appear on the surface; nevertheless, there is a significant ideological gap between the two.

Returning to the final scene of *Monterey Pop*, it becomes clear just how crucial Pennebaker's experimentation with asynchronous sound throughout the film impacts the way in which Shankar's performance is read. Considering the interaction of the film's parts with each other, and the relationship of those parts to the whole, reveals Pennebaker's ideological positioning. The film's final scene is an act of cinematic emancipation that revels not only in the utopian imaginary of the assembled community, but in the sensorial and affective potentiality of direct cinema's sync sound system. Beattie describes Pennebaker's presentation as 'emotionally and physically unit[ing] the audience members in a temporal and spatial ensemble' (2011, p.31). It is excessive, ostentatious, and draws attention to the triumph of the audio potentialities offered by direct cinema. Pennebaker's 'expressive practice' itself (*ibid.*, p.14), which is 'complicit in the performance' (*ibid.*, p.33), is an embodiment of the utopian performative.

The politics of direct cinema run deep within it, as well. Speaking of the sequence's presentation of sync sound, Pennebaker's insistence that 'it was all real' (Pennebaker & Adler, 2002) demonstrates how direct cinema's rhetoric of authenticity manifests itself through the affordances of technology and imagination and confers the very 1960s pursuit of the 'really real.' This sentiment of 1960s positivism, which understands 'the truth' as existing somewhere 'out there' in the world to be discovered, has been identified as an essential component of the ideology of direct cinema, but it is one that has been contested and refuted by subsequent intellectual movements (Ruby, [1977] 1988, pp.66-67). By imparting the scene with what he considers and values as an authenticity, Pennebaker can be seen to be validating or vouching for the legitimacy of – giving a weight to – the particular profilmic experience at hand. This line of thought will be pursued in the following chapter when considering Pennebaker's formal negotiation of two examples of self-presentation in *Sweet Toronto*: that of the Toronto-based Vagabonds motorcycle club and John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Presently, however, I want to continue this discussion of the utopic and utopian by examining Pennebaker's use of utopian formal gestures (such as inclusive editing practices) in the film as a way of responding to and engaging with the alienation effect produced by Lennon and Ono's performance in the film. Furthermore, I will compare Pennebaker's documentation of their performance to the reification of the Brechtian elements of Dylan and the Hawks' live performances through an anti-realist aesthetic in *Eat the Document* in order to draw conclusions about the intersection of aesthetics and ideology.

Aesthetics, Ideology and the Political Address of Direct Cinema in *Eat the Document* and *Sweet Toronto*

This thesis has already examined the ways in which *Eat the Document* functions as a utopic intervention in classical direct cinema through its editing scheme and sound design's disavowal of the utopian gesture of participation invited by the form's observational style. By defamiliarising its aesthetics – as well as the ideology behind those formal gestures – it adds a new dimension to direct cinema and expands its potential for political address. Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, too, due to its self-reflexive relationship with classical direct cinema, displays the potential political address of the form. I now want to turn to *Sweet Toronto* to examine Pennebaker's cinematic engagement with an alienating concert performance on par with Dylan and

the Hawks' in *Eat the Document*. In *Sweet Toronto*, Pennebaker relies upon traditional direct cinema formal gestures of inclusion – utopian gestures – that diverge sharply from the confrontational aesthetics of Dylan and Alk in *Eat the Document*. I want to analyse the Plastic Ono Band's subversive and confrontational performance against Dylan and the Hawks' in *Eat the Document* to uncover the way in which Pennebaker's inclusive and participative aesthetics produce an alienating experience for the cinematic spectator and reveal the performative critique of bandleaders John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Beyond this, however, I want to explore how aesthetic preferences for dialectical montage in *Eat the Document* and Pennebaker's more accretive approach in *Sweet Toronto* position the films' respective makers ideologically.

On Dylan's 1966 British and European tour, the possibility and potentiality for the utopian liberation of the rock concert was transformed into an experience of disconnect and discontinuity in practice for both the unmediated concert audience and the mediated film spectator in *Eat the Document*. Dylan's on-stage auto-destruction of his folk-poet persona and savage reinvention as an artist on his own terms dramatically – and even violently – demanded that his audiences rethink their relationship to their idol, including the terms of that relationship and the situation of power in it. In addition to the discordant rock sounds that subverted concertgoer expectations, Dylan staged specific visuals to deliberately alienate audiences.^{xxvii} In Paris, at the 24 May Olympia concert, Dylan and the Hawks performed before the backdrop of a massive American flag, which ran the length of the stage and dwarfed the black-clad band (see Figure 3.5). It was a highly provocative gesture in a country whose political left was particularly critical of America's involvement in Vietnam, and incited agitated and confused audiences to respond to its revelation behind parting curtains with a chorus of boos. The press was likewise incensed; *Paris-Jour* featured the headline 'Bob Dylan Go Home!' (Heylin, 2011, p.258). In *Eat the Document*, the spectator experiences this sequence in the same way he or she does the entire film – through geographic and chronological compression and gaps that dislocate and disorient – itself a previously discussed alienation technique. From an extreme close-up of Dylan's sunglassed eyes passing through the Scottish countryside in the back of a towncar – over which he intones, 'I'm sorry for everything I've done . . . and, uh, I hope to remedy it soon' – the viewer is thrust into the last row of seats at the Olympia. The stage curtains part and reveal the overwhelming presence of the Stars and Stripes. The scattered anticipatory applause is quickly overwhelmed by uproar of the rowdy crowd. 'Tell Me Momma,'

the first performance of the film, like the rest to follow, is a composite of different performances (here, the 24 May Paris and the 19 May Glasgow Odeon shows). The performance is typically incendiary and embodies everything that Dylan's fans hated about his electric turn. The instruments are noisy and are handled like weapons; Dylan's nasally howls drip with disdain.^{xxviii} Following the performance, the incensed crowd storms the stage as a disoriented Dylan is whisked away.

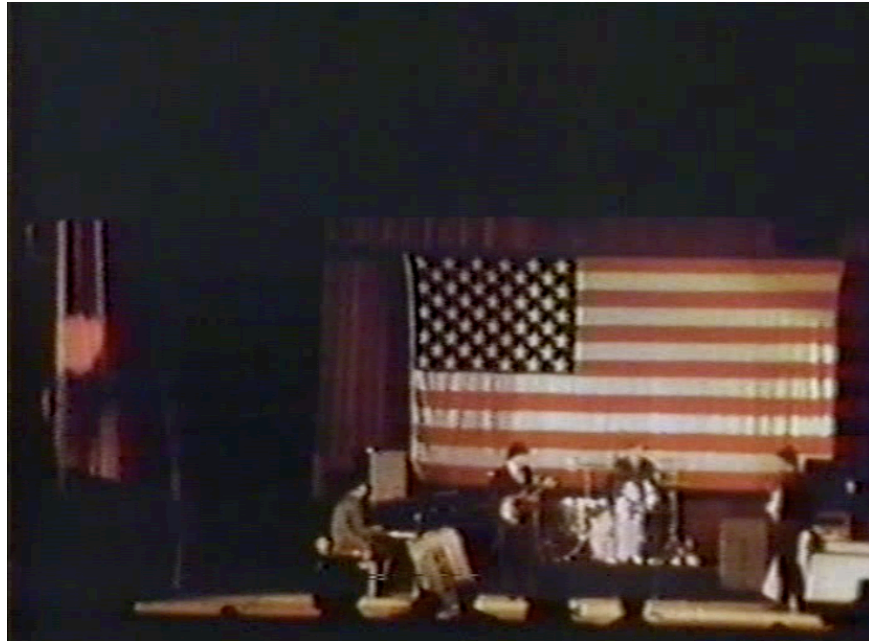


Figure 3.5. Dylan deliberately antagonises and alienates his Parisian audience with the ideologically loaded visual of the Stars and Stripes. The gesture is particularly provocative because of the audience's inability to locate or reconcile Dylan's own politics within it.

Pennebaker's own *Sweet Toronto*, which selectively documents the 13 September 1969 Toronto Rock and Roll Revival, is a fascinating parallel text to *Eat the Document* that, too, inverts the utopian spectacles of *Monterey Pop* and *Woodstock* that produce a participative unity between audience and performer. During John Lennon and Yoko Ono's Plastic Ono Band's storming and subversive 35-minute set, which closes the film, the stage becomes an operating table, on which the rock performance is pulled apart at the seams. The band, which also included Eric Clapton on lead guitar, Klaus Voormann on bass, and Alan White on drums, raves through a set of safe rock and roll standards ('Blue Suede Shoes,' 'Money (That's What I Want),' and 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy') before reaching the Beatles' British blues boom parody, 'Yer Blues,' where the set's avant-garde turn becomes more pronounced. The rote opening numbers – chosen because the hastily-assembled band had not had time to rehearse and were

relegated to playing songs that everyone knew – mock ‘plastic’ bands who function as nothing more than organic juke boxes.^{xxix} As the Plastic Ono Band savages into ‘Cold Turkey,’ ‘Give Peace a Chance,’ and the first Yoko-led number, ‘Don’t Worry Kyoko (Mummy’s Only Looking for Her Hand in the Snow),’ the musicianship becomes less integrated and increasingly dissonant. Ono wails and screams through the lengthy closing song, ‘John John (Let’s Hope For Peace)’ as Lennon and Clapton vamp on their discordant guitars, producing a wall of feedback, until a sheepish Lennon pulls Ono offstage and exits, leaving the bewildered crowd unsure how to respond. Even Lennon and Ono’s physical embraces throughout the set, which include kissing, can be understood as confrontational, given the prejudice and malice with which she was greeted by fan and press alike upon entering Lennon’s life.

In *Eat the Document*, Dylan’s confrontational relationship with his audiences and the disconnect this engenders is both presented diegetically in the film text and reinforced formally and structurally through the film’s editing scheme. Dylan and Alk seem genuinely amused at the exaggerated responses of the alienated fans and mock them by juxtaposing interviewees gathered by Bob Neuwirth within and against performances of ‘Like a Rolling Stone’ and ‘Ballad of a Thin Man,’ two of Dylan’s most spiteful and taunting songs from the period. The collision of these incongruent shots – and their ensuing rupture of cinematic realism, but synthesis of a more abstract idea – is consistent with Alk’s interest in Soviet montage theory. During ‘Rolling Stone,’ cutaways to close-ups of the interviewees’ distressed faces imply their agitation at the band’s raucous sounds and Dylan’s simultaneous dismissal of them. Furthermore, they interrupt the performance’s illusion of continuity. Unlike the audience cutaways that Pennebaker employs during Ravi Shankar’s dhun in *Monterey Pop*’s final scene, which preserve and expand the diegetic space, the audience cutaways in *Eat the Document*’s performance sequences are very clearly non-diegetic, Eisensteinian inserts that rupture the diegesis. Upon the song’s conclusion, one of these fans shrugs his shoulders and thoughtfully smiles, as if to admit, ‘Not so bad after all’ – a very obvious play with the Kuleshov effect. Other responses range from the disappointed (‘I wish he’d left that group in America’) to the angrily dismissive (‘Any pop group can produce better rubbish than that – it was a bloody disgrace!’) to the extreme (‘He wants shooting . . . he’s a traitor!’). The ‘Thin Man’ sequence takes this aesthetic and pushes it even further. Here, the interviewees’ responses are intercut with the performance, thus spatially and aurally interrupting it. One fan’s particularly

vitriolic rant concludes with, ‘He’s making a pile out of the people he pretends he’s for,’ and, after a pause, ‘Yeah, that’s how I feel,’ while a teenage girl shakes her head and simply responds with, ‘No.’ A rare statement of support from another fan, a bespectacled schoolboy, ‘He’s better than Donovan . . . and he’s better than Elvis Presley, too’ (also notable for extending Dylan’s absurd fascination with the Scottish folk singer – a running gag in *Dont Look Back*), invites a reproach from his companion: ‘Read a few decent poets – Shakespeare, perhaps.’

These sequences, along with the later ‘Baby, Let Me Follow You Down,’ demonstrate Alk’s employment of ‘music as a sort of Greek chorus to the accompanying montages in the same way interview segments are cut as commentary on performances’ (Farinaccio, 2013, p.85). They interact with the surrounding footage in a dialectic that develops an argument or concept. Alk’s Soviet-style, self-consciously alienating formal approach has precisely the kind of ‘intellectual’ appeal that Pennebaker argued worked against his cinematic principles.^{xxx} Because it was Dylan’s lithe and immersive stage performances that inspired *You Know Something Is Happening* (‘He was dancing out there [. . .] it was like he was swimming in the music’), Pennebaker especially disagrees with Dylan and Alk’s fractured presentation of them (Appendix). He laments: ‘What I miss from the version they made are Dylan’s profound and amazing performances. They chopped them all up, you don’t have any performance continuity’ (cited in Dalton, 1999).^{xxxi} ‘Tell Me Momma,’ for example, is completely asynchronous; as previously stated, its image track is a collage of two different shows, and its audio is sourced from a third – the 1 May Copenhagen concert. Its whiplash visuals – the disorientation of its whip pans, jump cuts and low-angle fisheye distortion – fight against its soundtrack – Dylan and Robertson’s duelling, screeching and squawking guitars – in a battle that foregrounds the sequence’s asynchronicity.

What separates *Sweet Toronto* from *Eat the Document* is a lack of a consciously alienating or confrontational mode of address in Pennebaker’s documentation and re-presentation of what is undeniably an alienating and confrontational performance. Pennebaker’s aesthetic approach to the stage is a clear progression from that of *Monterey Pop*, yet with a slightly more utilitarian tendency that understates the aforementioned play with patterns of rhythm, movement and colour slightly and, instead, amplifies the emphasis on the mechanics of performance.^{xxxii} Mamber understands *Sweet Toronto* to be ‘a very able critique of [*Monterey Pop*]’ (1974, p.188)

in which the disavowal of the fractured and impressionistic approach of the latter reaffirms direct cinema's faith in imparting on the spectator 'a sense of duration, of lived experience' (*ibid.*, p.189) that 'only real-time, relatively uninterrupted shooting seems able to provide' (*ibid.*, p.188).

A clear line of development can be traced from Pennebaker's treatment of Ravi Shankar's performance in *Monterey Pop* to that of the Plastic Ono Band in *Sweet Toronto*, albeit to different effect. In both, Pennebaker privileges what Mamber points to as being an experiential cinema in which the effects of time are crucial to the production of meaning. In *Monterey Pop*, the spectator's experience of the extended duration of Shankar's performance allows one to come away with an understanding of how the audience's groundswell of solidarity develops over time and eventually coalesces in a collective outburst of joyful applause. In *Sweet Toronto*, however, the spectator's experience of the Plastic Ono Band's set is meant to impart an understanding of the alienation their performance engenders. By preserving the illusion of spatial and temporal coherence, Pennebaker attempts to produce an affective understanding of the profilmic event. Rather than alienate the spectator through formally radical techniques, such as in *Eat the Document*'s editing design, he instead invites the spectator into the immediacy of the profilmic event to feel the alienating performance of the Plastic Ono Band as it unfolds.^{xxxiii} By engaging with the entirety of the Plastic Ono Band's set, the spectator occupies a position of privilege that allows one to bear witness to 'the subtle "drama" inherent in the entire presentation' (Mamber, 1974, p.190). Pennebaker's loose and inclusive editing practice allows for the spectator to witness the progression of the music across the thirty-five minute set. By refusing a politically formal aesthetic that calls attention to its objective and, instead, demanding the participative and democratic engagement of the spectator, Pennebaker's approach is subversive in its subtlety, much like the design of the performance itself.^{xxxiv}

In interviews, Pennebaker has minimised Alk's contributions to *Dont Look Back*, and, furthermore, has expressed broad disregard for Alk's work as a filmmaker and his editing, in particular, which he describes as 'destructive' (cited in Dalton, 1999).^{xxxv} Although one may wonder about any underlying personal jealousy, Pennebaker has indicated that his dismissal is purely professional and is rooted in the two men's divergent views on film fundamentals. He claims that 'Howard's film ideas [...] tend to be sort of intellectual ideas' that do not translate to 'very interesting visual ideas' (cited in Livson, 1987, p.71). As a cameraman, Alk was responsible for two of

the most distinctive sequences in *Eat the Document*: one, the film's only solo acoustic performance, a particularly hazy reading of 'Mr. Tambourine Man,' in which the ghostly Dylan is framed in an extreme close-up as a languorous, dreamy solo tumbles forth from his harmonica; the other, the previously-examined brief interviews with fans (and self-professed former fans) as they exit the Manchester Free Trade Hall. Both were filmed at the infamous 17 May concert while Pennebaker was on three-day leave to screen *Dont Look Back* at Cannes. The footage filmed in Pennebaker's absence makes for an interesting study, as it is the first instance, on this project, of Alk flexing his filmmaking muscles and operating away from the constrictive sphere produced by Pennebaker's seniority, and indicates the more compatible collaboration with Dylan that would blossom in post-production. Left to his own devices, Alk not only opted for subjects that did not interest Pennebaker – Dylan's acoustic sets – and methods that Pennebaker would never consider – the reportage footage reminiscent of the 'Are you happy?' man-on-the-street interviews in Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronique d'un été* (1961) – but pushed their significance beyond an immersion into a singular historical space and moment through his dialectic approach to film editing.

Clinton Heylin points to Alk's fierce use of dialectical montage to contrapuntally generate new conceptual meaning between the collision of independent conversations and musical performances as a 'distinctive' characteristic of his editing (1987, p.146). This is on display, as Heylin notes, in *Eat the Document*'s expansive 'Ballad of a Thin Man' sequence, which juxtaposes a composite stage performance of the song against fragments of Dylan's responses to reporters at the 3 May press conference at the Mayfair Hotel and the above-mentioned Free Trade Hall exit interviews, which humorously counterpoint the song's lyrics. Alk frequently utilises this particular technique in *Festival*, which documents three years of the Newport Folk Festival, 1963-65, to subversively challenge the folk music scene's quest for authenticity as well as their traditionalist, anti-progress narrative (as in a sequence where independent interviews with Son House and Mike Bloomfield are punctuated with their respective performances to demonstrate the way in which the blues, considered here as a condition to be either inhabited [House] or performed [Bloomfield], functioned as a musical genre in which discourses of authenticity were [and continue to be] particularly entangled). Pennebaker, however, seems to simply view Alk's editing style as incompatible with his own conception of direct cinema: '[Alk] really likes the idea of undoing anything [. . .] a kind of throwing things against

the real time of a scene or a situation. Whatever it is, go against it' (cited in Dalton, 1999). While not surrealist, *Eat the Document* does employ the anti-logic of Surrealism by rejecting causality in a way that is 'willfully, infuriatingly disorienting' (Dalton, 1999).

Reinforcing Mamber's conception of direct cinema as a cinema of duration, the true drama of Lennon and Ono's subversive performance in *Sweet Toronto* is revealed temporally (this emphasis on progressive movement is crucial to Pennebaker's work of this period and is discussed in depth in the following chapter). The length of the sequence allows for the gradual revelation of the band's progression into the avant-garde as well as the audience's corresponding disengagement with it. While the first four numbers are well-received, the group first runs aground with an embryonic version of 'Cold Turkey.'^{xxxvi} After the song receives a less than enthusiastic response, a clearly frustrated Lennon demands of the audience, 'Come on, wake up!' Following the ecstatic audience response to the next number, the crowd-pleasing 'Give Peace a Chance' – two months after its release as a single and already adopted as an anthem of the peace movement – Lennon, in a low-angle close-up, announces Ono's takeover as the bandleader: 'Now Yoko's gonna do her thing . . . all over you.' The colourful forewarning, with its vivid evocation of male ejaculation, signals an unorthodox reconceptualisation of the performer-audience relationship. Ono's position relative to the audience is characterised through Lennon's association of her art with hypermasculine sexual aggression and domination – and humiliation of the submissive sexual partner who is ejaculated upon (it also introduces a new dynamic of sexual politics within the band, but the main concern at the moment is for the performer-audience dynamic). The next song, 'Don't Worry Kyoko,' occupies a unique position between rock and the avant-garde. Philip Auslander astutely observes that Clapton's spiralling, semi-slide warped blues riff that drives the song is derived from the Everly Brothers' 1957 'Wake Up Little Susie,' suggesting that 'even Ono's highly experimental approach to music was ultimately grounded in and continuous with the rock-and-roll tradition' (2006, p.27). It features the entire band locked tightly into a hypnotic, bluesy groove – with Lennon and Clapton doubling the raw, repeating guitar riff – fighting against Ono's warbling moans and shrieks. 'John, John,' however, completely divorces the set from that tradition.

Like *Monterey Pop*, *Sweet Toronto* also closes with its longest – at 10 minutes – and most fascinating number. It consists of Ono's intonations of various words –

‘John,’ ‘peace’ and ‘hope’ – at varying pitches followed by a shift into other vocalisations, including warbling, screaming and screeching, over the dissonant sounds of the band. Lennon and Clapton completely defamiliarise the act of playing guitar. Initially, feedback is harnessed to respond to Ono’s utterances, but the wild sounds soon break free of their harnesses to become what is best described as ‘free rock.’ To produce increasingly discordant sounds, Lennon twirls his guitar’s volume and tone dials wildly, jiggles a single string, and brushes and swings the guitar against his amp; Clapton, meanwhile, runs a makeshift slide up and down the neck of his guitar and follows Lennon at his own amp, while White and Voormann accent the noise with arrhythmic punctuations on the drums and bass. Towards the end of the performance, Pennebaker cuts to the audience, but, due to extremely low light, the shot is pitch black – humorously illustrating the disconnect between performer and audience. There is no applause as the pair leaves the stage with a wave. Unlike performances like Jimi Hendrix’s and the Who’s in *Monterey Pop* and Dylan’s in *Eat the Document*, where the spectator is provided with visible evidence of the audience’s shock and horror, judging the audience’s investment here can only be ascertained by the diminishing applause. The response of at least one contemporary theatrical audience, however, at a 1971 screening of the film at Carnegie Hall was reported by *Variety* as hostile and aggressive: ‘Much of the film audience reacted with hisses and walkouts’ to ‘a seemingly endless solo by Ono, during which she delivers a modulated barrage of grating guttural sounds’ (Anonymous, 1972b, p.6).

While Lennon and Ono did not set out to be poorly received, they also did not necessarily wish to instil in their audience feelings of hostility and disengagement. Lennon’s very visible frustrations – first, after the middling reception to ‘Cold Turkey,’ then at Ono as she fails to budge from the stage – indicate that he was eager for his new material to be accepted and was disheartened when it was not. In the waning minutes of ‘John, John,’ after the other musicians have fled the stage, Ono is left alone to continue her staccato screeching (which resembles the cawing of a crow) over the sustained feedback from Clapton and Lennon’s guitars, which rest against the amps. He agitatedly tries to pull Ono off the stage; when this fails, he mocks her from behind by dancing a jig, then by extending his arms, leaning into her shoulder and absent-mindedly acting like an airplane. Thus, his embarrassment makes it clear that the performance had transformed into something over which he had lost control. Lennon and Ono did, however, want to challenge their audience, but, unfortunately, they also

misjudged them; Lennon and Ono worked under the assumption that the audience would be open to experimentation and deviation from conventional rock sounds, but, at a rock festival where a third of the bill was made up of the previous generation's ageing rockers, that was clearly not the case.^{xxxvii} Beyond this, their performance can also be understood as a form of protest against the constraints an audience places on a performer. While not to the extent that the band deliberately sabotaged its own set – again, Lennon, with something to prove, wanted to deliver a crowd-pleasing show – their critique of the expectation to be the organic jukebox embodied by Ono's art piece and refusal to participate in an uncritical engagement with the performance of rock music as a concept inverts the utopian performative into a spectacle of alienation that, in *Sweet Toronto*, gains its efficacy from Pennebaker's realist aesthetic.

This is the way in which *Sweet Toronto* can be seen as fulfilling its own take on the clichéd 'death of the 1960s' narrative that is often attributed to its companion film, *Gimme Shelter*. That film, of course, features the actual murder of a concertgoer, Meredith Hunter, the endpoint of a poorly managed and out-of-control public happening, which was subsequently transformed into the ontological death of the counterculture. In *Sweet Toronto*, the death is purely an ontological one. Pennebaker, for example, describes Lennon and Ono's performance as 'a funeral cry for something that was lost' (cited in Kubernik, [2012] 2014, p.204).^{xxxviii} Like the events of *Gimme Shelter*, it can be read, in denying the utopian performative of the countercultural rock festival, as a cynical political critique. While massive countercultural festivals continued into the 1970s unaffected, they never carried the same currency as a utopian gesture. Just as Dylan's electric performance with the Butterfield Blues Band at Newport in 1965 did not destroy the folk movement, but relegated it to cultural irrelevancy, so, too, did the aspirational utopianism of the countercultural rock festival suffer a similar fate in the wake of Toronto and Altamont. Pennebaker's remediation of the event through the 'jargons of authenticity' valued by the counterculture crucially positions *Sweet Toronto* as an ideological antithesis to his earlier *Monterey Pop*.

What this reading of *Sweet Toronto* against *Eat the Document* reveals is that Pennebaker's criticism of Dylan and Alk's irreverent treatment of Dylan and the Hawks' stage performances in the latter film implies not only an aesthetic preference, but also an ideological position. For Pennebaker, direct cinema is a cinema of direct sound – sync sound. What we shall see in Pennebaker's deployment of sync sound throughout his mature-period direct cinema is the exploration, exploitation and

deconstruction of an ideology of authenticity – an ideology whose promise of immediacy, experience and sensation implicates the spectator in a kind of phenomenological engagement with its cinema’s representation of reality. Prior to Pennebaker’s deconstruction of the ideology behind sync sound – and thus, the ideology of direct cinema – in *Monterey Pop*, *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.*, Alk and Dylan work against it in *Eat the Document*. Thinking ideologically, it is worth questioning Dylan and Alk’s deployment of Brechtian techniques in the film. Colin MacCabe, for example, criticises the ‘fashionable way of receiving and recuperating Brecht’ that ‘negates the productive element in Brecht’s work and turns the techniques for the production of alienation effects into pure narcissistic signals of an “intellectual” work of “art,” ’ a process he further decries as a ‘vulgarisation and de-politicalisation of Brecht’ (1974, p.26). However, Brechtian techniques are not deployed in *Eat the Document* simply as a superficial signifier of high art, but as an ideological critique of the realist impulse and operations of classical direct cinema. To return to Marin and the way *Eat the Document* can be thought of as a utopic intervention within direct cinema, the film likewise evokes Claire Johnston’s call for a counter-cinema that, as Kaplan says, challenges ‘prevailing realist codes [. . .] so as to challenge audiences’ expectations and assumptions about life’ ([1982] 1988, p.80). In this regard, *Eat the Document* is a success. Perhaps Dylan says it best: ‘All we did was cut up reality and make it more real’ (cited in Farinaccio, 2014, p.45).

Conclusion

This chapter established the ways in which *Eat the Document* anticipates the aesthetics of Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema and its production of an ideological voice. Crucially, I frame it as exemplifying the performative documentary; it functions as an alienating device that disrupts and problematises prevailing notions of documentary authenticity as advocated by classical direct cinema. This has several implications for Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema. Firstly, Pennebaker’s subsequent films exhibit an exploitation and play with direct cinema’s ‘jargons of authenticity’ in the expression of their ideological voice. Like *Eat the Document*, the interventions to the form represented by both *Sweet Toronto* and *One P.M.* indicate a break in the practice of direct cinema. Furthermore, *Eat the Document* is the first of two of this thesis’ case studies that is the product of an unorthodox collaboration (the

second being *One P.M.*); in this case, Pennebaker's own work as a cinematographer is reappropriated and redeployed in a critique of his filmmaking practice. Alk's dialectical montage turns Pennebaker's footage against itself (drawing substantial criticism from him as a result), but, interestingly, *Sweet Toronto*'s editing scheme is also a dialectical construct (although Pennebaker avoids Alk's overt collisions in favour of a more subtle approach to ideographic representation that nonetheless evolves direct cinema beyond its traditional accretive structure).

My discussion of Pennebaker's ideological appropriation of sync sound in *Monterey Pop* to suggest utopian unification (and attendant analysis of sync sound's destabilising and disorienting effect in *Eat the Document*) commences an investigation into the fetishisation of sync sound in direct cinema and Pennebaker's deployment of it for ideological ends in his mature-period work that will be sustained throughout the remainder of this thesis. As Pennebaker continues with his aesthetic and ideological overhauls to direct cinema initiated in *Monterey Pop*, sync sound will be the formal property where he makes his most crucial impact.

ⁱ Both *Eat the Document* and *Monterey Pop* were shot on Kodak Ektachrome 7242 colour reversal stock. With *Eat the Document* (particularly evident in its performance sequences), Pennebaker adapted his filmmaking style to account for the new aesthetic variables produced by the combination of colour stock, patterns of movement, and sync sound. His work on the film can thus be seen as an experimental trial run for the more assured stylistics of *Monterey Pop*.

ⁱⁱ *Eat the Document* was screened twice on 8 February 1971 at New York's Academy of Music ahead of its official premiere on 30 November 1972 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where it ran for two weeks. It has rarely been publicly exhibited since, but was broadcast on WNET on 17 August 1979. It remains commercially unavailable.

ⁱⁱⁱ *ABC Stage 67*, spearheaded by executive producer Hubbell Robinson, was the network's ambitious and, perhaps, over-determined attempt to produce 'cultural programs for a mass audience' (Gent, 1966, p.X15). Its programming – some of which achieved critical acclaim and Emmy, Academy Award and Peabody nominations and wins – included documentaries (*Sex in the Sixties* [Irving Gitlin, 1967]), dramas (*The Love Song of Barney Kempinski* [Stanley Prager, 1967]), musicals (*The Canterville Ghost* [John Robins, 1966]), adaptations (Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory* [Frank Perry, 1966]) and revues (*Rodgers and Hart Today* [Bill Davis, 1967]). Airing on Wednesdays at 10.00pm, the hour-long, weekly series ran from 14 September 1966 to 4 May 1967. Although it did complete its 26-episode order, it nevertheless struggled with both ratings and sponsorship for its entire run.

^{iv} William Rothman notes that, when Dylan hired Pennebaker to film his 1965 tour of the United Kingdom, the man whose boyhood idols included James Dean and Marlon Brando 'was intrigued that he might have what it takes to be a movie star. He was also intrigued that he might have what it takes to make movies. "This was a way for him to find out about films," Pennebaker has suggested' (1997, p.146).

^v D.A. Pennebaker, influenced by George Bernard Shaw's efforts to simplify the English language, intentionally titled the film without an apostrophe.

^{vi} Pennebaker's crew consisted of Howard Alk on a second camera and Bob Alderman and Alk's wife, Jones – with assistance from Bob Neuwirth – on concert and non-concert sound, respectively.

^{vii} On Dylan's 1966 British and European tour, the Hawks, who changed their name to the Band in 1968, consisted of Robbie Robertson (lead guitar), Garth Hudson (organ), Richard Manuel (piano), Rick Danko (bass), and Mickey Jones (drums). Levon Helm, the Hawks' regular drummer, declined to continue with the tour beyond its initial North American dates.

^{viii} It has been speculated that, on this tour, Dylan habitually ingested heroin prior to the solo acoustic set, followed by a 'speedball' of heroin and cocaine or amphetamine during intermission, ahead of the electric, full-band concert (Heylin, 2011, p.250).

^{ix} For a rather unrelenting account of Dylan's brutal reception in each city of the European tour, see Shelton, 1986, pp.365-71.

^x Dylan returned home from Europe in early June for a two-month break before a scheduled sixty-four-date US tour was to begin the first week of August. Already exhausted from the rigors of a six-month world tour and in poor physical health as a result of his frequent amphetamine use, he was confronted with three deadlines that required immediate attention upon his return – the film for ABC, which was expected in September; his much-delayed novel, *Tarantula*, for Macmillan, now scheduled for August; and the final obligations to his current record contract with Columbia, as well as the matter of negotiating a new one. In a way, Dylan's 29 July motorcycle accident came at an opportune time; it afforded him an actual break from his obligations (Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman cancelled the US tour and negotiated delays to his film and book deals) and became the catalyst for physical, personal and artistic renewal.

^{xi} Interestingly, as *Don't Look Back* was still yet to be released, Pennebaker even toyed with the idea of using the new, and then unused, 1966 footage to extend his Dylan narrative into a showcase of his startling artistic development. The prospect clearly excited him: 'You see [Dylan] go through that whole black and white acoustic period, and being really dragged by it at the end, and then bang!, you see him [in colour] jumping around on that stage [with the Hawks, in 1966], having such a great time, that that tells you all about Dylan's music, right there, and where he was at. And that's what the movie should be – it should have the two put together' (Bauldie, 1987a, p.26). However, the idea was less successful in practice, and he abandoned it.

^{xii} Pennebaker: 'I only know how to make one kind of film so it was going to be an extension of *Don't [sic] Look Back*' (BBC, 2003).

^{xiii} According to a 28 October 1966 *New York Times* article, the documentary, described as a 'folk music show starring Bob Dylan' (the description alone indicates the gulf between ABC's expectations and Dylan's actual work-in-progress), was removed from its scheduled airdate of 16 November and replaced with *Evening Primrose* (Paul Bogart, 1966), an original Stephen Sondheim musical (Anonymous, 1966a, p.80). The article cites Dylan's inability to complete additional filming in the aftermath of his motorcycle accident as the reason for its postponement.

^{xiv} For a description and analysis of *You Know Something Is Happening*, see Dalton (1999).

^{xv} For an account of Alk's early association with Dylan, as well as a concise overview of his film career (with an emphasis on his several collaborations with Dylan), see Heylin (1988). For a detailed study of Dylan and Alk's cinematic collaborations, see Farinaccio (2013; 2014).

^{xvi} Among Dylan's recruits were the Hawks' Rick Danko and Richard Manuel (joining their already-present bandmate Robertson), Tiny Tim, and Paul Stookey, who reported: 'I'm a seeker in monk's clothing, cavorting with Tiny Tim and Howard Alk, and a winterscape [sic]. I end up on the cutting-room floor' (Bauldie, 1987b, p.91; emphasis in original). This description suggests a very different and more figurative filmmaking approach that Dylan and Alk probably deemed too incongruous with the existing Pennebaker material – regardless of how unhappy they were with it – for the final edit. This hypothesis is further corroborated by photographs included in *The Basement Tapes Complete*, the eleventh volume of Columbia Records/Legacy Recordings' series of Bob Dylan archival recordings, *The Bootleg Series*, released in November 2014. A selection of fourteen uncredited photographs dated March 1967 show Dylan and a cadre of associates in what is labelled an 'unknown location' but appears to be dressed as the interior of a frontier log cabin. In many of the photographs, Dylan, wearing overalls and a coonskin hat, strums an acoustic guitar in a chair on set among period-appropriate furniture and several lighting rigs. Other angles reveal Danko and Manuel accompanying Dylan on their own guitars on the fringes of this set, presumably just out of the shot. Several photographs also show Dylan in a striped suit and glasses focusing a 16mm camera on a tripod; in one, Alk stands beside him. Furthermore, a twenty-five minute promotional documentary for *The Basement Tapes Complete* entitled *Bob Dylan and The Band – The Basement Tapes – The Legendary Tales* (2014) provides brief glimpses of this lost footage. Among the fictional vignettes that went unused and unseen are: Tiny Tim, as the hooded drifter Philip Granger, peering into the front room of a home where Dylan, in a coat, scarf, and hat, plays the piano for Manuel; a very Welles-ian deep focus composition in which Danko jumps from playing pinball to selecting a song on a diner jukebox, while a transfixed Manuel intently stares into space in the foreground of the frame; and Dylan and the Hawks as Old West cardsharks eyeballing each other during a tense hand in the deep

shadows of a smoky backroom lit only by the bulb that hangs above their heads. Dylan historian Arie de Reus posits that, while the Woodstock footage may have begun with the intention of augmenting what existed of *Eat the Document*, 'it seems to have ended as an *early try*' for the film that became *You Are What You Eat* (de Reus, 2015; emphasis mine). I, however, have found no evidence to corroborate this speculation (which seems to flimsily hinge on the involvement of characters like Alk and Tiny Tim, among other behind-the-scenes facilitators in the Woodstock scene, in both projects); further attempts at asking de Reus to clarify the meaning of 'early try' were unsuccessful. Based on all available evidence, my own conclusion is that, in an attempt to abandon as much of the Pennebaker footage that was clearly frustrating them as possible, Dylan and Alk – still intending to fulfil Dylan's contractual obligation to ABC – devised, scripted and began to film a dramatic reconceptualisation of the project more aligned with Dylan's initial idiosyncratic vision. If anything, the unused footage seems to be a first attempt at materialising cinematic ideas that would eventually be realised in *Renaldo and Clara*. Using this later Dylan/Alk collaboration as a model, it is reasonable to assume that the new, fictional scenes filmed at Woodstock would have supported and framed Pennebaker's 1966 concert footage (plus any of the absurdist 'little scenes' that could be salvaged – see later discussion on this point) along the lines of the latter film's synthesis of highly figurative vignettes and performance sequences from Dylan's 1975 Rolling Thunder Revue. In a personal correspondence, Dylan historian Vince Farinaccio expressed his agreement with my contention (see Farinaccio, 2014, for more on connections between the practice of both films).

^{xvii} Of course, one could argue – as Pennebaker does when he famously described Dylan as 'a guy acting out his life' – that there is a presentational element to Dylan's performance in *Dont Look Back* (Levin, 1971, p.240). In particular, Dylan's frequent confrontational encounters with members of the press, where Pennebaker admits that Dylan was showing off 'specifically because he knew we were filming,' demonstrate Dylan's keen awareness of how the filmmaker's camera could be employed to cultivate a specific image of himself as an *enfant terrible* (Pennebaker, 1983, p.504). While Dylan's complicated negotiation between these modes is one of the film's most intriguing aspects, I would argue that, as a whole, the representational mode dominates *Dont Look Back*'s performance style. For further analysis, see Hall (1998).

^{xviii} For an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the performance of social actors in documentary, see Marquis (2013).

^{xix} For purposes of this study, it is also useful to note that Waugh, while stating that direct cinema never completely resigned the representational mode of documentary performance (which, however, ignores late-period work, particularly by the Maysles, including the obvious *Grey Gardens*) (*ibid.*, p.88), identifies two strands of the cycle that 'by their subject matter bypass and compensate for *vérité*'s disavowal of performance' (*ibid.*, p.80). The first includes films in which an intimate bond between filmmakers and their subjects engenders performances 'enabled by, addressed to, and improvised enactments of that relationship,' while maintaining basic unawareness of the camera (*ibid.*). He offers *Warrendale, Harlan County, USA* (Barbara Kopple, 1976) and *Grey Gardens* as examples. The second and predominant strand consists of films about 'subjects whose extrafilmic social roles consists of public performance' in which 'special scrutiny is usually given to the dialectic of public and private,' and include *Jane* (Pennebaker, 1962) and *Salesman*, although the inclusion of some examples, such as *Underground* (Emile de Antonio, 1976), is questionable.

^{xx} Nichols' concept of documentary voice plays a crucial role in chapter four's formulation of 'kinetic progressions' as an aesthetic and ideological scheme in mature-period Pennebaker.

^{xxi} Although his tone is critical of the way in which this produces direct cinema's contentious discourse of objectivity, Paul Arthur neatly outlines how this practice worked against the authoritarianism of the previously-dominant New Deal documentary model. Direct cinema claims 'a more active, more pluralistic, "democratic" spectatorship' whose politics are couched in the 'liberal doctrine of the period' here 'transposed cinematically as a space where multiple viewpoints were entertained, a Bazinian principle of perceptual freedom adduced as "an expressive emblem of egalitarianism"' (1993, p.120). Arthur sees this as problematically being 'equated with unbiased access or a "multiple consciousness of opposing perspectives"' (*ibid.*, p.121).

^{xxii} Similarly, Wright (2013) conducts close readings of *Woodstock* and *Gimme Shelter* to examine the production of the historical narratives in each. The dichotomy of both films' aesthetics is analogous to mine here: 'Whereas *Woodstock* emphasises collaboration between audience and performer, performances in *Gimme Shelter*' is characterised by a 'disconnecting gaze' that alienates its audience (p.80).

^{xxiii} This is not to downplay or ignore the essentiality of sync sound to several of the film's performance sequences – particularly those presentations concerned with the interaction between performer and audience – or to misleadingly suggest its absence until Shankar's dhun. In fact, the confrontational antics of the Who and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, in particular, rely on sync sound to display the rupturing of the sense of harmony that had prevailed between performer and audience by capturing the immediate audience shock and unsettledness at those acts' auto-destructive performances. During the nighttime performances of Jefferson Airplane's 'Today,' which solely focuses on Grace Slick, and Otis Redding's 'I've Been Loving You Too Long,' the singers are bathed in strong backlighting; the high-contrast halo that outlines their bodies against the stark darkness abstracts them into patterns of motion and emotion. Here, according to Pennebaker, he 'wanted people to respond to what was being performed' (Pennebaker & Adler, 2002). They are two further examples of sequences that reject the fractured and impressionistic assembly of those that abandon sync sound.

^{xxiv} For more on this topic, see chapter four.

^{xxv} Pennebaker's longstanding interest in mood over informationalism is explored in depth in chapter four.

^{xxvi} For a theoretical discussion of sync sound in observational documentary, see Nichols, 1991, pp.38-44 and chapter four of this thesis, where a deeper analysis of sync sound builds upon Nichols' work, among others.

^{xxvii} Brecht's immense and significant influence on Dylan's artistic development is well-documented. It is 'Pirate Jenny' that Dylan credits with providing the creative breakthrough that lead to his artistic arrival as a songwriter (Lloyd, 2014, p.65). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that he may have also encountered Brecht's theoretical writings on theatre, or, at the very least, become familiar with their concepts through his patronage of New York alternative theatre in the early 1960s.

^{xxviii} In Todd Haynes' experimental Dylan biopic, *I'm Not There* (2007), Dylan and his band literally open fire on their audience with machine guns at the singer's infamous electric debut at the Newport Folk Festival, materialising the feelings of many traditional folk fans.

^{xxix} Ono had previously conceived a performance piece in which she was backed by four plastic boxes with tape recorders inside as her band. The name 'Plastic Ono Band' originated as a reference to this piece.

^{xxx} Although not nearly as overtly confrontational and self-consciously alienating as Alk's technique in *Eat the Document*, Pennebaker's own editing scheme in *Sweet Toronto* can also be described as dialectical and a progression from ideological deployments of montage in *Monterey Pop*. The following chapter will explore Pennebaker dialectical approach to direct cinema in detail.

^{xxxi} A surprisingly generous amount of Pennebaker's footage from this tour, both on- and off-stage, is prominently worked into the narrative of Martin Scorsese's 2005 documentary, *No Direction Home*. It is even edited in a style akin to Pennebaker's from the period, which provides a fascinating window into the film that could have been.

^{xxxii} Pennebaker describes *Sweet Toronto* as 'finish[ing] what *Pop* began. Like *Pop*, it is another giant new film, but it concentrates totally on the performance and the immediate audience response' (Levin, 1971, p.232). Despite regular cutaways to the audience during other performers' sets earlier in the film (such as Bo Diddley and Jerry Lee Lewis), there is only one shot of their visible reaction to any of the Plastic Ono Band's set, and it in response to the aforementioned performance of 'Give Peace a Chance.' However, they seem to be born out of utilitarianism more than anything else and do not reveal anything about the performer-audience relationship, unlike *Monterey Pop*, where three of its most iconic moments are a product of its preoccupation with this relationship: Mama Cass' stunned speechlessness at Janis Joplin and Big Brother and the Holding Company; a teenage girl's wide-eyed shock at Hendrix smashing his burning guitar into the stage floor; the entire audience's overwhelming collective ecstasy during Ravi Shankar's offering.

^{xxxiii} Kruse (2009) situates the performance as part of Lennon and Ono's expansive 1969 Campaign for Peace, which famously included the couple's two bed-ins among other forms of activist art. His argument for the inclusion of the performance itself in the couple's wide-ranging campaign is not convincing, but it nevertheless invites a rethinking of the performance's affective outcome, given the its preservation on film and distribution into spaces beyond the geographical location where the happening occurred (despite the film's relative obscurity, a version is presently commercially available on DVD). For example, he draws upon Paddy Scannell's concept of 'the doubling of place' when describing the affective immediacy resulting from the television coverage of Lennon and Ono's bed-ins, saying that it

‘offered the potential of reducing the sense of distance between Lennon and Ono and their audience, both physically and emotionally’ (p.24). The same concept is at work in *Sweet Toronto*.

^{xxxiv} The design of the performance is not unprecedented for Lennon. 1968’s *The Beatles* features two distinct Lennon tracks bearing the title ‘Revolution’: ‘Revolution 1’ and ‘Revolution 9.’ However, Lennon’s original intention for ‘Revolution’ was a composite of two tracks – a nearly eleven-minute composition labelled as ‘Revolution Take 20’ on subsequent bootlegs – that gradually transitions from relaxed blues of ‘1’ to the *musique concrete* of ‘9.’ Although they are both stronger pieces for having been developed into independent compositions, there is a unique subversiveness to Lennon’s original conception of the track that is absent in the album release. Still, binding the two finished pieces together with the same title allows for multiple readings of their relationship to each other.

^{xxxv} See also Bauldie (1987a), Heylin (1987), and Livson (1987).

^{xxxvi} The arrangement of ‘Cold Turkey’ had yet to be perfected – the melodic version played here lacks the bite of the studio version, which would be recorded ten days later with the same band, minus Yoko, and with Ringo Starr on drums instead of White.

^{xxxvii} For more on the makeup of the festival bill and speculation about its effect on the composition of the audience, see chapter four.

^{xxxviii} Pennebaker further describes the scene thusly: ‘Coming at the end of that whole concert, it was the end of the Beatles. [The audience] understood it, and at the end they fell silent. And John looked out and it was kind of scary, like nobody was there. It was a funny moment. They all left the stage, and I remember a piece of paper blowing across the stage [. . .] I thought, “My God. This is a fantastic wake” ’ (cited in Kubernik, [2012] 2014, p.204).

Chapter 4

Sweet Toronto: D.A. Pennebaker's (Direct) Cinema of Attractions

Introduction

In 1952, D.A. Pennebaker found himself facing an existential crisis.

He had dissolved his engineering enterprise, Electronics Engineering, and was living off the sale of his six patents. His wife, Sylvia, had just given birth to the couple's first child, Stacy. He had been introduced to experimental documentarian Francis Thompson, and was learning about filmmaking while assisting Thompson with his long-gestating, 'distorted documentary,' *N.Y., N.Y.* Still, a lack, a creative restlessness stirred with him. A notebook entry dated 17 January of that year reveals a rudderless man yearning for a personal rebirth: 'This is the beginning. It will all start here. I have lived for thirty-seven years, and it will all begin now' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.100). Although he also experimented with still photography and painting, Pennebaker had always assumed these artistic impulses would find an outlet in prose. He envisioned himself as a writer in the literary tradition of F. Scott Fitzgerald and John O'Hara, but he abandoned his own novel in this style, *Simon Fox*, after 150 pages. 1952, the year of Pennebaker's directionless pursuit of 'art,' did provide him with one thing, however: a vision.

Pennebaker speaks of a vision he experienced in a dream that clarified his convictions about art, and it is very specifically a modernist vision of art. The dream, set in the far future, began with Pennebaker wandering through a Paul Delvaux-esque landscape with a group of strangers who eventually find themselves gathered around a cloth-covered table. Following a long wait, a mysterious figure appeared. After greeting the group:

[H]e took the cloth off, and underneath was this very complicated kind of mechanical thing [. . .]

And he said, 'Well, are you all ready?' And everybody said, 'Yes.' And he did something. He put his hand – something else happened, and then it was over. And he covered it up and walked away. But it happened – the effect of it was the most extraordinary [. . .] It had movement, and everything happened [. . .] He made something happen before your eyes, with his hand and this little thing, device. But it happened in process. You could never separate any part of it from the whole thing happening [. . .]

And I woke up, and I was so excited [. . .] [T]hat idea was what I wanted [my art] to look like. Something that you didn't understand, but it just kept moving, and it led you to something else. It led you from one place to another, and it wasn't pictures, exactly. It was some kind of movement of – I don't know what.

That's what I was trying to do. (1983, pp.97-98)

Pennebaker's dream is particularly fascinating for its idiosyncratic convergence of myth and modernity. It bears the hallmark of classical myths in which the divine impart esoteric knowledge to chosen men to activate a new phase of human evolution, yet its imagery infuses it with the unconscious anxieties of modernity.

While this is certainly a heady reading, it should, hopefully, be obvious that the intention is not to argue that Pennebaker is the recipient of some kind of divine touch; Pennebaker's practice is, after all, grounded in an unassuming earthiness, which befits a man who describes himself as 'just a working man' (cited in Levin, 1971, p.234) and has been accused of being 'just a hustler' (cited in Christgau, 1970, p.93). Nor should the dream be read as a clichéd 'lightbulb moment' in which Pennebaker is suddenly struck with the notion of fulfilling his artistic pretensions through film. In fact, he will be the first to admit that he was still at a loss as to how to actually pursue this newly-clarified vision of art and was still relatively unfamiliar with filmmaking (1983, p.98). The dream does, on the other hand, frame the thematic explorations of this chapter as peculiar artistic preoccupations of Pennebaker that precipitate his interest in film. In so doing, direct cinema is relocated from its common perception as an external engagement with surfaces of the profilmic world to a process more strongly rooted in internal processes of its author. This is a discourse more generally afforded to fiction film or avant-garde *auteurs*, but typically eludes documentarians – and certainly the direct cinema filmmakers.

Direct Cinema Beyond 'The Feeling of Being There'

On its own, Ricky Leacock's aphorism of 'the feeling of being there' can be considered a minimalist, straightforward and unpretentious definition of direct cinema, yet it is also one that poses problems in its incompleteness and uncomplicatedness. Using it as a starting point for understanding direct cinema, however, one can locate several key preoccupations of the documentary cycle inherent to its study embedded within it. It suggests that direct cinema is a modernised cinema of attractions, concerned with a realism and phenomenology of image and sound. Bill Nichols, for

instance, calls direct cinema ‘a particularly vivid form of “present-tense” representation’ where ‘the rhythms of everyday life set in’ (1991, p.40).

Pennebaker is perhaps the most modernist of the major direct cinema practitioners, and *Sweet Toronto* showcases his ideographic approach that further develops from *Monterey Pop*’s fascination with patterns of rhythm, movement and colour.¹ *Sweet Toronto* foregrounds the ‘present-ness’ of direct cinema through Pennebaker’s fetishisation of machines, a preoccupation that harkens back not only to Pennebaker’s first film, *Daybreak Express*, but also to the advent of cinema itself via a detour through avant-garde works like Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising* (1963) and *Kustom Kar Kommandos* (1965). *Sweet Toronto*’s opening minutes, which will be analysed in detail later in this chapter, are perhaps the most viscerally immersive phantom ride in all of direct cinema.

This chapter’s title draws upon a comment made by Keith Beattie when arguing that one of the effects of the so-called ‘rockumentary’ is the production of a visual knowledge organised around the performative human body. ‘[R]ockumentary’s (direct) cinema of attractions,’ according to Beattie, ‘is [. . .] centred on and conducted through the “attraction” and display of onstage and offstage performance’ (2008, p.61). The concept prompted by Beattie’s wordplay – the linking of direct cinema with Tom Gunning’s cinema of attractions – offers a new critical perspective through which to understand direct cinema, yet it is not one that he pursues to the fullest implications of the phrase in the aforementioned work. Thus, this chapter further develops the ‘(direct) cinema of attractions’ as a critical concept as specifically exemplified by Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema.

Detrimentially, the ‘rockumentary,’ for some critics, has come to be emblematic of direct cinema, to the point that the dismissal of films such as *Woodstock* and *Monterey Pop* functions as the dismissal of direct cinema as a whole. Keith Beattie acknowledges that its critics allege that direct cinema ‘fails to situate subjects within sociological or historical contexts,’ thus denying the imperative of ‘the traditional documentary project,’ which is based in epistemology (Beattie, 2008, p.60). While this allegation is a legitimate concern that, to some degree, was explored in the previous chapter, the assumed conclusion is not necessarily a consequence of it. What is at work in direct cinema is the production of knowledge in a way that diverges from the traditional Griersonian model, yet still maintains commitment to an epistemological base. Michael Renov, too, is a vocal proponent of challenging documentary film

theory's 'unduly separatist and deeply rationalist' practice of positioning the documentary gaze in epistemological thought 'over pleasurable or ecstatic looking and for its enthronement of sobriety at the expense of the evocative and delirious' (2004, p.96). I concur with Beattie's contention that '[t]he form of knowledge produced within this mode is subjective, affective, visceral and sensuous' (*ibid.*).

The work of this chapter is primarily conducted through the continued analysis of *Sweet Toronto*, initiated in the previous chapter, but it also returns to Pennebaker's experimental short *Daybreak Express*, which predates direct cinema, and the early direct cinema short *Breaking It Up at the Museum* to investigate the ways in which he returns to the specific preoccupations of these early works with a new ideological and formal purpose in his mature period. To achieve this, this chapter draws together several interlinked areas of enquiry. Firstly, I will provide a brief historical overview of the Toronto Rock and Roll Revival and briefly summarise the film. I will then explore the way in which Beattie's concept of documentary display is exhibited in *Sweet Toronto*, which connects the film – as well as direct cinema – to a documentary tradition derived from Gunning's concept of the cinema of attractions. Drawing upon the work of Cohen (2012) and Alsop (2014) as well as Pennebaker's analysis of his own work to devise a conceptual framework, I argue that what I term kinetic progressions is the singular conceptual and structural element in Pennebaker's work in his mature-period direct cinema. In this consideration of the modernist Pennebaker, with a particular focus on the ideological implications of sync sound, I focus my attention on the performing machine on display and the mechanics of labour. This includes the machine of technological mediation, the camera, as well as the machines it records, from the motorcycles and guitars of *Sweet Toronto*, to the elevated trains of *Daybreak Express* and self-destructive sculptures in *Breaking It Up at the Museum*, to *Sweet Toronto*'s soft machine – the human body. I argue that *Sweet Toronto*, representative of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, represents a fulfilment of the potentiality promised by early direct cinema. In *Sweet Toronto*, Pennebaker pushes the established conventions of direct cinema into more complex configurations that amplify the voice of the filmmaker as well as direct cinema's status as a personal cinema.

In drawing out this proposed theoretical material from *Sweet Toronto*, my textual analysis will predominantly focus on two scenes: a dynamically-shot motorcade sequence, in which limousines carrying the Plastic Ono Band and the Doors are escorted by the Vagabonds Motorcycle Club to Varsity Stadium (which opens the film)

and the entirety of the Plastic Ono Band's performance at the Toronto Rock and Roll Revival (which closes it). Apart from a few cursory references, I do not address, with any kind of sustained analysis, the middle bulk of the film, which is filled out with sets by Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard. On the whole, this section is unremarkable and less engaging than Pennebaker's comparable attempts in other films from the period (and even the final act of *Sweet Toronto*) at translating the immediacy of live performance to cinema; moreover, it lacks the novel approach to direct cinema evident in the sequences that bookend it and form the basis of this chapter's analysis. However, it should be noted that this middle section does stand out to Stephen Mamber as an example of direct cinema's status as a cinema of duration. He specifically points to Chuck Berry's set, presented in its entirety. He opens the set with a 'clumsy' 'Johnny B. Goode,' the unfortunate result of being backed by a band assembled especially for the day's festival with whom Berry was unfamiliar (1974, p.190). As the musicians become more familiar with one another, 'there is a gradual coalescing of talent,' and the band once again returns to 'Goode' at the close of the set, with a vastly improved execution (*ibid.*). Mamber describes the significance of this extended sequence thusly:

[W]e can only tell the difference by having been witness to the progression that led up to it. Traditional editing practices would surely have cut out the first performance of the song as merely inferior duplication, and any selection of 'best' songs from the forty-five-minute performance would give no idea of the subtle 'drama' inherent in the entire presentation. (*ibid.*)

Whereas Pennebaker's particular preoccupation with direct cinema as a cinema of duration was explored in the previous chapter, the present chapter is concerned with new structures for direct cinema that characterise Pennebaker's mature period. *Sweet Toronto*'s opening and closing segments, I argue, exemplify these new structures.

Furthermore, my reading of the Plastic Ono Band's performance in this chapter is informed by and builds upon groundwork laid by Philip Auslander (2006), who conducts a comparative analysis of the Ono Band's performance and the somewhat curious Woodstock appearance of Sha Na Na, derided camp 1950s rock and roll revivalists (pp.20-29). He argues the ways in which each bands' performances exhibit divergent negotiations with rock's past and present, with portents of its emerging cultural turns; thus, his analysis predominantly focuses on the first half of the Plastic Ono Band's set. My interest, however, lies in the second half's avant-garde turn. Nevertheless, his analysis sets the stage for my own, which focuses on the way in which

Lennon and Ono's performance 'reflected the countercultural emphasis on authenticity' (*ibid.*, p.21).

The Toronto Rock and Roll Revival

The Toronto Rock and Roll Revival, for all its obscurity, once had the unique distinction of being crowned the 'second most important event in rock history' by *Rolling Stone* magazine (Yorke, 2009). Although the earnestness of such a declaration may be lost to the ensuing decades which have rendered the festival itself an interesting footnote in rock history, it is certainly clear why in the throes of the historical moment the magazine – given its pedigree – designated the Revival with such importance, even if it appears to be somewhat of an overstatement from a contemporary perspective. The Revival's significance is not necessarily the event itself, but its consequences. Simply stated, the event is, more or less, 'the concert that broke up the Beatles' (Goddard, 2009, p.IN02).ⁱⁱ

Life within the Beatles had been particularly miserable for Lennon in 1969. The four were struggling to function as a collective, and it was clear that everyone was moving in his own direction. Lennon's working relationship with both Harrison and McCartney, in particular, was strained, if not unbearable. The early weeks of September had produced the latest of the increasingly frequent indicators of such things when McCartney rejected 'Cold Turkey' as a potential Beatles single. Thus, in the days prior to his invitation to the festival, Lennon had been seriously contemplating quitting the band, and even expressed his intention to Eric Clapton, Klaus Voormann, and Beatles manager Allen Klein on the flight to Toronto. The testimony of insiders does suggest that, as poorly received as it was, the experience of performing with the Plastic Ono Band was the pivotal event that instilled Lennon with the confidence to quit the Beatles.ⁱⁱⁱ To journalist Peter Goddard, Lennon himself commented that that night in Toronto made him feel 'I could do it on my own' (2009, p.IN02).^{iv}

Despite its name, as well as the impression suggested by *Sweet Toronto* itself, the 'revival' of 1950s rock and roll acts was but one facet of a line-up that was not so much eclectic as it was bizarre. With a ragtag mélange of musicians consisting of the previous generation's aging rockers (Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Gene Vincent, and Little Richard), rock decadence at its peak (the Doors), on-the-rise shock rockers (Alice Cooper and Screaming Lord Sutch) and politically-charged fusion

(Chicago Transit Authority, soon to be simply Chicago), local acts (Flapping and Whiskey Howl), and the now-forgotten (Jr. Walker & the All Stars, Tony Joe White, Doug Kershaw, and Cat Mother & the All Night Newsboys), the promoters, John Brower and Ken Walker, appeared to be making a grab for several demographics without clearly considering just to whom this bill would appeal. Perhaps accordingly, tickets sold poorly and the festival was threatened with cancellation until Brower, upon the suggestion of Kim Fowley, aware of Lennon's reverence for the '50s rockers on the bill, his childhood heroes, called Apple Corps offices the night before the festival and asked Lennon to emcee the event. Surprisingly, Lennon agreed to attend, but on the condition that he could play.^v Despite initial media disbelief of the Beatle's involvement (believing it to be a hoax, Toronto radio station CHUM refused to report the news), evidenced confirmation from the promoters led to a last-minute surge in ticket sales, and the festival sold out the afternoon of the event (Hopper, 2014, p.A3). Pennebaker's own road to Toronto, which was filled with false starts, cross-country wheeling and dealing, and last minute arrangements, was no less frenetic than Lennon's.^{vi}

Sweet Toronto opens with a dynamic showcase of virtuosic mobile camerawork in action as the Vagabonds Motorcycle Club escorts a motorcade carrying the Plastic Ono Band and the Doors to Varsity Stadium to the staccato throb of Bo Diddley's 'Bo Diddley.' Upon arrival at the stadium, the camera joins Diddley on stage as he blazes through the second half of the song. To distinguish it from the earlier *Monterey Pop* – partly because it was where his own interest laid, and partly because it was a saleable hook that could be quickly pitched to investors – Pennebaker elected to showcase the festival's rock and roll revivalist strand. To a degree, this distorts the film as a historical document (however, the same could be said of *Monterey Pop*), but Pennebaker's selections also propel the film's unique dialectics. Sets by Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry and Little Richard follow.

The film's nostalgic levity is then dosed with bad acid when the Plastic Ono Band takes the stage in what Pennebaker calls 'a science fiction ending' to the film (cited in Levin, 1971, p.232). Lennon and Ono invert the utopian spectacle of the rock and roll revivalists and pound their way through a set of sickly and diseased rock and roll standards en route to avant-garde dissonance, as detailed in the previous chapter. As with *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, Pennebaker's final act forces a rethinking of the entire film. The form that *Sweet Toronto* embodies is akin to what John Corner

calls proactive observationalism, in which ‘the fundamental mode is still indirect but the depiction has been more heavily coded, perhaps more richly inflected’ by the filmmaker’s interventions (1996, p.28). By performing a dialectical reading of the film, its critiques of masculinity and ‘inauthentic’ performativity are enacted through Pennebaker’s ideological appropriation of direct cinema’s ‘jargons of authenticity’ and reveal the critical capabilities of his mature-period direct cinema.

Documentary Display and the (Direct) Cinema of Attractions

The discourse surrounding direct cinema – specifically, unsurprisingly, early direct cinema – is imbued with the language Gunning used to describe the pre-1906 cinema of attractions, but such a connection has rarely been pursued critically. However, such a critical consideration of direct cinema as a direct cinema of attractions not only revises our understanding of the form’s ‘affective ways of knowing’ – ways of seeing and producing knowledge (that is, the mechanics of direct cinema) – and foregrounds it as an affective cinema within its particular social period, but also positions Pennebaker’s mature-period work as the fulfilment of the form’s potentiality (Beattie, 2008, p.6).

Through his concept of documentary display, Beattie traces for documentary an alternate lineage to the Griersonian epistemological tradition in which ‘knowing [is] attendant on display’; it is a lineage that is informed by and ‘aligned with the series of visual excitements and shocks characteristic of an early “cinema of attractions,” ’ through the modernist city symphony film, to the historical and contemporary avant-garde (*ibid.*).^{vii} He furthers that ‘[d]ocumentary display shares with the cinema of attractions an emphasis on spectatorial engagement, visual stimuli, and showing or presenting exhibitionistic views capable of visually arousing pleasure in the spectator, and, through such approaches, forms of sensorial knowledge’ (*ibid.*, p.19). Direct cinema is a form of documentary in which this is particularly apparent.

Three characteristics of cinematic modernism embodied by the cinema of attractions as outlined by Gunning are also manifested in direct cinema: potentiality, attractions/display, and the machine. Just as early modernists were fascinated with the potential of film, so, too, early direct cinema offered similar possibilities, but in a new way that was reflective of its age (as Gunning says, ‘each period constructs its spectator in a new way’) (Gunning, 1986, p.70). Rothman (1997) enthusiastically suggests that

direct cinema offered a new way to look at ‘the reality of life, the life of reality, the real possibility of spontaneous expression, in the present’ (p.124). A contemporary perspective has perhaps blunted the visceral impact of its style, which Callenbach calls ‘so shocking at the outset’ (2008, p.62). In fact, akin to Gunning’s claim that ‘there is no question that reactions of astonishment and even a type of terror accompanied many early projections’ (Gunning, 1994, p.116 cited in Beattie, 2008, p.18), Pennebaker reports that audiences watching the first broadcast of *Primary* in 1960 thought that they were watching an unmediated event unfold in real time (1983, pp.235-36). Its style was so radical that they cognitively could not process it properly.

First and foremost, Gunning’s cinema of attractions is ‘an exhibitionist cinema’ (1986, p.64). He derived the term ‘attractions’ from Eisenstein, who deployed the term when developing a new radical theatre to refer to a technique of ‘subject[ing] the spectator to ‘sensual or psychological impact’ (*ibid.*, p.66). Gunning sees this manifested in early cinema as ‘exhibitionist confrontation rather than [the] diegetic absorption’ of the narrative cinema that displaced it (*ibid.*). To this end, he recognises that close-ups in early cinema are not used ‘for narrative punctuation, but as an attraction in its own right’ (*ibid.*). Such a practice is especially pervasive in direct cinema – often amplified by a camera zoom – and *Sweet Toronto* has some particularly rich examples: from the extremely intimate, almost sensual pans along the front suspensions of the Vagabonds’ and Ontario Provincial Police’s motorcycles, to the sweating, straining face of the heavily-bearded John Lennon as he grits his teeth and labours at his guitar, to the film’s final shots that inspect the abandoned guitars that are left resting against their amps producing a sustained feedback that continues to cut into the blackness of then night. These shots do not act as some narrative emphasis but showcase and display the mechanics of labour and the labour of machines to cinematically embody the film’s ideological position, or voice.

Gunning also argues that ‘in the earliest years of exhibition the cinema itself was an attraction. Early audiences went to exhibitions to see machines demonstrated [. . .] rather than to view films’ (*ibid.*, p.65). While the same fetishisation of the machine was not necessarily present in the exhibition of direct cinema films, it is certainly evident in the practice of its filmmakers and pervades the films themselves. Obviously, emergent technologies played a critical role in enabling such a mode of filmmaking in the first place, and, furthermore, direct cinema has been strongly defined by its relationship to this technology. Marcorelles’ understanding of this relationship, for example, reveals

his particularly modernist perspective: '[B]y making a man who is closely in contact with the machine our mediator, breathing through his machine in a way, we establish a new relationship with our own small world' (1973, p.146). Whereas Waugh criticises direct cinema's fetishisation of the image, I understand its practitioners' true formal obsession to be with sync sound – a claim that will be analysed thoroughly in this chapter and the next ([1977] 2011, p.104).

If the cinema of attractions is a way of understanding the potentiality of cinema, then that cinema does not represent an endpoint, but a particular moment in a progression. *Sweet Toronto* represents the fulfilment of the potentiality displayed by early direct cinema. It embodies the concept of documentary display and draws upon the cinema of attractions' 'exhibitionist confrontation' in a way that pushes Pennebaker's direct cinema beyond its classical form. It refers back the modernist preoccupations evident in Pennebaker's early work, but utilises their display with a more progressive and mature ideological and aesthetic purpose. Their dialectical display – which departs from traditional direct cinema – embodies what can be identified as the documentary's voice, which reveals Pennebaker's particular ideological positioning. In this way, *Sweet Toronto* can be said to be an example of Pennebaker's mature direct cinema technique.

Daybreak Express, Breaking It Up at the Museum and the Modernist Pennebaker

Pennebaker's pre- and early direct cinema work embodies a cinematic modernism that is returned to in *Sweet Toronto* and further complicated by his mature style. His pre-direct cinema experimental shorts, which include notable and influential collaborations with Francis Thompson and Shirley Clarke on a series of film loops for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, represent a unique intersection of documentary and the avant-garde, and point towards his direct cinema's 'open abandonment of informationalism' (Beattie, 2011, p.15).^{viii} Rabinovitz calls *Neon Signs* (1958), a collaboration between Pennebaker and Clarke, 'a ciné-poem of form, color, and movement' that 'represent[s] the vanguard of American film aesthetics in the 1950s' (2003, p.101). Aesthetically, these culminate in *Daybreak Express*, in which Pennebaker pushes his non-synchronous sound technique to its limit.^{ix} The film is an ode to 'midcentury modernity' and celebrates 'jazz, the el [and] the accelerated pace of life' (Beattie, 2011, p.16). Pennebaker – influenced by the paintings of John Sloan,

which transform ‘bleak, terrible’ incidents of the everyday into ‘a thing [. . .] of passionate beauty’ – alienates and amplifies the experience of riding New York’s 3rd Avenue elevated train (the ‘el’) (Pennebaker, 1983, p.88). It is pure kinesis; it mixes locomotion of the phantom ride, wide-angle distortion, the dizzying disorientation of its looping camera movements, and the absence of direct sound in a way that is essentially a visual anti-jazz for the way its kinetic orchestrations work with and against its jazz score, the Duke Ellington song of the same name. To Pennebaker, the el was an emblematic monument of and to modernism:

I thought it was our version of the [. . .] Eiffel Tower. And when they tore them down, I thought that that’s even worse than tearing down Penn Station, which was beautiful and lovely, but these were alive, and that was just a place to go to. (Appendix)

On the other side of the sync divide is *Breaking It Up at the Museum*. Like the Maysles brothers’ *Cut Piece* (1965) and their later work with Christo and Jeanne-Claude, this film is an example of direct cinema’s engagement with modern and contemporary art happenings. It documents the auto-destructive performance of neo-Dadaist Jean Tinguely’s mechanical assemblage *Homage to New York* (1960) in the Sculpture Garden of the Museum of Modern Art. Intercutting between wide shots and close-ups reveals the interaction of the sculpture’s moving parts and their relationship to the whole. Bicycle wheels oscillate, ribbons twirl, pistons pump, and a bathtub shakes as something inside flaps around like a fish out of water; fires rage and smoke plumes until the fire department ends the performance to the disapproval of the assembled audience. The effect of the film’s sync sound is quite striking; we hear the discordant striking of piano keys by tiny mechanical feet over the audible shaking of the sculpture’s moving parts that builds to a suspenseful instability until its premature end. The interaction of these sounds and their corresponding visuals ground the performance in the experience of ‘the real’ and foregrounds the materiality of classical direct cinema.

This relationship and its ideological implications are toyed with, exploited and subverted in Pennebaker’s mature period. *Daybreak Express* and *Breaking It Up at the Museum* demonstrate dialectical sound practices that are deployed in *Sweet Toronto* to indicate Pennebaker’s ideological positioning in the film’s debate over the performance of authenticity.

Ideographic Representation in Direct Cinema: Surface and Depth

I now want to turn to the mechanics of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema and discuss the way in which it produces meaning. Richard Barsam argues that, '[i]n direct cinema, meaning develops through a process of accretion, in which the images grow and coalesce in the viewer's perception' (1986, p.139). He furthers: 'It is only through understanding their interaction that the viewer arrives at the interpretive possibilities of the whole film. Thus, the inherent, organic tension between these images, and between the parts of the film, reinforces their multiple implications' (1986, p.140). Consider a specific shot in a direct cinema film – such as, for example, Keith Richards' snakeskin-booted foot tapping in time to the rough mix of 'Wild Horses' in *Gimme Shelter*, or *High School*'s anonymous teenage girl who leans against the wall of an empty, cavernous high school corridor and wistfully gazes into its void. Meaning is



Figure 4.1. *Gimme Shelter* and *High School*.

produced through simultaneous horizontal and vertical processes. This operation involves understanding the shot's function within the broader system of the entire film – the process of accretion and coalescence that Barsam describes (horizontal); what this horizontal process also allows for is the excavation of the found symbolism within the shot itself (vertical). For example, Grant remarks about how Wiseman 'seizes upon objects and physical details in the institutions he films and invests them with a significance beyond their function purposes' (1992, p.17). The above shot in *High School*, then, embodies Wiseman's perception of the institution's attitude towards its students. Thus, the production of meaning in direct cinema becomes an issue of surface and depth.

Not all scholars are as generous as Grant. Jonas Mekas, as early as 1963, criticised direct cinema for 'stick[ing] to the same familiar surface':

There must have been a strong need in man during the past five years or so to stress the surface, 'plastic' aspects of truth. There was too much mistrust and fear of what's going on deeper inside. We stuck to observations of the crust movements, letting the unconscious wander by itself for a while. ([1963] 1972, p.95)

Winston calls 'the major danger of the direct cinema approach' the problematic prospect that 'filming the surface of things reveals the surface of things' ([1983] 1988, p.520). Lewis Jacobs, citing Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroitor's *Lonely Boy* (1961), the Maysles brothers' *Showman* and *Salesman*, *Dont Look Back*, and *King, Murray*, also exposes what he considers the superficial pretensions of direct cinema, saying:

[D]espite the disclosures of some fundamental truths about the human condition [...] it was not enough for filmmakers to be committed to so inflexible and ingenuous a belief in the significance of surface details and to trust so implicitly in chance to an imaginative coherence. (Jacobs, [1971] 1979, p.378)

Regardless of what he sees as a prevalent symptom across the film cycle, he does not dismiss the potentiality within direct cinema for cinematic significance altogether. He concedes that two of Allan King's films, *Warrendale* and *A Married Couple*, for example, transcend 'the bric-a-brac of mere observation' (*ibid.*).

If direct cinema is a study of surfaces, then it is the job of the 'observational filmmaker, perceiving not with the naked eye but with the kino eye, [to] enter what Rouch calls a "cine trance" and discover meaning as embodied in the surface of things, within the realm of visible phenomena' (Grant, 1992, p.9). In films such as *Jane* and *Dont Look Back*, filming subjects like Jane Fonda and Dylan, who are used to the camera's presence and – consciously or unconsciously – enact a self-presentational style for it, posed a particular challenge for Pennebaker as well as for the abilities and limits of direct cinema in general. He says: '[T]o make the story work, you're going to have to get underneath this, so it meant much harder [*sic*] kind of looking and waiting and thinking. Much more thinking. It just didn't all play for you right on the surface' (1983, pp.352-53). After *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, Pennebaker's pursuit of 'meaning as embodied in the surface of things' took on a more refined, dialectical approach that emphasised the concept of documentary display and resulted in a more ideographic direct cinema.

My use of 'ideographic' here to describe Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema draws upon Eisenstein's familiar usage in 'The Cinematographic Principle and

the Ideogram.’ He looks to Chinese hieroglyphs to develop a theory of intellectual montage and describes how their two-category system works:

[T]he copulation (perhaps we had better say, combination) of two hieroglyphs of the simplest series is to be regarded not as their sum, but as their product, i.e., as a value of another dimension, another degree; each, separately, corresponds to an *object*, to a fact, but their combination corresponds to a *concept*. From separate hieroglyphs has been fused – the ideogram. By combination of two ‘depictables’ is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable. (Eisenstein, [1929] 1977, p.30; emphasis in original)

Eisenstein goes on to outline his theory of intellectual montage, but my interest for the purposes of this study is with the mechanics behind the ideographic concept he describes here in Pennebaker’s mature-period work. Elements of this more dialectical approach emerged in *Monterey Pop*, as demonstrated by the previous chapter’s textual analysis of the quintessentially direct cinema deployment of sync sound during Ravi Shankar’s dhun when compared to the fractured and impressionistic presentation of Country Joe and the Fish’s ‘Section 43’ in order to validate a certain kind of authentic and embodied presence at the former. In *Sweet Toronto*, however, Pennebaker more confidently pushes the conventions of direct cinema in new directions. Still, he does not take his direct cinema as far as Alk’s dialectics in *Eat the Document*, which freely defy spatial and temporal continuity in favour of a conceptual synthesis; Pennebaker’s dialectics work within the familiar bounds of direct cinema in a much more subtle manner. He exhibits a rethinking of documentary display and the role of dialectical exhibitionism in the presentation and enactment of the documentary’s voice. In Pennebaker’s mature-period work, his ideological voice as a filmmaker is enacted through what I call ‘kinetic progressions.’

Pennebaker’s Kinetic Progressions

One of the goals of this project is to develop a critical understanding of Pennebaker’s methodological and formal approach to filmmaking in his mature-period direct cinema. What are his particular formal preoccupations? What are the particular strategies that he employs to explore those preoccupations? How do these strategies coalesce to articulate an identifiable, singular voice of the filmmaker? To that end, I have identified in his work of this period a structural quality that I have termed ‘kinetic progressions,’ in which an ideographic direct cinema, enacted through Pennebaker’s emphasis on kinesis, embodies the ideological voice of the filmmaker. These kinetic

progressions represent a highly cinematic (as opposed to rhetorical or literary) process of signification that utilises classical direct cinema's emphasis on present-ness, the found symbolism within its study of surfaces, and the exploitation of direct cinema's discourses of authenticity to further formally evolve the language of direct cinema in a way that fulfils the form's potentiality for political discourse. As a close analysis of *Sweet Toronto* will reveal, the performed kinesis of Pennebaker's mature period is considerably more dialectical than Barsam's classical model of direct cinema, where a process of accretion produces meaning.

The output of two scholars in particular was especially formative in identifying and developing this conceptual reading of Pennebaker: Thomas F. Cohen's work on Shirley Clarke in *Playing to the Camera* (2012) and, perhaps somewhat laterally, Elizabeth Alsop's analysis of Claire Denis' free adaptation of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor, Beau Travail* (1999). Alsop is interested in uncovering 'what [the film's] kinetic or "visual language" functions to "reveal" or "project" – its expressiveness of ideological principles rather than plot, and of abstractions rather than narrative specifics' (Alsop, 2014, p.21). Likewise, Pennebaker's kinesis privileges mood over informationalism, and I want to explore the way in which his camera's study of surfaces expresses ideologically-loaded depths. Mamber hints at this prospect when he states that direct cinema 'glories in the camera's ability to catch action on the run and in the most difficult of shooting conditions, not just to revel in technique, but as a means of expressing a life-style through a camera style' (1974, p.179).

Furthermore, Cohen devotes a chapter of *Playing to the Camera* to an analysis of Clarke's experimental documentary *Ornette: Made in America*, a work that spans two decades and traces Clarke's aesthetic embrace of developing technologies (incorporating film, video, and even video game aesthetics) as well as the 'tension between holistic changes to bodies [. . .] and local bodily movements involved in making music' over a protracted period of time (Cohen, 2012, p.93). To introduce his argument, he points to Clarke's interest in the kinematics of the human body in her early work, such as *Dance in the Sun* (1953), *Bullfight* (1955), and *Moment in Love* (1957) and proposes that, in *Ornette*, 'she explores a broader notion of *kinesis* as change or growth rather than as locomotion only' (*ibid.*, p.91; emphasis in original). He traces his use of kinesis to Aristotle's *Categories*, where six kinds are listed: generation, decay, increase, diminution, alteration, and change of place. However, Cohen does not pursue this conceptual framework beyond providing an avenue through which to

introduce his analysis of Clarke's film; thus, I have taken the groundwork he has laid and developed it further in my analysis of Pennebaker's films. I am especially interested in the mechanics of such a concept.

'Leacock and Pennebaker care only about reality on the move, heightened, indeed, overcharged, with meaning' (Marcorelles, 1974, p.33). In describing his 'off the hip' shooting style, Louis Marcorelles provides a useful starting point for discussing Pennebaker's aesthetics (*ibid.*, p.28). Writing in *Living Cinema: New Directions in Contemporary Film-Making*, he furthers: 'What Pennebaker seeks above all is rhythm and rhythmical relationships, and he pushes almost to absurd lengths Leacock's revolutionary discoveries. One must be entirely "in," participate in depth' (*ibid.*, p.63). Unfortunately, this is the extent of his analysis of Pennebaker in a volume that is overwhelmingly focused on Leacock (even a later paragraph on *One P.M.*, which will be discussed further in the following chapter, quickly bypasses Pennebaker's directorial credit to emphasise the film's collision of Leacock and Godard's respective techniques). However, this exploration into the cinematic value of Pennebaker's aesthetics is a welcome response to the dismissals of such critics as Ron Blumer, who only sees 'loose construction and sloppy ramblings' ([1969] 1979, p.472) in his work.

Considering that Marcorelles refers to Pennebaker as Leacock's '*alter ego*,' it is worth clarifying what he means when referring to the latter's 'revolutionary discoveries' (*ibid.*, p.33; emphasis in original). His evaluation of Leacock is best embodied by his assessment of the director's *A Stravinsky Portrait*: 'an example of perfect cinema, image, sound and movement in absolute unity' (*ibid.*, p.61). He points to Leacock's pioneering experimentation with sync sound, which brought a new dimension of physicality to filmmaking, as his most crucial intervention in the field. Leacock's rigorous attention to '*the visual detail that cannot be treated separately from the sound that accompanies it*' (*ibid.*, p.50; emphasis in original) represented a 'categorical rejection of the old cinematographic "grammar"' (*ibid.*, p.86), went beyond candid observationalism and 'demand[ed] immediate participation in the event' (*ibid.*, p.66). Through a deceptively austere style, 'Leacock brought a surgeon's knife to reality' (*ibid.*, p.65) in an attempt to 'discover just what lay behind the apparently united fabric of the familiar' (*ibid.*, p.53). His finished films take the shape of a kind of essayistic reportage, where the understated yet distinctive voice of the filmmaker also offers space for the spectator's interpretive participation.

Marcorelles' assessment of Pennebaker is based on four films: *David, Jane, Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*. The first two are hour-long programmes made under the auspices of Drew Associates that, although ostensibly Pennebaker's films, bear the markers of Drew's editorial interference, while the latter two are independent, post-Drew feature-length Leacock Pennebaker, Inc. productions, and represent Pennebaker's classical direct cinema. One film that Marcorelles does not cite (and, in all practicality, most likely did not have access to) is the one that is perhaps the most crucial in anticipating the aesthetic and ideological preoccupations of Pennebaker's subsequent work through his mature-period direct cinema – *You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You*. Made shortly after his departure from Drew Associates, this twelve-minute short, an elliptical puzzle of a film about the wedding of Timothy Leary and Nena von Schlebrügge (which it refuses to show), for all intents and purposes, serves as Pennebaker's 'declaration of independence' from Drew. It issues a formal critique of the Drew films in its vehement rejection of the reportage mode, crisis structure and narrative closure typical of the Drew films in favour of an ambiguity and elusiveness that presents an alternative to the informational imperative of documentary and, in the process, 'offers a radical reassessment of [Pennebaker's] allegiance to direct cinema' (Beattie, 2011, p.89). That reassessment would prove to be, as Dave Saunders argues, 'indicative and predictive of Pennebaker's and direct cinema's overall trajectory' (Saunders, 2007, p.50). Pennebaker's future lay in a personal cinema more aligned with his contemporaries in the avant-garde such as Stan Brakhage and Jonas Mekas than the anti-cinematic journalistic pretensions of Drew.^x Although Pennebaker had no association with the New American Cinema Group/Film-Makers' Cooperative and personally did not find much in common with their practice, his work is nevertheless spiritually akin to theirs.^{xi} For example, Brakhage's body of work has been characterised as:

[Occupying] a filmic space that was defined by light, rhythmic pulsation (like the human heart), color, depth, and a time frame that could not be held in check by memory. Indeed, a memory of a Brakhage film was closer to an aura, a dream, something that was paradoxically ephemeral and concrete at the same time. (Varela, 2005, pp.170-71)

Such an assessment is markedly similar to the way in which Marcorelles writes about Pennebaker and is further supported by Pennebaker's own statements regarding his cinematic preoccupations: 'The thing that interests me in film is mood, see? Which is what dreams are. The reality of dreams always fades, but what you do remember – but

you never put words to it – is mood’ (cited in Levin, 1971, p.269). My alignment of Pennebaker with these filmmakers does not mean to assign to Pennebaker avant-garde credentials that he does not deserve; Pennebaker has always been a careerist with commercial aspirations. Instead, my goal here is to point out the avant-garde tendencies in his work that are routinely ignored. This is in accordance with one of the aims of this project, which is an attempt to situate Pennebaker’s direct cinema of this period as a more sensorial, personal cinema than it has traditionally been understood and positioned. Of course, what differentiates Pennebaker from Brakhage and Mekas is his commitment to sync sound. Robert Christgau identifies Pennebaker’s belief that ‘the aural reality was as honorable as the visual’ as a characteristic that separated him from ‘the underground film poets who were beginning to proliferate in New York [in the early 1960s]’ (1970, p.92).^{xii} As was raised in the previous chapter and shall be furthered later in the present one, Pennebaker’s commitment to sync sound is more complicated than simply being a lazy reliance on a personally favoured aesthetic; rather, sync sound, as employed by Pennebaker, intimates a particular ideological positioning. His remarks likening sound to colour suggest a provocative, synaesthetic engagement with film’s formal properties and indicate their capability for ideological deployment:

Color balance is something that has come out of the super-elegance of the Hollywood film concept [. . .] I am not particularly offended by slight excess of blue light or a slight excess of red light. It depends on how you use it. Color is just like sound – it’s like musical sounds that a band makes [. . .] One has to understand what a film can do under certain conditions and use it the way you want it. (cited in Rosenthal, 1971, pp.195-96)

Thus, the specific textual strategies through which the ideological voice of his films is enunciated, then, bears proper analysis.

The process of editing *Dont Look Back* was especially formative in developing a particular set of principles that would characterise Pennebaker’s classical direct cinema. He de-emphasises attention towards individual moments in favour of a holistic approach that is mindful of drag on the film’s general kinetics. To that end, he is ‘careful about having anything run to its inevitable end [. . .] the film is what you’re interested in, not any one segment of it’ (Pennebaker & Neuwirth, 2007). For example, he reveals on *Dont Look Back*’s DVD commentary track that the thunderous ovation Dylan received at the conclusion of ‘The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll’ on 2 May at Leicester’s De Montford Hall was so overwhelming that the inclusion of the performance in its entirety in an early cut of the film ‘[took] away energy’ from the film

as a whole (*ibid.*). Therefore, he opted to cut away before the audience erupts in applause. This illustrates his attention towards the progression of the whole as opposed to the relative autonomy of its parts. He says:

Moments are cheap now. I'm looking for a longer line than moments. We all know moments are going to happen. You could stand out on the corner here and watch the soliciting on Broadway. You'll see marvellous moments. But you don't do it because you want something a little bit more substantial [. . .] You want something more coming out of it. Moments are the cop-out. (cited in Levin, 1971, p.244)

In his mature period, Pennebaker's ideological voice as a filmmaker explores the concept of authenticity through the privileging of mood over information. His formal development of what I term 'kinetic progressions' in this period allows for the cinematic foregrounding of his ideological voice in a way that differs from his classical direct cinema, as exemplified by *Dont Look Back*. With the concept of the documentary voice, Bill Nichols lays key critical groundwork for the way in which I want to understand how Pennebaker's voice is enacted through the 'unique interaction of all a film's codes' in its address of the spectator (Nichols [1983] 1988, p.50). Again, Nichols defines a documentary's voice as 'that which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organizing the materials it is presenting to us' (*ibid.*). In Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, the dialectical construction of his kinetic progressions enacts this voice and, furthermore, represents the deployment of a new model of direct cinema.

Kinetic Progressions at Work in *Sweet Toronto*

In this regard, the final sequence of *Sweet Toronto* is the most crucial for understanding the way in which it transforms the preceding narrative and reveals the film's ideological position. On this sequence, Pennebaker has said:

I didn't even care about Lennon. I didn't go to film Lennon. Lennon and Clapton and Yoko showed up, and did this ending, and the ending is fantastic, and I wasn't prepared for it. It's beyond anything that the first four guys do. The first four guys are going to be a movie, a perfectly transforming movie. What John does is extraordinary, him and Yoko. You can't believe that. In the end it really puts you through a change you didn't expect. So that's a great movie. That's really what movies should do. (cited in Levin, 1971, p.255)

This idea of a cinema that 'puts you through a change you didn't expect' is key to Pennebaker's filmmaking ideology and manifests itself in the distinct narrative structure

shared by the mid-to-late 1960s musical trilogy of *Dont Look Back*, *Monterey Pop*, and *Sweet Toronto*. All three films conclude with sequences that mark an evolutionary progression beyond what precedes them in ways that fulfil, challenge or complicate the narrative thusly presented. In addition, these final sequences are, themselves, modular in form; they are self-contained constructions with a transformative, progressive arc of their own in addition to the role they play as the conclusion to the overall narrative of the film. Thus, changes of state transpire on two levels.

Dont Look Back culminates in Dylan's landmark appearance at the Royal Albert Hall on 9 May at the conclusion of his 1965 tour of England, where his stage performance charts a neat evolutionary arc from the early folk-protest of 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' and 'Talkin' World War III Blues' to the poetically elusive, rhetorically complex and politically pessimistic 'It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)' and 'Gates of Eden,' which are representative of his then-current songwriting preoccupations. At the same time, the sequence also functions as a progression that fulfils a particular narrative arc that the film constructs for Dylan. Dylan does not fit the mould of the Drew hero, however; the crisis the clearly agitated Dylan faces backstage in the moments before taking the stage is not a win/lose scenario, but an existential one.^{xiii} He is tasked with facing his destiny, which manifests itself in the particular trial before him – playing in a hall loaded with a century of accumulated psychogeographical significance to an audience of Britain's cultural elite, including the Beatles. It is the culmination of the film's narrative momentum.

An awareness of the film's overarching ideological structure allows for a further reading of the following exchange in *Dont Look Back*'s final scene, as Dylan and his entourage pile into a waiting car and drive off into the night after his triumphant Royal Albert Hall concert:

Dylan:	God, I feel like I've been through some kind of . . . thing, man.
Pennebaker:	[laughs] You have . . .
Dylan:	No, but I mean there was, something was, something was special about it, that's all.

Supplemented with his commentary on the conclusion of *Sweet Toronto*, it becomes clearer why, beyond *Dont Look Back*'s own unity of effect, Pennebaker chose to end that film on this sentiment. Once again, Pennebaker uses Dylan as a mouthpiece for his own ideological perspective (although his presence is felt in a number of other ways

throughout the film, it is intriguing that Pennebaker himself verbally provokes further commentary from Dylan to clarify the transformative quality of his experience^{xiv}).^{xv}

In *Monterey Pop*, the same principle is at work. As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, in looking at the film as a whole, Pennebaker's tour of contemporary popular music builds towards a coda that is, in his words, 'structured beyond the scope of popular music' – Ravi Shankar's 17-minute dhun, which captivates its highly responsive audience (Pennebaker & Adler, 2002). The sequence itself traces the transformative interactivity of performer, audience and filmmaker and the relationship that coalesces between them during Shankar's performance. Through the affordances of new technologies (handheld camera and sync sound recorder) and old (sitar and tabla) and the esoteric, 'we all kind of come to some new place' (*ibid.*). In many ways, it both fulfils and challenges the preceding thematic and narrative development. It represents the ultimate endpoint and fulfilment of the utopian thematics threaded throughout the film, but also poses a strong formal counterpoint to what precedes it for the reasons Pennebaker cites above.

Thus, it should be clear how Pennebaker, with *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop*, developed an identifiable structural model in which the concluding sequence (or coda) is both a self-contained entity with its own transformative kinesis and also a narratological node that represents an evolutionary progression beyond the preceding narrative. It is an ideological construct that allows him to embed his pronounced ideas on the transformative capabilities of cinema into the very framework of his films. If *Dont Look Back*, *Monterey Pop* and *Sweet Toronto* all share this structure, what, then, differentiates *Sweet Toronto* from the previous two films and makes it worth examining as a singular object? Aesthetically, it follows *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop* in structure and voice. However, its treatment of this structure is slightly refined; this is one of the properties that distinguishes *Sweet Toronto* as an example of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema.

For a film that is stylistically dependent on acceleration and momentum, there is remarkably little forward progress made to the shape of Pennebaker's direct cinema. In that regard, unlike the two previous films, *Sweet Toronto* does not represent a significant working upon direct cinema. Instead, it employs a particular model of direct cinema that had been refined over time during Pennebaker's classical period. Thus, on the one hand, there is a degree of stasis to it, structurally-speaking. However, what makes *Sweet Toronto* a valuable case study is that, in it, this classical structural model is

deployed post-classically, with an amplification of certain stylistic and ideological trends and a rejection of others. This is where *Sweet Toronto* does propel direct cinema forward. While ‘the thrill of the new/now’ is key to the appeal, ideology and aesthetic of classical direct cinema, *Sweet Toronto*, as a mature-period work, demonstrates more complex possibilities for the form. Instead of the visceral thrill of the Vagabonds phantom ride sequence being an end in and of itself, it becomes a cog in a sweeping kinetic gesture that embodies an ideological play with notions of authenticity in direct cinema.

What Pennebaker presents in *Sweet Toronto* is a noticeably more dialectical deployment of direct cinema techniques than his two previous utilisations of this progressive structure. At the same time, however, it is not an overtly confrontational dialectic, as in a traditional Eisensteinian understanding of the term; the viewer is hardly assaulted with a ‘montage of attractions’ for the purpose of creating new confrontational relationships. *Sweet Toronto* still retains a degree of the seemingly seamless ‘organic tension’ that arises from the interactions of the film’s component parts which Barsam recognises in classical direct cinema’s production of meaning and catalyses into the multiple ‘interpretive possibilities’ of its reception (1986, p.140). It is subtle, and such critiques might not register with a less engaged spectator, but, nevertheless, *Sweet Toronto*’s rhetorical engagement with these particular ‘jargons of authenticity’ is propelled by the juxtaposition of forces in opposition. I want to draw attention to two sequences where this is enacted, which shall constitute the locus of this chapter’s textual analysis of the film. The first sequence is slight – just three minutes – and occurs in the film’s opening minutes. As members of the Vagabonds Motorcycle Club wait with the Ontario Provincial Police alongside a highway for the Plastic Ono Band’s motorcade to pass, Pennebaker seizes the opportunity to subtly and structurally frame the two fraternal orders dialectically. This brief scene foreshadows the more sustained dialectical framing at work later in the film, where the ‘jargons of authenticity’ in which discourses on direct cinema are embedded are the very concepts at play in the juxtaposition of the Vagabonds against John Lennon and Yoko Ono. I argue that Pennebaker’s treatment of sync sound – perhaps the defining aesthetic characteristic of direct cinema – in his dialectical presentation of the self-presentation of both parties advocates an alignment with the values embodied by Lennon and Ono’s display.

Pennebaker’s kinetic progressions privilege display and showcase attractions. *Sweet Toronto* opens with the juxtaposition of the machinery of both the law and the

outlaw in a series of close-ups. Before this, however, the very first image the spectator is presented with in the film is a close-up of Bo Diddley's right hand strumming his cherry red guitar, which spits out the famous 'Bo Diddley' riff onstage at Varsity Stadium. The close examination of instruments is a motif that is introduced immediately and persists throughout the film through close-ups of hands at work on guitars, buzzing amplifiers on stage, and even the human body, the 'soft machine,' through the repeated framing of Lennon's sweating, labouring face. The image quickly dissolves from Diddley, but the stadium audio persists. Over the fragmented, stammering asynchronous sounds of the guitarist and his band tuning up and the audience clapping in time, the film's handwritten title fades up over a tightly-framed pan up the front suspension of a motorcycle to a personalised decal (of what appears to be a frenzied smiley face icon on uppers and the name 'Green Grass' painted in bubbly swirls that would not look out of place on a nursery wall) on the windshield. With a cut, the camera, its eye on the patches and insignia on his black vest, staggers in closely to the back of a biker, who hangs, waiting, on the shoulder of a desolate Ontario highway with his Vagabond Motorcycle Club brethren, who slouch over their bikes in conversation, behind him. Although the Toronto Rock and Roll Revival pre-dates the Altamont Speedway Free Festival by three months, Pennebaker's film was released a year after *Gimme Shelter*. It is possible that he foregrounds the Vagabonds in *Sweet Toronto*'s opening minutes to play against the spectator's associations engendered by the presence of bikers at a music festival in the wake of the widely-reported (especially within countercultural media) events at Altamont.^{xvi}

Obvious differences aside, Pennebaker is more interested in drawing parallels between the Vagabonds and the second fraternal order profiled, the Ontario Provincial Police. He cuts from the Vagabonds to the windshield of a police motorcycle emblazoned with the force's crest as well as the abbreviation 'O.P.P.' and cycle number in thick black lettering before pulling back slightly and shifting to the right to reveal the regimented bodies of two troopers standing perfectly postured in smart, tailored uniforms, complete with helmet, sunglasses, and knee-high black boots, also by the highway. The two brotherhoods' spatial proximity only becomes clear two shots later; as two limousines carrying the Plastic Ono Band speed past the road-hungry Vagabonds straddling their bikes deep in the frame, a cast shadow in the foreground reveals that the troopers are positioned not ten feet away (see Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2. *Ideographic representation as political critique in Sweet Toronto.*

Through this deliberate juxtaposition of biker iconography, Pennebaker closes the distance between law and outlaw. Such an alignment is surely less than flattering towards the police, who, here, are being levelled against another group with a reputation for much-publicised violence and brutality toward assembled publics in the late 1960s.^{xvii} However, it would be unfair and misleading to read the sequence as a critique of the Ontario Provincial Police, specifically (or the Vagabonds, for that matter); rather, they are used synecdochically to critique police as a social and conceptual apparatus.^{xviii} Pennebaker here exploits what Michael Chanan identifies as the moving image's 'double function as index and icon' in documentary (2007, p.13). The documentary sign is simultaneously, as index, a marker of a specific relationship with the profilmic world (the rendering of its literal contents) and, as icon, a negotiation on a conceptual level with 'cultural conventions, social norms, aesthetic ambiguity, [and] symbolic connotations' circumscribed within its representation (*ibid.*, p.14). While what Pennebaker does is nothing on the level of the sustained, overtly political documentary of de Antonio from the same period, and perhaps could even be dismissed as merely a superficial display of parallel iconography, Pennebaker's ideographic style allows him to embed political ideas into a seemingly throwaway scene in a way that is suggestive and provocative – a faculty of direct cinema's potential as a political force that de Antonio fails to recognise or credit.^{xix}

Kick-starting his bike, a white-helmeted Vagabond leaps into the steeply-angled camera as it tracks forward to meet his movement. He never hits his seat. A quick cut to an abstracted flurry of motion transitions to a canted angle wide shot of the speeding highway and its conjoined barren countryside, and, suddenly, the spectator is hitching a phantom ride to Varsity Stadium with the Vagabonds. Over the course of twenty shots in the next two minutes, cameraman Barry Berghorsen's subjective camerawork, as

assembled by Pennebaker, approximates ‘the feeling of being there’ and, in fact, shares certain affinities with *Daybreak Express*. Viewed as an isolated, discrete sequence, it can be read as the apotheosis of direct cinema’s pursuit of present-ness and therefore open to the critical debates that the concept invites. However, when read against the film’s showcase sequence, the Plastic Ono Band’s confrontational performance piece, the Vagabonds’ phantom ride can be better understood as one component of a complex dialectic that rewires and redeploys the essential qualities of classical direct cinema to produce a political critique of notions of masculinity and authenticity.

The motorcycle is an apposite vehicle through which to profilmically investigate the construction of immediacy in direct cinema. Consider the way in which riding a motorcycle was constructed as an unmediated experience and guarantor of a countercultural authenticity by popular authors of the era. For example, in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert Pirsig likens experiencing the road in a car to watching television; it is a process that produces passive observers by reducing the world beyond the window frame to a simulacrum; however:

On a cycle the frame is gone. You’re completely in contact with it all. You’re *in* the scene, not just watching it anymore, and the sense of presence is overwhelming. That concrete whizzing by five inches below your foot is the real thing, the same stuff you walk on, it’s right there, so blurred you can’t focus on it, yet you can put your foot down and touch it anytime, and the whole thing the whole experience, is never removed from immediate consciousness. (Pirsig [1974] 1999, p.12; emphasis in original)

However, Pennebaker acknowledges that the documentary filmmaking process is more complex than for which any such metaphor can account. In the introduction, I worked towards dispelling the fallacy of technological determinism in which the discourse of direct cinema is entangled; Pennebaker, for example, defiantly argues that the films were ‘a product of the imagination, not a product of the equipment’ (1983, p.190). I want to further his line of thought regarding the relationship between the filmmaker’s imagination and his equipment, as it complicates the ontological debate at hand. ‘[B]ecause the equipment is used in a certain way, in league with that imagination,’ he argues, ‘you believe what the equipment produces [. . .] Now, actually, you’ve been cheated. You haven’t seen things [. . .] It might cause you to wonder at the process’ (*ibid.*, pp.195-96). What is particularly notable as Pennebaker lays bare the chimera of immediacy in documentary is the way in which he explicitly alienates the spectator. Because this notion of ‘immediacy’ is the product of a highly mediated process and the

spectator only witnesses a pre-determined reality, one is not, and cannot, actually be ‘there.’^{xx}

Returning to *Sweet Toronto*, the sequence continues with a virtuoso display of direct cinema camerawork (see Figure 4.3). Bergthorsen’s camera swings 180 degrees to the left, giving a quick glance of the view to the rear, then swings 360 degrees to the right for a sustained view of the same, in which the scope of the convoy becomes apparent. Perhaps defying audience expectations, the O.P.P. and the Vagabonds work together in the spirit of cooperation to escort the Plastic Ono Band’s motorcade from Toronto International Airport (now renamed Toronto Pearson International Airport) to Varsity Stadium. The sequence engenders a participative unity – both in its profilmic representations as well as in its relationship to the spectator – that the film disrupts and disavows in its final sequence (as discussed in the previous chapter’s analysis of the Plastic Ono Band’s performance). A total of 80 Vagabonds, equally divided between

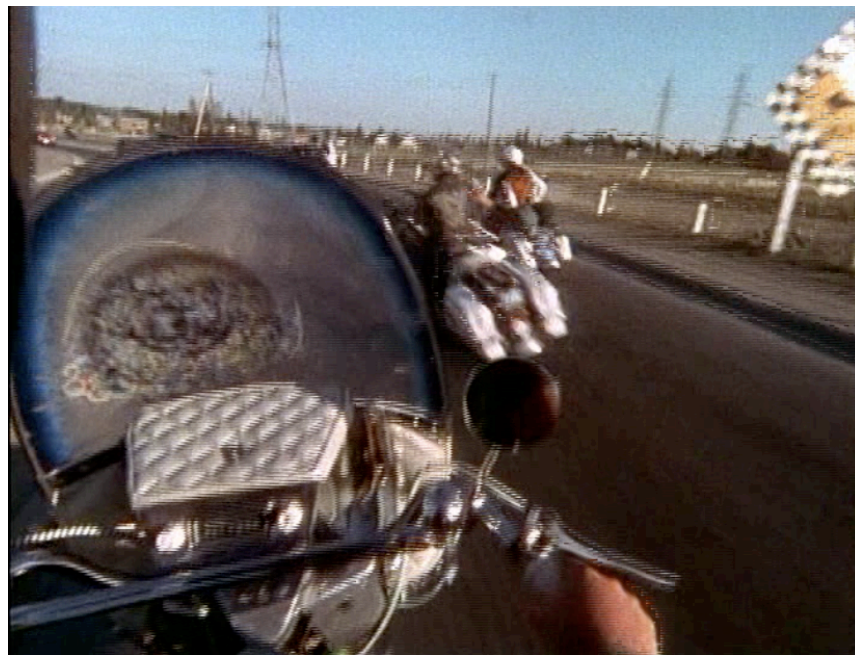


Figure 4.3. *A phantom ride with the Vagabonds. The scene’s asynchronous sound produces a specific ideological effect.*

the front and the rear, accompany the two-car motorcade, which carries festival headliners the Doors in the first limousine and the Ono Band in the second.^{xxi} We cut to what will function as a master shot for the sequence – a view peering over the shoulder of Bergthorsen’s green-helmeted host biker, Green Grass, as he squeezes the throttle and thunders past several other motorcycles and both limousines. The highway cuts through a flat, desolate landscape of late-summer grass punctuated by a coal preparation

plant, an occasional factory, and monolithic, recursive electricity pylons.

Geographically, the convoy (and the spectator's subjective gaze) moves from the periphery to the centre. Toronto International Airport is located in the city of Mississauga, fourteen miles northwest of downtown Toronto, where Varsity Stadium is situated, on the University of Toronto's campus.

The surroundings gradually become more densely urban as the convoy nears the centre of Toronto. Stretches of the road are now elevated and other routes run perpendicularly to ours through the land below. It winds to the left, then to the right, and merges with another highway. It is difficult not to recognise a strange beauty in this swarm of graceful two-wheeled locusts as they disregard gravity and glide past Bergthorsen's camera, one by one, in the glare of the setting sun. The sequence especially produces the feeling of triumphant defiance. Although the mood is euphoric, the words of Hunter S. Thompson, speaking of the Hells Angels, embody the action witnessed by the spectator and hint at a more sinister potentiality: 'To see a lone Angel screaming through traffic – defying all rules, limits and patterns – is to understand the motorcycle as an instrument of anarchy, a tool of defiance and even a weapon' ([1967] 1996, p.88).

Much of this feeling surely derives from Bergthorsen's acrobatic camerawork. As the skyscrapers of downtown Toronto appear in the distance, a fellow biker gestures angrily in Bergthorsen's direction; his intent is unclear. Perhaps he is being called out for recklessness. Indeed, Bergthorsen's highly mobile camera offers the spectator a multitude of perspectives, all of which he renders with virtuosic glee and seemingly little regard for his own safety. Over these two minutes, his camerawork foregrounds the sheer physicality of direct cinema filmmaking. For example, he twists his body to peer into the limousines' tinted windows; pans the camera for a view of the road behind him as his host and two other bikers cross into each other's lanes; hoists the camera over his driver's head for a dynamically-composed, canted angle bird's-eye view of his burly arm gripping his bike's handlebar in a show of dominance over the dangerously-close blacktop that hurtles by beneath them. At one point, as he shifts his point of view from over his driver's left shoulder to his right, he catches a sustained look at the duo's long cast shadow on the adjoining lane and dry, dusty shoulder. Attention is immediately drawn to the camera perched on Bergthorsen's right shoulder as well as the filming unit's bare-bones setup – Bergthorsen is clearly just a man riding on the back of a motorcycle at a high rate of speed with limited use of his hands. Such a visualisation

functions as an indexical marker that actualises his precarious physical position and the dangers risked for the shoot. His camerawork is pure cinematic excess; the instability of his position – and, by extension, that of the spectator, engendered by the subjective gaze of the phantom ride – provokes the spectator's investment through the tension it produces by drawing attention to the technique of a highly-skilled cameraman in a high-risk situation.

On the soundtrack, the staccato rhythms of Diddley's 'Bo Diddley' bite and throb, giving the spectator Pennebaker's version of whiplash rock and roll. More than a punchy number to soundtrack the scene or an auditory signifier of a concurrent event (as Pennebaker's editing implies, although there is no way of knowing that this is historically true – nor does it matter), it is a homing beacon that surely and steadily draws the players to their stage. Thus, Pennebaker creates a relationship between sound and image that works on several levels. Not only does the asynchronous sound serve an illustrative function that enhances the rhythmic drive and forward motion of the motorcycles/mobile camera and rapid editing, and preserve (for the sake of argument) an implied historically authentic simultaneity (or, at the very least, create a narrative simultaneity – that is, a temporal relationship – within the diegesis of the film), it also interacts with the image in a way that constructs diegetic spatiality and draws the spectator into the narrative. The sounds of the performance – a combination of live music and audience ambiance – exert a centripetal pull on the spectator through the subjective gaze of Pennebaker's phantom ride that prompts the spectator to witness, document and activate the spectacle that unfolds at the festival. Like a hungry sun, the spectacle draws the focus of the narrative to its locus of centration on the Varsity Stadium stage. Sound calls, and image responds.

Direct Cinema and the Politics of the Sound Hermeneutic

These particular properties of the sound/image relationship on display in this sequence make this an appropriate juncture to introduce Rick Altman's concept of the sound hermeneutic and draw upon a number of ideas explored in his 1980 article, 'Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism,' to develop an understanding of the political critique at work in Pennebaker's deployment of sync sound in the film. Altman conceives of the sound hermeneutic as a way of drawing attention to the alienating effects of sync sound in classical realist cinema that mask the mechanical and industrial

processes involved in its exhibition. He uses this to propose a new understanding of the sound/image relationship, which he likens to a ventriloquist and his dummy, in which image is subservient to sound and is, in fact, ‘actually created to disguise the [mechanical] source of the sound’ (Altman, 1980, p.67). Therefore, the sound hermeneutic ‘is a process [. . .] whereby the sound asks *where?* and the image responds *here!*’ (*ibid.*, p.74; emphasis in original). According to the ‘ideological ploy’ of sync sound, the spectator accepts that sound is produced by an on-screen, diegetic speaker (the visibility of the image is understood as a guarantor of this authenticity), thus answering the question posed by sound, when, in fact, it is produced by the cinema’s loudspeaker (*ibid.*). Altman argues that this rerouting of sound from apparatus to diegesis, through the masking of the mechanics of production (and reproduction), engenders a disconnect between modes of production and consumption. As a result, codified within the aesthetics of classical realist cinema, the ideological effect of sync sound is the reinforcement of capitalist notions of reality.

Although Altman conceived the sound hermeneutic to deconstruct certain ideological ploys of sync sound particular to classical realist cinema, I intend to adapt and deploy the critical framework of the hermeneutic in an analysis of the politics of sync sound in *Sweet Toronto*. I argue that, in documentary film, sync sound serves a more explicitly political purpose, and, furthermore, Pennebaker’s deployment of sync sound in his mature-period direct cinema is much more radical than accounted for in existing scholarship. My analysis here works towards refuting Thomas Waugh’s rather generalised assertion that direct cinema failed to fulfil the ‘untapped political potential of the new [direct sound] apparatus,’ which was left to the ‘grassroots political movements’ of the New Left of the late 1960s to appropriate and radicalise ([1990] 2011, p.88). Waugh is not alone in criticising direct cinema for what is being perceived as a limited use of the direct sound apparatus it pioneered, however. Leo Braudy, for example, in his analysis of the films of the radical film collective Newsreel, relates sync sound to ‘a desire for easy and unabrasive answers to distant problems’ and furthers that ‘the non-sync film becomes more radical than the sync because sync suggests easy solutions, the effortless marriage of word and image’ (1968, p.49). As the previous chapter’s study of the ideological deployment of sync sound in *Monterey Pop* established, Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema challenges the prevailing assumptions about the use of sync sound within this particular mode of documentary. I

now want to build upon that analysis by examining the political potentiality of Pennebaker's ideological deployment of sync sound in *Sweet Toronto*.

To do this, I want to first consider the implications of Pennebaker's refusal of sync sound during the Vagabonds' phantom ride. In the same way that Altman characterises the sound hermeneutic in terms of call and response, I have, above, described one of the properties of the sound/image relationship in this sequence as image responding to the centripetal call of sound. There are two distinct, but overlapping processes at work in this relationship: firstly, the locating of the source of the asynchronous sound (that is, Diddley's guitar); and, secondly, the disappearance or masking of the scene's synchronous soundtrack (the noise of the motorcycles and accompanying environmental ambience). Altman asks, 'What is it about sound that encourages its off-screen or disembodied use, and seems to call for rapid location of its source?' (1980, p.73). In this particular scene, it is a twofold tension: a narratological tension that seeks its resolution in the location of the sounds produced Diddley's guitar, and also an ideological tension that results from the replacement of scene's accompanying synchronous soundtrack. The asynchronous sound during the phantom ride with the Vagabonds can also be understood as producing effects of distancing and remove. Because the spectator is denied the profilmic sounds of the motorcycle escort – the grunts of the exhaust, whipping winds, passing traffic, and so on – that would further ground it in the moment, in the now, it more readily lends itself to readings that emphasise its more abstract, poetic qualities. The spectator is not privy to these materialist sounds which, for example, reveal the mechanical means of the motorcycle's kinesis; instead, as emphasised in the preceding scene analysis, these machines are transformed into graceful extensions of man that defy gravity as they soundlessly glide down the highway.

Again, this is a technique that Pennebaker experimented with in the earlier *Monterey Pop* in a brief scene to emphasise similar thematic concerns of isolation and remove. On *Monterey Pop*'s Criterion Collection DVD audio commentary track, Pennebaker justifies his creative choice to remove the synchronous audio track from a panned shot of a low-flying airplane passing directly over the festival grounds by claiming his intent for the shot was to suggest that 'we [the festivalgoers] had wiped out the whole of the world' (Pennebaker & Adler, 2002). Only the studio recording of Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)' is audible during this shot, although sync sound – plus the asynchronous music track – is

maintained in all of the shots around this one. This brief shot presages Pennebaker's larger-scale play with the ideological weight of sync sound in *Sweet Toronto*.

The above considers a sequence that foregrounds asynchronous sound; what, however, of sync sound in direct cinema? To Altman, the tension of the sound hermeneutic in classical realist cinema is a structuralist or materialist one that becomes an 'ideological ploy'; in direct cinema, the sound hermeneutic of sync sound is more overtly politically loaded. The issue here is one of labour and the visibility of that labour by displaying it – especially in musical performances, as Cohen (2012) points out and my analysis follows. Who, or what, is producing that sound? Throughout *Sweet Toronto*, Pennebaker's creative treatment of audio suggests an attempt to inscribe ideological weight behind one kind of profilmic representation as opposed to another. By furthering this idea, I will resolve the questions the preceding analysis raises through a discussion of the film's treatment of John Lennon, the body and the mechanics of labour. Lennon and Ono's performance, in which sync sound explicitly binds image and sound to emphasise labour and its product, contrasts sharply with Pennebaker's presentation of the Vagabonds, and suggests his own validation of or affinity with Lennon and Ono's presentation of the authentic self over the Vagabonds'.

As the convoy enters the home stretch, passing Queen's Park, a 49-acre urban park enclosed by university grounds (one biker shows off his impeccable balance for the camera by riding with his legs straight out ahead of him and comically picking his nose), the camera stabilises slightly and shot lengths increase, which calm the whiplash kinesis but protract the sequence's tension. This is amplified significantly by the asynchronous soundtrack's propulsive patted juba beat, courtesy of Bo Diddley's drummer, which now dominates the mix. After the convoy rounds a street corner and cruises past a police cordon along the exterior of Varsity Stadium, the camera cuts to a quick pan across the audience inside, whose attention is suddenly diverted away from the stage. A limousine, now escorted by six officers on foot who keep the swarming crowd at a distance, crawls into the stadium and slows to a stop. The pounding African rhythms are now overwhelming. The rear door opens. As Diddley unleashes a rapturous shriek, Lennon, clad in a wrinkled white suit, bounces out of the limousine and is quickly ushered into a tunnel backstage.

Performing Authenticity: The Machine Body and Sync Sound as Cinematic Attractions

With John Lennon, Pennebaker introduces a figure through which a critique of the Vagabonds' performativity and ideology of self-deception is enacted. As previously noted, in keeping with the structural and progressive properties of Pennebaker's two previous musical documentaries, the film's final sequence 'puts you through a change you didn't expect' by offering a self-contained scene that evolves the film beyond the preceding narrative. In *Sweet Toronto*, the kinetic progression from reel to reel is a dialectical one; in this sequence, Lennon's body becomes another of the film's prolific machine attractions on display. It is an attraction that is loaded with and enacts Pennebaker's ideology of authentic performance through the collision of the Plastic Ono Band's performance with that of the Vagabonds'. Here, I will explore how Pennebaker's ideological construct works.

One of the key issues embedded within the musical performance documentary, raised by Cohen, is promoting the visibility of the human body's physical labour involved in producing what Western thought considers a transcendental art or experience, and emphasising film's unique ability to explore the 'physical kinematic properties' of music (2012, pp.14-15).^{xxii} Kracauer, for example, somewhat surprisingly finds that 'the sight of the performer's body intrudes on the pure musical experience' (*ibid.*, p.12). Cohen counters Kracauer's claim by arguing that the 'erasure' of the signifier – and, thus, the 'abandon[ment of] the referent' – is an ideologically loaded problem (*ibid.*, p.20).^{xxiii} Therefore, I want to consider the machine body of Lennon and the way in which it functions as a kinematic attraction for Pennebaker's camera. Gunning once referred to Chaplin as '[t]he modern machine body of component parts and nervous energy' (2010, p.240). Similarly, Pennebaker transforms Lennon into the most complicated of all the machine attractions on display in *Sweet Toronto*. From the film's very first shot – the close-up of Bo Diddley's shiny red guitar – to the Vagabonds' triumphs of engineering and Diddley's jangly legs and the guitar cord that whips around and dances with them – Pennebaker's exhibitionist direct cinema privileges the display of machines and the mechanics of moving parts. Not only does the Plastic Ono Band's performance sequence continue this motif – the film's final shot, a close-up of Lennon's feedback-spitting guitar resting against his amp, parallels its first – but it completes the film's dialectical progression and reveals Pennebaker's ideological alignment with his subject.

The first shot of Lennon is an extreme close-up of his pale, anxiety-ridden face, and, as the performance progresses, his sickness and unease become more pronounced. He is frequently filmed from a low angle or in profile, where the backlighting – reminiscent of Otis Redding’s appearance in *Monterey Pop* – paints a dirty halo around his mounds of unkempt hair and beard, and the stadium lighting flares off of the golden frames of his glasses. By the set’s last number, ‘John, John,’ his eyes are vacant, his skin glistens with sweat and the drenched hair on his head and face has flattened. From this last shot, Pennebaker pans down for a close-up of Lennon’s hands working his Epiphone Casino (its pale wooden body stripped of paint) – flicking the pickup selector switch, twisting its dials and vibrating its strings to produce a cacophony of atonal noise.^{xxiv} The camera slowly zooms onto Lennon’s face during his last attempt at pulling Yoko off the stage as he looks at his wife, runs his hands through his wet hair and beard, looks to the ground, then briefly into the audience and back to his wife. He suddenly looks very vulnerable and unsure of himself. After the band vacates the stage, Pennebaker showcases the abandoned instruments as the guitars’ feedback continues to ring out into the night. He zooms onto Yoko’s microphone, a solitary monument against the blackness; he cuts to a close-up of Clapton’s guitar leaning against the amp, and then ambles over to Lennon’s on the other side of the stage, in the same position. By connecting Lennon’s body to the machines and moving parts studied by the camera through the sustained fragmentation of the close-up that transforms it into a cinematic attraction, Pennebaker truly presents Lennon’s body as the soft machine.

The dialectical kinesis of Pennebaker’s complex moving parts seeded throughout *Sweet Toronto* that work towards revealing the ideological voice of the filmmaker converge in the Plastic Ono Band’s performance. His deployment of sync sound in this sequence, which illustrates the sound hermeneutic in direct cinema, engages with direct cinema’s ‘jargons of authenticity’ and intimates his particular ideological alignment with the values embodied by Lennon and Ono’s self-presentation. My enquiry into the sonic space of *Sweet Toronto* can be framed as an aural corollary to Nichols’ concept of axiographics. Axiographics, according to Nichols, is:

[A]n attempt to explore the implantation of values in the configuration of space, in the constitution of a gaze, and in the relation of observer to observed [. . .] Axiographics asks us to examine how the documentary camera gaze takes on distinctive qualities and poses concrete issues of politics, ethics, and ideology in terms of space. (1991, p.78)

Likewise, Pennebaker's dialectical collision of non-synchronous and sync sound in *Sweet Toronto* attempts to do the same with the documentary's sound design. The Vagabonds and the Plastic Ono Band are clearly established as groups who represent opposing ideologies, and Pennebaker utilises the conventions of direct cinema to cinematically voice his own endorsement of the performative authenticity enacted by the Ono Band. The Vagabonds promote a certain self-presentation of masculinity and authenticity that the Ono Band undercuts and critiques. This is apparent through a number of obvious characteristics – including clothing, body type, gender and behaviour – but the most cinematically compelling opposition explored by *Sweet Toronto* is the distinction between each group's machines, their uses, and their on-screen representation. In one sense, Thompson's earlier description of the motorcycle as 'an instrument of anarchy, a tool of defiance and even a weapon' could also be

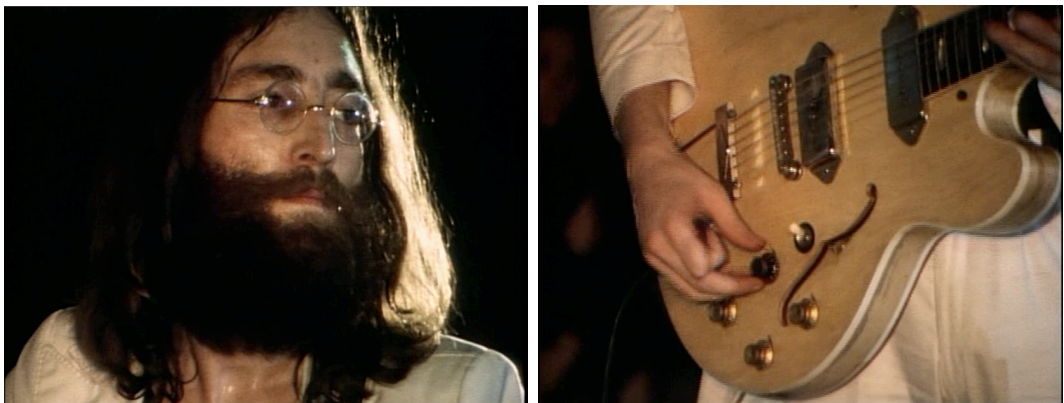


Figure 4.4. *Sync sound's display of labour. Pennebaker employs direct cinema's 'jargons of authenticity' to inscribe this sequence with a particular ideological weight.*

applied to the Ono Band's instruments. However, Pennebaker, through the specific strategies of direct cinema, imbues them with a value that differentiates them.

As previously discussed, in the film's opening minutes, the Vagabonds' motorcycles gracefully and soundlessly glide down the highway as a result of the removal of the scene's sync soundtrack and replacement with the asynchronous 'Bo Diddley.' This action masks the materialist sounds of the phantom ride produced by the motorcycle, its compatriots and the other traffic. Thus, it can be concluded that the labour of these machines is materialised through their sound. However, unlike with the presentation of the Vagabonds, Pennebaker's exhibitionist direct cinema privileges the labour of the Plastic Ono Band and the sync sound produced by their machines. Through the close-ups of Lennon's face, hands, guitar and amp, Pennebaker's

documentary display showcases the direct relationship between sound and image (see Figure 4.4). The spectator hears the sonic effect of Lennon pressing his guitar against his amp and corraling and letting loose ear-piercing feedback with the twist of a tone dial. Nichols argues that '[s]ynchronous sound and relatively long takes [. . .] anchor speech to images of observation that locate dialogue, and sound, in a specific moment and historical place. Each scene [. . .] displays a three-dimensional fullness and unity in which the observer's location is readily determined' (1991, p.39). This is the same effect produced by *Breaking It Up at the Museum*, in which sync sound grounds and unifies the montage of attractions produced by Tinguely's sculpture and gives it a materiality that works towards some kind of affective experience for the spectator. On the other hand, the Vagabonds motorcade sequence has an analogue in *Daybreak Express* and the transcendental quality produced by that film's asynchronous soundtrack.

The dialectical relationship between the Vagabonds' and the Plastic Ono Band's showcase sequences that results from the denial of sync sound in the former and its deployment in the latter goes beyond producing simply a spatial, diegetic or narratological effect for the spectator, as Nichols suggests – it also produces an ideological effect. For all their theatricality, Lennon and Ono seem to be striving for some kind of authentic experience – a performative authenticity. This is achieved not only through their subversive mockery of the rock performance (analysed in detail in the previous chapter) and its attendant critique of rock's 'hypermasculine theater' – as well as that of the Vagabonds – but through the way in which Lennon's performance, in particular, functions as an act of emancipation and outlet of defiance from a life (as a Beatle) in which he no longer believed (Plantinga, 1998, p.325). This is enacted through what Pennebaker calls the 'absolute conviction' of his and Ono's performance (cited in Kubernik, [2012] 2014, p.204). Read in this manner, their performance can be understood as an enactment of what Jean-Paul Sartre refers to as performing in good faith. In *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre vehemently attacks those who deny the will for freedom within themselves through their own self-deception, which he calls 'a dissimulation of man's complete liberty of commitment' ([1948] 2007, p.61). Both Lennon and Pennebaker adopt Sartre's position of judgement – Lennon, through his performance that strives for an authenticity as well as a personal liberty, which he also wills for his audience, and Pennebaker, through the dialectical construct of the film, which reveals his ideological positioning (or what Nichols refers to as the film's voice).

Sartre furthers: '[I]n the name of that will to freedom which is implied in freedom itself, I can form judgements upon those who seek to hide from themselves the wholly voluntary nature of their existence and its complete freedom' (*ibid.*, p.62). This is precisely the operation that the dialectical collision of these sequences enacts.

Pennebaker's Vagabonds are not the nonconformist casualties of Eisenhowerian malaise of *The Wild One* (László Benedek, 1953), the masculinity-destabilising homoerotic fetishists of *Scorpio Rising*, or the self-important hippie free spirits of *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), but agents of self-deception. After Altamont, bikers were no longer seen by the counterculture as anti-establishment, individualist heroes, but as fascist masochists (Wood, 2003, p.338). The scene's asynchronous sound creates not just a diegetic distance, but also an ideological distance that disavows the Vagabonds' ideology of self-deception.

Conversely, Pennebaker's deployment of sync sound in the Ono Band's sequence inscribes their performance with an authenticity rooted in the discourse of direct cinema. By engaging with the materialist connotations of sync sound, which ground it in a 'three-dimensional fullness' to produce an affective, experiential cinema, Pennebaker literally gives an ideological weight to the claims enacted by the Ono Band's performance, and, thus, exhibiting his approval of their own performative authenticity while disavowing the Vagabonds'. Pennebaker's operation is a self-aware appropriation and exploitation of the discourses of direct cinema – what Arthur refers to as 'jargons of authenticity' – to foreground his own voice in a way that indicates a break with previous direct cinema traditions. In *Sweet Toronto*, he plays with direct cinema's aestheticisation of authenticity; if direct cinema is commonly perceived to represent a certain 'fidelity to the Real,' then Pennebaker takes that perception and exploits it for his own ends (Arthur, 1993, p.131).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that *Sweet Toronto* indicates a break with previous direct cinema traditions through the dialectical structure of its kinetic progressions, which deviates from Mamber's classical model. Through *Sweet Toronto*, I have explored the aesthetic and ideological properties of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema, which exploit the established conventions and discourses of direct cinema – particularly the 'jargons of authenticity' surrounding sync sound – to push the form into

new, complex configurations that amplify the ideological voice of the filmmaker. In this way, Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema represents the fulfilment of the potentiality promised by early direct cinema.

Indeed, *Sweet Toronto*'s deployment of sync sound to indicate the ideological positioning of the film (and its maker) points towards a political potential for the form previously unrecognised by critics. To that end, the following chapter's case study, *One P.M.*, sees Pennebaker engage with not only more overtly political subject matter, but with a heightened dialectical aesthetic that produces a political critique of his collaborator, Jean-Luc Godard. Much like it does to direct cinema, it pushes many of this chapter's areas of enquiry into new directions; in particular, the fetishisation of sync sound reaches its logical endpoint (which the sound hermeneutic is once again critical to conceptualising), the film's amplified kinetic progressions privilege conceptual space over diegetic space, and the film's complicated ethical space is mapped. As Pennebaker continues to explore the outer reaches of the form, it is pertinent to ask: at what point is it no longer direct cinema?

ⁱ I am speaking here of a cinematic modernism. The modernism of the films of the Maysles brothers, as has been argued in Davidson (1981), Vogels (2011) and Rogers (2015), is more akin to a literary modernism. Frederick Wiseman, on the other hand, addresses the condition of modernity as a social consequence of industrialisation and capitalism; for more on this, see, for example, Armstrong ([1984] 1988), Grant (1992), and Saunders (2007).

ⁱⁱ *Rolling Stone* was certainly not being facetious – only Bob Dylan's electric debut at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival was ranked as more significant. 'The end of the Beatles' also fed into the grand 'death of the sixties' narrative that the magazine was pushing at the end of the decade – a trend that was reaching a fever pitch with the Manson murders and Altamont. Pocket Books published a collection of these articles in *The Age of Paranoia: How the Sixties Ended* (1972).

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, the testimony of Ringo Starr in Hopper (2014) as well as statements by journalist Ritchie Yorke (2009), a confidant of Lennon's who was present in the Apple Corps offices when the musician received the invitation to Toronto from Brower.

^{iv} Still, as discussed in the previous chapter, while onstage and immediately afterwards, Lennon seemed keenly aware of the apathy and bewilderment – if not outright animosity – with which the band's performance was greeted by the audience. However, as reported by Hopper in 2014, Lennon's public comments on the festival shortly afterwards offered a revised evaluation: "The buzz was incredible," he told a British music magazine shortly after returning to the U.K. "I never felt so good in all my life. Everybody was with us and leaping up and down doing the peace sign" (p.A3). While statements like these almost certainly attempted to spin the perception of his performance in his favour to avoid humiliation in its aftermath, the Toronto Rock and Roll Revival also clearly functioned as a cathartic, transformative experience for Lennon, regardless of its reception; associating it with those feelings of purging release, it makes sense that his memory of the event would take on a feeling of triumph. The experience, then, was akin to what Dylan calls 'some kind of . . . thing' at the conclusion of *Dont Look Back* – a proclamation of demarcation, marking a change-of-state.

^v For an account of Lennon's mad scramble to assemble a band at the last minute and reach Toronto on time, see Yorke (2009).

^{vi} Christgau (1970) provides a highly detailed account of the pre-production and filming of *Sweet Toronto* in an article that is part company profile and part embedded New Journalism. It gives fascinating insight into the practicalities and mechanics of operating an independent filmmaking company, with a heavy emphasis on the business, accounting and legal proceedings.

^{vii} For more on the intersection of documentary and avant-garde film, see Macdonald, 2015, pp.1-25.

^{viii} For more on the Brussels film loops, see Rabinovitz, 2003, pp.100-02.

^{ix} Pennebaker laments the neglect the film has endured in the ensuing decades. Indeed, *Daybreak Express* is overlooked in Gartenberg (2014), a historical survey of the New York city symphony film. 'I've never gone into it very much, or nobody's asked me very much about it, because it's just a kid's film,' he expressed to the author in conversation. 'It seems like that, and it's not. By then, I was not a kid anymore' (Appendix). Pennebaker exposes a tension within the film; as he perceives it, what he sees as a mature work is dismissed by precisely what makes it so accomplished – the childlike sense of discovery that infuses each disorienting play with frame rates and every dizzying oscillation of the camera – and signifies a triumphant embrace of the modern.

^x For Beattie's argument for Pennebaker fitting Mekas' definition of 'personal cinema,' see Beattie, 2011, p.90.

^{xi} Pennebaker has acknowledged that his experimental approach in *Daybreak Express* was unaffiliated with the New American Cinema Group: 'There was a group in New York then, making sort of abstract films, and it was kind of a New York filmmaking group [the Film-Makers' Cooperative], and this was not like that' (Appendix).

^{xii} While both revel in the possibilities of a liberated, spontaneous cinema, Pennebaker's direct cinema practice is distinct from Jonas Mekas', particularly the practice exemplified by Mekas' diary films, whose collaged assembly of multimodal textual systems produces an 'irreducibly heteroglossaic' finished work (James, 1992, p.165).

^{xiii} See Mamber, 1974, pp.115-31 for a detailed analysis of the Drew hero and the crisis structure, the two structural motifs most-associated with the early direct cinema of Robert Drew and his associates.

^{xiv} This is confirmed by the official transcript of the film, published as a book in *Bob Dylan: Dont Look Back* ([1968] 2006).

^{xv} See Hall (1998) and Rothman, 1997, chapter six, who argue that Pennebaker enacts his own ideological critique of old media through Dylan's very direct attack of news journalists in *Dont Look Back*.

^{xvi} A survey of materials held in the Maysles Brothers' archives at Columbia University's Butler Library reveals that the paranoid, 'end of the 1960s' narrative was attached to Altamont immediately by the underground press, who saw the Angels as an emblem of fascist terror. The front page of the 12-19 December 1969 *Berkeley Tribe* dramatically reads: 'Stones Concert Ends It: America Now Up for Grabs' (p.1). The mood instilled by the Angels at the concert is described as '[o]ne communal terror of fascist repression' (Csicsery, 1969, p.5). 'Altamont was a lesson in micro-society with no holds barred,' Csicsery laments. 'Our one-day micro-society was bound to the death-throes of capitalist greed' (*ibid.*, p.1). He furthers: '[W]e've blamed pigs for less while holding the myth of right-wing Anarchist sacred. Marlon Brando, freewheelin' agent of chaos, another of Saturday's toppled camp heroes [. . .] America wallows in the hope that someone, somewhere, can set it straight. Clearly nobody is in control. Not the Angels, not the people' (*ibid.*, p.5).

^{xvii} Hunter S. Thompson also draws parallels between the police and an outlaw biker gang with whom he was intimately familiar – the Hells' Angels. See Thompson, [1967] 1996, pp.106, 218, 237, 255.

^{xviii} In 1967, Pennebaker's partner at Leacock Pennebaker Inc., Ricky Leacock (who served as one of six cameramen on *Sweet Toronto*), produced *Chiefs* (1968), an 18-minute short about a police chief convention in Waikiki Beach that represents, in Leacock's words, 'my view of where America is at in 1967' (Naficy, 1982, p.235). Thomas Waugh, however, accuses Leacock of being 'preoccupied with [. . .] easy targets' instead of engaging in more significant political endeavours ([1977] 2011, p.96).

^{xix} For more on de Antonio's criticism of direct cinema, see Rosenthal, 1978, pp.8-9, Waugh, [1977] 2011, p.111, and Zheutlin, [1981] 1988, p.235.

^{xx} Jane Gaines (1999) pushes this idea considerably further in her analysis of the politics of affect in radical leftist documentary. Through her concept of political mimesis, she interrogates the relationship between on-screen bodies engaged in 'sensuous struggle' and its immediate response in the bodies of its spectators. Gaines considers such films as sensual documentaries that intend to provoke their spectators into some kind of action on a visceral level through their immediacy, or what she calls 'the production of affect,' particularly through the deployment of a realist aesthetic (p.92). See also Gaines, 2007.

^{xxi} The mobile camera briefly catches a glimpse of Ray Manzarek, keyboardist for the Doors, turning to meet its gaze out of the black car's rear window as Berghorsen breezes through the stopped traffic outside the entrance to Varsity Stadium. The Doors are not otherwise seen nor mentioned in the film.

The volatile – and ultimately futile – attempts by Leacock Pennebaker Inc.’s executive vice-president Peter Hansen to secure the Doors’ release from manager Bill Siddons is recounted by Christgau (1970). The Doors were integral to Pennebaker’s plan of selling the film to potential investors; however, when Lennon’s appearance was confirmed the day before the festival, these efforts were shifted to obtaining Lennon’s release.

^{xxii} See Panse (2015), who claims that ‘the documentary protagonist needs to claim the right *not* to be seen,’ for an opposing view (p.172; emphasis in original).

^{xxiii} Cohen is concerned with the politics of selection involved in fracturing the continuity of stage performances – particularly the performances of black artists – with cutaways that render the performing body invisible. He specifically speaks of a sequence in *Jazz on a Summer’s Day* in which Thelonious Monk’s performance of ‘Blue Monk’ is intercut with both footage of the 1958 America’s Cup yacht race and its radio play-by-play. This disconnect relegates jazz to ‘music under [. . .] white people’s amusements’ (2012, p.32).

^{xxiv} In an interesting bit of synchronicity, Lennon describes himself as ‘a cinéma-vérité guitarist-musician’ (Wenner, 2000, p.22). The analogy here is that while his raw and admittedly ‘poor’ technical ability lacks the proficiency of an Eric Clapton or B.B. King, his unique approach to the instrument can ‘make [it] speak,’ similar to what makes direct cinema stand apart from ‘technically perfect film’ (*ibid.*). Of course, Lennon is mistaken in inferring that direct cinema cinematographers, despite any technical rawness, are poor technicians, but his point still stands.

Chapter 5

The Wrecking Corporation of America: Direct Cinema Under Construction in *One P.M.*

Introduction

‘He kept saying we have to hurry and get to California because this is where it is going to begin. I asked, what was going to begin? “The revolution you fool,” he told me. I said I didn’t think so, but we sort of went along with it’ (Pennebaker cited in Phillips, 1998).

As D.A. Pennebaker recounts it, the pairing of Jean-Luc Godard and himself, the cynical sidekick, as watchmen on the walls of revolution has a certain quirky appeal, but their collaboration in the waning months of 1968 signified much more than a cultural curiosity. ‘It kind of caught an urgency that was going on in this country in terms of filmmaking,’ Pennebaker would reflect, decades later (cited in Adams, 2011). With *One P.M.*, Jean-Luc Godard and D.A. Pennebaker develop a documentary practice to respond to a society in crisis in the late 1960s; in so doing, they expose a crisis of form in prevailing modes of documentary representation, which, most immediately, implicated Pennebaker’s own observational practice as well as that of his fellow practitioners of direct cinema.

One P.M. is a documentary project initiated by Godard after he foresaw a 1968 American revolution and completed by Pennebaker when Godard abandoned it after no revolution came to pass. *One P.M.*’s self-reflexive – and self-destructive – structure interlaces sequences of political urgency (starring Tom Hayden, Eldridge Cleaver and Jefferson Airplane, among others) with fictionalised re/deconstructions that challenge and complicate the terms of the film’s representation and build to a destructive climax. Throughout the film, artificiality is foregrounded and the (re)presentation of reality is made unnatural. This chapter will consider the film’s political address, and pay particular attention to the cynical voice of Pennebaker, which particularly manifests itself in the film’s second, more implicit – and not frequently acknowledged – function as a critique of Godard’s agenda and methods. Pennebaker’s cynical criticism of Godard’s politics and dissent from his methodology is a significant political gesture that demonstrates the political potential of direct cinema. The disharmonious voices of Pennebaker and Godard produce a dissonance that complicate both form and message;

it speaks to the political circumstances of America in 1968 with a low fidelity that auto-critiques direct cinema and takes Pennebaker's mature-period interventions to their limits. Pennebaker's kinetic progressions take on a new form; his dialectical formal approach evolves from *Sweet Toronto* into one that showcases and privileges unified conceptual space over unified diegetic space.

This chapter will first outline the history of *One P.M.* in Godard's *One A.M.* project and explore their divergent methodologies. In its expression of an anxiety of development and the interrelationship between the materiality of film and the forces that structure everyday life, I conceptualise Pennebaker's structural approach to *One P.M.* as a form of cognitive mapping – specifically, as a *dérive* that rewrites Godard's cinematic topography and creates a new conceptual and utopic space of political exchange. *One P.M.* is an updating of the city symphony film that points to the urban crises that will afflict the US city in the 1970s. At the same time, Pennebaker enacts a critique of Godard and Godard enacts a critique of direct cinema, which I explore through an examination of the film's political address and a discussion of Pennebaker's cynical reframing of Godard. Investigating the film's terms of representation inevitably leads to a discussion of its ethical space and the documentary as a site of alienated labour; I ask if Pennebaker's critique of Godard is an ethical one, but also shed light on Pennebaker's equally problematic ethical relationship with his social actors. Lastly, I consider *One P.M.*'s critique of direct cinema's fetishisation of sync sound and the way in which the film self-reflexively deconstructs direct cinema's most privileged guarantor of authenticity.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about direct cinema as a whole in an analysis of *One P.M.* because the circumstances of its existence are so atypical and are not indicative of overall trends in direct cinema. As a forgotten oddity, it does not enjoy the same status as perhaps the most high-profile post-classical direct cinema film, *Grey Gardens*. Nevertheless, as atypical as *One P.M.* is within the direct cinema 'canon,' it indeed points towards aesthetic and ideological trends that developed within documentary film and avant-garde cinema over the next fifteen years. For example, John Lennon, who made a number of experimental films with Yoko Ono during this period, was particularly influenced by it, and quite blatantly drew upon its two closing sequences when given the chance (Appendix).ⁱ Its self-reflexive brand of direct cinema would not be popularised until five years later with the release of *Grey Gardens*, its diaristic hybridity of actuality and fiction anticipates *Sherman's March* (Ross McElwee,

1986), and it even shares more in common with *Underground* than de Antonio would care to admit. What it does point to, however, is the experimentation inherent in Pennebaker's practice in this period – a quality that would diminish considerably after 1970 and the bankruptcy of Leacock Pennebaker, but was in full bloom at the time with the Norman Mailer film cycle (culminating in *Maidstone*) and the highly personal and experimental *Eclipse* – and the overall trajectory of his mature direct cinema.

***One P.M.* as Parallel Text**

One P.M. was the eventual result of Leacock Pennebaker's contractual obligation to the Public Broadcast Laboratory (PBL). In a deal brokered by chairman of the board David McMullin and PBL executive director Av Westin, Leacock Pennebaker was to produce a film directed by Godard in America for the PBL to air on National Education Television (NET). The PBL was an early experiment in national public broadcasting in America subsidised by the Ford Foundation. In November 1967, the laboratory launched a weekly contemporary public affairs, news and arts magazine series, *PBL*, that was notable for providing 'a platform for dissenting political views and controversial artistic projects' (Ponce de Leon, 2015, p.97).ⁱⁱ Its seeming disregard for the FCC's Fairness Doctrine, evident in its eschewal of balance and equal time in favour of arguing specific polemics, made it highly scrutinised and widely discussed in critical circles. Many network affiliates, however, elected not to carry programmes dedicated to what they considered sensitive topics, such as race relations and the Vietnam War (Gent, 1967a, p.95) (see Figure 5.1).ⁱⁱⁱ *PBL*'s reputation of being 'costly and controversial,' of which it never rid itself, had beleaguered the series from the beginning (Gould, 1969, p.1). The PBL was also marred by an internal ideological rift between the laboratory's staff, led by Westin, who favoured topical public affairs programming, and its editorial board, who saw their remit as ensuring 'adequate representation of purely cultural undertakings' (Anonymous, 1968b, p.95). What decisively damned the series, however, was the disinterest with which it was greeted by the general public, even after significant retooling for the second season, which included commissioning programmes from marketable commercial filmmaking talent like Arthur Barron and Jean-Luc Godard (Carroll, 1968, p.34).^{iv} The Ford Foundation did not renew the PBL beyond its initial two-year, \$10 million-dollar grant and it was disbanded; the weekly

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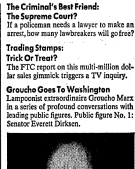
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Figure 5.1. Advertisement for PBL from the 4 November 1967 edition of the New York Times. Like the ad for ABC Stage '66, the copy (if not necessarily the presentation, as in Stage '66's case) emphasises the series' distinction and significance.

PBL series was replaced, perhaps predictably, with a diluted, inoffensive new format that reflected the 'conservative, middle-of-the-road and liberal opinion from all parts of the country' (Gould, 1969b, p.91). The Corporation for Public Broadcasting-backed Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) replaced NET in October 1970, but Leacock Pennebaker was still expected to deliver on its contract.

Godard, having dealt the company the US distribution rights to *La Chinoise* in late 1967, was already in business with Leacock Pennebaker. This relationship was extended when McMullin arranged a month-long cross-country promotional tour for Godard, who was hoping to finance an ambitious new project, *Communications* (one of many from 1968 that would not come to be), with a quick infusion of cash, the following spring.^v The lecture tour, which would have seen Godard visit nineteen

universities across North America, ‘was somewhat of a disaster’ and ended abruptly after seven engagements (Pennebaker, 1983, p.616).^{vi} Although his films had not been financially successful in the US, Godard was a figure whose distinguished stature, particularly among young filmmakers and intellectuals on university campuses, ensured that his appearances were happening events.^{vii} In addition, *La Chinoise* outperformed all expectations and became the first Godard film to turn a profit in the US (*ibid.*, p.627). Godard-mania did not go unnoticed at the PBL, which Pennebaker has accused of short-sightedly trying to capitalise on Godard while his ‘star was very high’:

[Hiring Godard] was a typical kind of educational television decision, you know, which is almost always for fashion – momentary fashion – and has very short vision [. . .] I don’t think they had any idea what he was going to do and didn’t even want to know, they just wanted to use his magic name. And so they sort of misguidedly put up the funding for it. (*ibid.*, pp.627-28)

After shooting *One Plus One* (1968) in London in June and *Un film comme les autres* (1968) in Paris (in the aftermath of the May events) in July and August, he returned to America in October 1968 to begin his project for the PBL, to be titled *One A.M.*, or *One American Movie*, with Pennebaker and Ricky Leacock serving as his cameramen.^{viii} The project was scheduled for PBL’s second season and was announced in the trade publications *Broadcasting* (Anonymous, 1968d, p.55) and *Variety* (Anonymous, 1968c, p.34) in September.

One A.M. was to be an attempt to examine American society on the verge of what Godard believed to be an impending political revolution in the United States. Pennebaker considered the project ‘a furthering of the concept of a documentary’ (cited in Rabin, 1998). In fact, Godard planned to go beyond mere documentation – he had, after all, ‘reproached *Primary* as a work that was incapable of explaining the US political process’ (Beattie, 2011, p.69) – and devised a self-reflexive structure that juxtaposed documentary sequences with fictionalised re-enactments to ‘draw attention to the artificial and constructed nature of representation as well as the ability of representation to rewrite “real-life” experiences’ (*ibid.*, p.71). However, when the anticipated revolution never came to pass, Godard reconsidered the project. ‘Towards the end, when he realized that he misjudged everything, he lost interest in the film and abandoned it,’ Pennebaker revealed (cited in Phillips, 1998).

Godard had demonstrated scepticism of the project almost as soon as production wrapped. In an interview with Martha Merrill in the winter of 1968, Godard admits, ‘It’s associated with people from Channel 13 [at the time, WNDT], who won’t show it

because they are like *The New York Times*' (cited in Merrill, 1972). Godard was also developing new projects and collaborations at a dizzying pace during this period and was extremely overworked. In fact, he had flown to Quebec in mid-November in the midst of *One A.M.*'s already whirlwind cross-country production for exploratory meetings with a local television in Abitibi, northern Quebec, where he was given *carte blanche* to develop a form of revolutionary television as a public outlet for a community of striking miners (de Baecque, 2010, p.440). Nothing came of the proposal. There was also a torrent of new projects with Jean-Pierre Gorin and the Dziga Vertov Group. After viewing rushes with Gorin at the Leacock Pennebaker offices in March 1970, Godard realised that the time and effort required to make sense of the disorganised raw footage was not worth the investment for a film that was no longer politically relevant. 'I thought we could do two or three days' editing and finish it, but not at all. It is two years old and completely of a different period' (cited in Mauldin, 2008, p.234). \$35,000 – none of it Godard's money – had been spent on the abandoned film (de Baecque, 2010, p.440).

Because Leacock Pennebaker was contractually bound to PBS with or without Godard – not to mention out approximately \$15,000 of the company's money on the project – Pennebaker completed his own version of the film, which he re-titled *One P.M.*, or *One Parallel Movie* (Godard contemptuously – or humorously – referred to it as *One Pennebaker Movie*) (Levin, 1971, p.247).^{ix} 'It provides a sense of the strange mood in America at the time. It was very peculiar because it wasn't just Jean-Luc, there were numbers of people who did think something was going to erupt in America. Nixon was right to be paranoid,' Pennebaker later reflected (cited in Phillips, 1998).^x *One P.M.* is not the film Godard set out to make, but instead 'parallels and informs *One A.M.*' (Beattie, 2011, p.71).^{xi}

One P.M. opens with one of the film's recurring visual motifs – the countdown clock of universal film leader. This is followed by a written introduction by Pennebaker that clarifies the film's purpose and relationship to Godard's *One A.M.* The blare of a foghorn signals the film's first scene – two African American schoolgirls giggle and skip through an industrial shipyard, pass a tape recorder back and forth and sing along to the repeating chorus of 'Beautiful is black' that ekes out of its speaker. From a bleak industrial railway, the film cuts to an upstate New York woodland where actor Rip Torn, wearing a Native American buckskin and headdress, carries a tape recorder and mimics a speech, line by line, that it plays by Tom Hayden. He jumps from bucolic

countryside to gritty metropolis and continues his performative interpretation of Hayden's words while ascending and descending a Manhattan skyscraper under construction. From there, the film visits Hayden himself, who holds court in the backyard of his suburban Berkeley home and lectures to Godard and their entourages on the crucial role 'the man in the office and the man in the factory,' bowing to the pressure applied by students and 'the blacks,' will play in a new American revolution. Hayden's speech is followed by a similar speech by Eldridge Cleaver, who discusses the government's suppression of black revolutionaries, across the bay in Oakland, a lengthy street mass lead by LeRoi Jones in Newark, and a scene of Godard coaching Torn on his delivery of Hayden's speech in Pennebaker's workshop.

The film's second reel is composed of an expansive suite of recursive scenes that, once again, is prefaced with countdown leader and opens with Godard asking questions of attorney Carol Bellamy as she walks through New York's Financial District. It then returns to Hayden, Torn, and Cleaver (both Hayden and Cleaver, crucially, question Godard's methods of representation), and then Bellamy again, who is also given the spotlight for a speech of her own, which is promptly mocked by Torn, dressed as a Confederate officer, in front of a classroom of African-American schoolchildren. After this provocative sequence, Midtown Manhattan is woken up by an early morning rooftop performance of the Jefferson Airplane. After it is broken up by the police and arrests are made, a high school marching band parades by. In striking time-lapse photography, the Schuyler Hotel, site of the Airplane's rooftop concert, is demolished.

Mapping a Crisis: *One A.M.* and *One P.M.*'s Divergent Cartographic Practices

The intended structure of *One A.M.* was much more architecturally rigid and vertically oriented in a top-down manner than *One P.M.*'s looser, more chaotic collection of scenes. Godard planned *One A.M.* to feature ten scenes, in binary modes of representation: five blocks of documentary sequences, which provide the film's foundation, would be interlaced with five fictionalised re-enactments of those scenes, challenging the originals' representational ontology. Its structural design is somewhat familiar; the juxtaposition of discrete sequences recalls the recently completed *One Plus One*, but taken to a deconstructive conclusion.

For any given scene, according to Pennebaker, ‘we wouldn’t know what was going to happen, and we weren’t supposed to know. We were just supposed to film it as we saw it, like a newsreel’; he and Leacock were instructed to shoot their 400-foot rolls of film – roughly ten minutes of coverage – continuously and without in-camera editing (cited in Rabin, 1998). Reinforcing the film’s profilmic interrogation, *One A.M.*’s very form was to critique the systemic oppression of American capitalist development by setting said investigation in motion by first spotlighting a person in a position of power, and thereafter showcasing ‘the people who are trying to struggle against it’ (cited in Merrill, 1972). The first documentary sequence was to be an interview with Carol Bellamy, a young attorney at one of the country’s most prestigious law firms, Cravath, Swaine & Moore. She was chosen by Godard because she appeared to be ‘someone who symbolized America, that is money and imperialism, Wall Street, and especially a woman rather than a man because that’s in accordance with the American myth’ (*ibid.*). An interview with Tom Hayden of Students for a Democratic Society, a musical performance by Jefferson Airplane (‘musicians or beatniks who try to escape, who at least have a defense reaction’ against the system), and an interview with Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panther Party (‘blacks who have the most advanced position’) were to follow (*ibid.*). The final sequence was to feature an African American girl from Brooklyn’s Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district skipping through the streets of Harlem (positioned at the bottom ‘because [she] is the most oppressed’) (*ibid.*).

The fictionalised re-enactments, in which actors recited from transcripts of each social actor’s monologue featured in the documentary sequences, were to rework and re-contextualise this actuality footage in order to ‘draw attention to the artificial and constructed nature of representation as well as the ability of representation to reframe and rewrite “real-life” experiences’ (Beattie, 2011, p.71). For example, a white actress, Paula Matter, was to recite Cleaver’s monologue to anonymous pedestrians walking down New York’s 5th Avenue. In one of the re-enactments that survived Pennebaker’s cut, actor Rip Torn, dressed as a Confederate officer, satirises Carol Bellamy’s monologue in front of a class of African American middle school children in the largely black Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district, which, at the time, was embroiled in a volatile dispute between the community-controlled school board and the United Federation of Teachers labour union. According to Antoine de Baecque, interviews with a member of IBM’s board of directors and a social worker from a Chicago slum were also filmed, although it is unclear how – or if – they fit into this structure (2010, p.438).

It is likely that these were exploratory attempts at one of the film's finished component sequences (i.e., the interview with the IBM executive was abandoned in favour of one with Carol Bellamy).

Using what is known about *One A.M.*, a schematic representation of the film's intended structure reveals how its top-down organisation would have looked, as well as just how much of the material is included in *One P.M.*, albeit in repurposed form:

Actuality Footage	Fictional Re-Enactment
Carol Bellamy discusses big business' potential for activism/social progress in her Manhattan office	Rip Torn recites Bellamy's monologue dressed as Confederate officer to Ocean Hill-Brownsville classroom to provoke discussion of media representation of militancy
Tom Hayden delivers speech on pervasiveness of US military-industrial complex in everyday life to Godard and their entourages in the garden of his suburban home	Rip Torn replays and mimics Hayden's tape recorded monologue ascending skyscraper and in woods wearing Native American headdress
Jefferson Airplane performs 'The House at Pooneil Corners' atop the Schuyler Hotel	Unknown
Eldridge Cleaver and the Black Panthers discuss imperialistic practices of the ruling class in the US	Paula Matter recites Cleaver's monologue on 5 th Ave*
African American schoolgirls from Ocean Hill-Brownsville in street scenes in Harlem	Unknown
* not included in <i>One P.M.</i>	

As this schema indicates, the effect of Godard's intended structure is 'image and word interact[ing] in a dialectic that forces the viewer to consider the relationship of word and image and the effects of representation' (Beattie, 2011, p.71).

Although Pennebaker first attempted to edit the film according to Godard's dictate, he found its lack of spontaneity problematic and describes the resulting structural effect as 'obsessive' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.623). He then 'began to edit it in any way that it seemed to me, I guess interestingly [*sic*],' which suggests a much less disciplined methodology than Godard's (*ibid.*). This second attempt was informed by a more familiar direct cinema approach that emphasised an immersive subjectivity in the profilmic events, but augmented with a kind of free cognitive mapping that is simultaneously both a unifying and alienating force. If *One A.M.* was intended to be a purposeful march from point A to point B through regimented blocks of scenes

reminiscent of the urban grid, then *One P.M.* is a *dérive* that rewrites Godard's cinematic topography according to responses to particular experiences, encounters and atmospheres along the filmmaking journey. Its movements create a new spatiality and a new way to read the profilmic topography.

Michael Chanan espouses the idea of the filmmaker as mapmaker; he calls filmmaking 'a form of symbolic spatial production which creates [. . .] a new lived relationship with the space inhabited by the subject' (2007, p.79). Beyond reconstituting and reconstructing lived space simply on a formal level, filmmaking becomes a 'form of cognitive mapping' in which 'a vision of the space of everyday life, the social forces binding it together and pulling it apart' is charted (*ibid.*, p.84). *One A.M.* and *One P.M.* represent different spatial practices of the same place. The idea of *One A.M.* can be read as an attempt at the rational, spatial organisation of a complex, systemic crisis in late-capitalist American society that, in its representational march 'back to zero,' also proposed a critique of documentary film's ontological authenticity. In this regard, it resembles the Manhattan grid itself, on which most of the project's filming took place. Borne out of 19th century industrialisation and capitalism and characterised by a reorganisation of space through so-called rational and logical design, the implementation of the Cartesian grid was a move that dictated all future movement, organisation and living on the island. The structured, hierarchical system of blocks usurps the natural landscape that the city was built upon and regiments the space into geographically-based neighbourhoods (such as Harlem, Midtown and the Financial District) in a way that frames the space as unreal – the urban grid as a kind of game board on which the metropolis plays out its own development, like a self-replicating virus. Architectural theorist Rem Koolhaas contends that 'the Grid is, above all, a conceptual speculation. In spite of its apparent neutrality, it implies an intellectual program [. . .] [I]n its indifference to topography, to what exists, it claims the superiority of mental construction over reality' (1994, p.20). What *One A.M.* would have done, in mimicking what is a topographical consequence of capitalism as well as an embodiment of its unchecked development, is call attention to the structural forces that mediate everyday life. Its subversive and deconstructive march through its cinematic, structural 'blocks' would have produced a particular cognitive map that reflected Godard's own 'intellectual program.'

Pennebaker, however, criticised the preconceptions Godard brought with him to the project and which were embodied in the very structure of *One A.M.* The film's

structure was not something that resulted as a consequence of his experiences in the US and investigation into its structural inequality, but was an already-established device onto which he sought to graft a series of cinematic encounters that corresponded with his preconceived ideas about American politics. According to Pennebaker, ‘He had it in his head what he was interested in and wanted. I don’t see how you can find out what’s going on if you have it in your head what you’re really interested in’ (cited in Levin, 1971, p.246). Godard, however, lacked a sufficient understanding of American politics to actually produce an effectual analysis; it was his misreading of the social upheaval in the US that was the impetus for the film in the first place as well as the reason for its abandonment. *One P.M.*, on the other hand, also operates as a double-edged critique, but with a shift in focus – the engagement with lower class resistance against systemic oppression is still present, but, to it, a critique of the politics of Godard’s intervention into this resistance is added. It remixes Godard to produce a new critical cinematic geography in which *One A.M.*’s cartographic practice is remapped as a *dérive*.

For Guy Debord and the Situationist International, the *dérive* represented an act of *détournement* that hijacked and rerouted the monotony and repetition of everyday life under advanced capitalism as a means of resisting it. The spontaneous, unplanned journey aimed to break away from patterns of movement encouraged by urban planning (sidewalks guide, crosswalks say ‘cross here’) to produce a new and authentic reading of the city that is directed by the psychogeography of the urban landscape. It can be considered an act of defamiliarisation, which Chanan calls ‘a process aimed at destabilising routine forms of perception [. . .] and which is in fact the recovery of perception, and therefore potentially subversive’ (2007, p.84). The *dérive* recovers one’s awareness of:

The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground). (Debord, 1955)

With this in mind, I want to now turn to *One P.M.*, where an analysis of Pennebaker’s methodological approach and the film’s *dérive*-like structure will produce an understanding of the way in which Pennebaker’s ‘renovated cartography’ operates in relation to Godard’s *One A.M.* as well as the structural oppression and its resistances in late 1960 America that the film works towards reframing (Debord, 1955). In accordance with the traditional direct cinema practice of Robert Flaherty’s concept of

non-preconception – and in opposition to Godard’s methodology – *One P.M.* was largely shaped in response to Pennebaker’s experiences and encounters during filming.^{xiii} At the same time, it diverges from these traditional practices in its organisation through conceptual or thematic – rather than spatio-temporal – unity (or, perhaps more accurately, the illusion of spatio-temporal unity).^{xiii} This method of organisation recalls that of the idiosyncratic *Monterey Pop*, which Mamber (as referenced in chapter three) identified as diverging from several traditional direct cinema concepts, such as, crucially, constructing ‘a sense of duration, of lived experience’ (1974, p.189).^{xiv} It is no surprise, then, that what fascinates Pennebaker about *One P.M.* is ‘the way the film stays together [even though] there really is no story, and yet it is kind of about something’ (1983, p.623). Pennebaker’s free editing overwrites the structural rigidity of *One A.M.* with a new spatial practice that is associative, conversational and hinges upon what Debord calls ‘psychogeographical pivotal points’ (1956). He describes these pivotal points as the ‘principal axes’ of certain ‘unities of ambiance’ whose locations can be remapped in such a way that their new distances ‘may have little relation with the physical distance between them’ (*ibid.*). Although the general concept can be gleaned from the film’s synopsis, one particular sequence quite clearly articulates *One P.M.*’s *dérive*-like structure at work. In a suite of scenes at roughly the film’s halfway point, Pennebaker condenses a series of nodes or ‘pivotal points’ separated by the country’s geography, starring Bellamy, Hayden, Cleaver, Torn and the students of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, into a new map of political noise that surveys dissent across class, racial and geographical divides in late 1960s America. The structural connections it makes between these points are associative or conversational in structure.

The sequence begins with one of the film’s frequent cutaways to countdown leader that signal Pennebaker’s structuralist enquiry.^{xv} From there, the camera follows Bellamy through the bustling streets of Manhattan’s Financial District to her workplace and up to her office on the 35th floor as she is interrogated by Godard via radio earpiece about her profession and the financial institutions that surround them. The film then cuts across the country to Tom Hayden’s living room in suburban Berkeley, California, where a confused Hayden questions Godard about the intrusive influence of Leacock and Pennebaker’s perpetually mobile cameras during a discussion about the US military-industrial complex in a previous scene, which Godard claims is a purposely self-reflexive tactic. The next scene shuttles back across the country to Midtown

Manhattan and inside Pennebaker's workshop at the offices of Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., where Torn rehearses his performance of Hayden's speech in front of Godard; then it is back to Berkeley, where Hayden listens to a monologue by Cleaver on a tape recorder and makes a few cursory comments of his own. The audio persists as the film jumps not only across the Bay Bridge to Oakland, but back in time, as Cleaver, now in person and on camera (sitting in an austere room whose white walls are bare save for two posters of Huey P. Newton and Malcolm X), continues to deliver his monologue, in which he outlines the compounded structural inequities that black revolutionaries must surmount that white revolutionaries do not and develops an analogy that likens the treatment of blacks in the US to the treatment of native Algerians by the occupying French forces. The film then cuts back to Bellamy's Manhattan office, where she idealistically expounds her belief that big business can be reformed into a force for positive social development in the US and abroad. Finally, the suite's final sequence features Torn, dressed as a Confederate officer, mocking Bellamy's monologue in front of a class of bewildered African-American middle school students in Brooklyn before engaging them in a discussion of the way in which their school district was framed by the local media during a recent union dispute.

As this brief sequential outline demonstrates, the process of cognitive mapping represented by *One P.M.* charts Pennebaker's own 'intellectual program' and rewrites the strict compartmentalisation of Godard into a more fluid dialectical system that facilitates conversational exchange between the political ideologies on display. It also clarifies the way in which Pennebaker's free cognitive mapping acts as both a unifying and alienating force. The way in which the sequence crosscuts between scenes that crisscross the country produces a sense of alienation from the spatio-temporal coherence of more traditional direct cinema. Although the effect is not nearly as disorienting as that produced by *Eat the Document*, the organising principle is the same. What is an alienation effect at one level is a unifying force on another, and, like *Eat the Document*, the sequence's deference to conceptual organisation unifies it under different cognitive terms. Each scene becomes a 'psychogeographical pivotal point' in which the physical distance between each one is remapped according to different measures. Geographical space is condensed and reordered to produce a new conceptual space. Pennebaker's cognitive mapping not only reshapes the country's geographical landscape but its political landscape, as well. The associative exchange between the range of political ideologies (embodied by the subject of each scene) that is manufactured through the

effects of montage builds to become a genuine interaction and dialogue by the sequence's conclusion.

The in-scene interaction between these ideologies first materialises in the sequence's third scene, in which Godard coaches Rip Torn in his reappropriation of Hayden's monologue, which hints at an interrogation into revolutionary language (and the language of revolutionaries). In the following scene, Hayden, listening intently to Cleaver discuss the 'machinery' that is needed for black revolutionaries to overcome their structural oppression, is asked by someone in the room to clarify Cleaver's point, on which he comments, 'The party . . . organisation . . . an alliance.' He reinforces it with a circular gesture of his hand, tying everyone together, as the film transitions to Cleaver, his monologue persisting, in Oakland. Rip Torn's monologue, too, through its satirical mocking of Bellamy's speech from the previous scene, is in direct dialogue with her and her liberal ideology. In this regard, the sequence goes beyond mere documentation and display of isolated and heterogeneous voices of resistance; through dialectical synthesis, the sequence maps a new utopian political space of exchange in which a new potentiality is produced.^{xvi}

If Pennebaker's overwriting of Godard's rigid structure is a critique of it, then it is possible to argue, by extension, that the implosion of its phallogentricity is also a swipe against the ego of its architect. While Godard clearly intended for *One A.M.*'s trickle-down structure to materialise certain class relations perpetuated by US capitalism, the planned structure may have actually produced another, unintended effect. There is perhaps something totalitarian about the very structure of Godard's film – again, despite his intentions and known allegiances – with its reinforcement of a fixed class system that does not allow for any kind of exchange or conversation between the social groups to which he draws attention, which Pennebaker's film liberates. Pennebaker's critique of Godard throughout *One P.M.* will be further discussed later in this chapter in an analysis of the film's political address and Pennebaker's own political cynicism.

Phallic Verticality in *One A.M.* and *One P.M.*

One P.M. can also be thought of as an updating of the city symphony film. As an inverted counterpoint to the way in which *Daybreak Express* celebrates the modern and the city as a network of phenomena, *One P.M.* follows the city symphony's

outward-facing gaze onto the quintessential site of modernity and frames it as a site of anxiety. Wolfgang Natter's comments on *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927) can just as easily be applied to *One P.M.*:

The film, in fact, goes further than any from the period in suggesting the spatialization of (hi)story, the making of history entwined with the social production of space. The means which invite such an understanding in the film are precisely the spatial characteristics of film manifested on a formal level, montage and then crosscutting, editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously. (Natter, 1994, pp.221-22)

Reflecting historical turns in modernity, *One P.M.* is decidedly less celebratory than its forerunners, however. It engages in the practice of surveying to reveal film as a 'new form of cognitive mapping' – a gesture to reappropriate the alienated city and reconquer a sense of place. Through cognitive mapping, argues Chanan, the film produces 'a vision of the space of everyday life, the social forces binding it together and pulling it apart' (2007, p.84). I would like to explore this process of surveying in *One P.M.*, in the form of walking or gazing from above, through Henri Lefebvre's concept of phallic verticality and the subsequent work in urban studies – contemporaneous to *One P.M.* – by Manuel Castells that supports Lefebvre's phenomenological proposition.

Although *One P.M.*'s structure is not constructed in the hierarchical manner intended for *One A.M.*, the original's emphasis on phallic verticality in specific sites of capitalistic power across New York City is retained in two key scenes as a means of materialising a critique of the production of space and expressing an anxiety of development. Lefebvre writes:

Metaphorically, [phallic verticality] symbolizes force, male fertility, masculine violence. Here again the part is taken for the whole; phallic brutality does not remain abstract, for it is the brutality of political power, of the means of constraint: police, army, bureaucracy. Phallic erectility bestows a special status on the perpendicular, proclaiming phallocracy as the orientation of space, as the goal of the process – at once metaphoric and metonymic – which instigates this facet of spatial practice. (Lefebvre, 1991, p.287)

This plays out in one of the film's earliest scenes. Following from pitch blackness and the disembodied voice of Rip Torn, intersecting asphalt streets give way to glass and steel as Torn ascends the steel frame of a skyscraper under construction in an industrial elevator with its stoic, silent operator (the sequence was filmed by Leacock, and, allegedly, the acrophobic Godard – who remains unseen – panic-strickenly clung to Leacock the entire time). It is a continuation of the previous scene, in which Torn,

wearing Native American buckskin with an elaborate headdress, sits among the bare, thin trees in a late-autumn New York woodland and plays a speech by Tom Hayden on the reel-to-reel tape recorder he carries. He pauses the tape intermittently to repeat some of Hayden's words; he murmurs some phrases, shouts others with a staccato delivery, and repeats specific words as if trying to discern their meaning. The net effect of his performance is the destabilisation of the meaning of Hayden's words through robbing his speech of any syntactic coherence and reducing those words to syllabic utterances. It is a very Godardian trick that is indicative of his interest during this period in interrogating language systems, particularly through the method of 'getting back to zero,' as explicitly put forth in *Le Gai savoir* (1969). This will be discussed further in the following section.



Figure 5.2. Rip Torn performatively deconstructs Tom Hayden's speech as it plays on the tape recorder, which we then see Hayden give on-camera.

Torn's performance continues (after a change into street clothes – and now with a flat cap on his head) during his ascent in the construction elevator (see Figure 5.2).

One particular exchange bears analysis:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Hayden: | The university system is kind of a supply line – |
| Torn: | The university system is, uh, supply line . . . [whispers] supply line . . . [raising voice] suupplyyyyyy liiiiiine! |
| Hayden: | – uh, for the, uh, military economic machinery of the country – |
| Torn: | – for the military – military economic, uh, machinery of the country . . . [shouting] machinery of the country! |
| Hayden: | – and you can disrupt the, uh – |
| Torn: | You can disrupt . . . disrupt . . . dis-rupt . . . |
| Hayden: | – supply line. |
| Torn: | [flatly] Supply line. |
| Hayden: | [garbled] We want action in the streets – |
| Torn: | [murmuring] Action in the streets. [shouting dramatically] Streets! Action! In the streets! |

Leacock's camerawork is particularly responsive to Torn and Hayden's 'dialogue.' For example, as Torn emphasises the words 'machinery of the country,' Leacock pans his camera to the left to reveal the metal scaffolding that hugs the skyscraper's framework of steel girders and, beyond that, the stone, steel and glass of the surrounding buildings (whose own heights soon far surpassed by Torn's stratospheric climb) to illustrate the dominance of the built environment as its own kind of machinery of the country. Likewise, Torn's clamorous call for 'Action! In the streets!' is met with a downward pan to traffic passing through an intersection on the streets below. In a later sequence, Eldridge Cleaver, addressing the off-camera Godard, echoes Hayden's speech – both men repeatedly emphasise the mechanised, alienating forces of oppression and control – which serves to link the two leaders through language (Pennebaker's reading of the communication breakdown between various radical political groups will be discussed later in this chapter).

Interestingly, *One P.M.*'s anxiety of development, which is explored spatially through the camera's vertical movements in this scene (giving perspective on the over-developed city before investigating its social impact) and is returned to in later sequences (most notably with attorney Carol Bellamy in the Financial District and Rip Torn's parodic critique, where it is also explicitly addressed rhetorically, as well), offers a prescient view of what would define the urban crisis of the 1970s. Manuel Castells argues that 'the roots of the different levels of crisis' of the 1970s 'are produced by a particular form of spatial organization,' and, furthermore:

[T]he U.S. urban crisis is a crisis of a particular form of urban structure that plays a major role in the U.S. process of capitalist accumulation, in the organization of socialized consumption and in the reproduction of the social order. ([1976] 1982, p.574; emphasis in original).^{xvii}

It is a view in which '[p]erspective vision and prospective vision constitute the twofold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with' (de Certeau, [1984] 2002, p.93).

The sequence recalls two other films that feature camera scrolls along the length of skyscrapers in their opening minutes: Peter Whitehead's *The Fall*, its contemporary, and Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte* (1961). Both Whitehead's and Antonioni's gestures are descents, however, while the movement in *One P.M.* includes both an ascent and descent. Tina Rivers suggests that the sharp descent along Manhattan's under-construction General Motors building in *The Fall* primarily serves to materialise

a metaphorical fall ‘within a specific sociohistoric context’ and, through Whitehead’s panoramic shots of the steel metropolis, establish his identity as tourist-filmmaker (Rivers also identifies a suggestion of the film’s ‘structuralist investigation’ in the repeating ‘metal scaffolding of the elevator shaft [that] superimposes itself onto the view of the city [. . .] as the camera rapidly falls [. . .] recalling the vertical passage of celluloid through a fluttering projector gate’) (2011, p.430).^{xviii} *La notte*’s graceful downward crawl along Milan’s newly-built Pirelli building’s glass façade, on the other hand, emphasises visual and aural abstraction and draws attention to ‘what we take for granted’ in the alienated condition of modern life (Brunette, 1998, p.54).^{xix}

The camera’s vertical conquest of the skyscraper in *One P.M.* shares in common some of the effects produced by these similar movements while working towards an overall more complex function. The horizontal scaffolding bars and steel girders that rhythmically intercut the spectator’s view of the city beyond, generated by vertical climb and decent of the elevator, here, as in *The Fall*, act as a further marker of *One P.M.*’s own ‘structuralist investigation’ (this will be developed in detail later in this chapter). With *La notte*, it shares in common a certain alienation effect. Although Godard, like Whitehead, is an outsider and a ‘sight-seeing’ approach (in that he seeks out the obvious subjects like Hayden and Cleaver who could be categorised as ‘tourist attractions’ in this sense) can be identified as informing Godard’s methodology, he is not the ‘tourist-filmmaker’ that Whitehead is, nor is this suggested in the camera’s ascending and descending engagement with the cityscape. Godard’s agenda is very different; he has come to the US with an inflexible methodology and seeks out material that will conform to a pre-determined thesis (and he loses interest in the project when the reality of the situation fails to meet his presuppositions).

To compound these readings and further investigate the connotative functions of this sequence, the profilmic movement of the elevator must be considered in relation to the trajectory of *One A.M.*’s intended structure and the way in which it is re-deployed in *One P.M.* As a scene, Rip Torn’s ascent and descent of the skyscraper also metonymically embodies the phallic verticality that was to infuse the entire intended structure of *One A.M.*, as evidenced by its hierarchical arrangement. However, whereas the kinesis of *One A.M.* was to be a straight descent from upper to lower class subjects and spaces, the elevator’s movement also suggests something very different, on which *One P.M.*’s remix of Godard capitalises. The camera’s ascent – and, along with it, the perspective of the spectator – in *One P.M.*’s opening minutes suggests an attempt at

getting the lay of the land. Torn scales the highest point in the neighbourhood to survey the surrounding landscape. However, the view from the top is shrouded in an ethereal white fog that renders useless the skyscraper's utility as a vantage point. Such a perspective produces an ideological effect, which de Certeau described when writing about another New York skyscraper:

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp [. . .] His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god [. . .] The 1370 foot high tower that serves as a prow for Manhattan continues to construct the fiction that creates readers, makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text. (de Certeau, [1984] 2002, p.92)

De Certeau writes about this perspective's affective vision, which concerns my study of *One P.M.* Torn's descent of the skyscraper with the camera – which is, again, tied up with the scopic regime of the spectator – is at once a literal return to the earth as well as a move that indicates the methodology of the forthcoming investigation. It is a move away from the abstract remove of the clouds and the ideological perspective that such a position offers and a return to the streets, where the movement through them produces a very different kind of spatiality and understanding of the urban. *One P.M.* the city symphony works towards 'transcend[ing] the capacity of the naked eye, or rather, the restricted perspective of the atomised and isolated individual observer, so that making a film like this is a way of transcending your own city-dweller's alienation' (Chanan, 2007, p.84). This is the space of *One P.M.*'s investigation. Pennebaker's cognitive mapping follows the logic of the city street – of intersections, chance encounters, interruptions, window shopping – and its avenues of robbery.

The Political Address of *One P.M.*

Any discussion of *One P.M.*'s political address must first be situated within the intended political framework of the *One A.M.* project. Two interrelated trends dominate Godard's practice in this period: his increasing engagement with radical leftist politics on screen and his corresponding distrust and disavowal of cinematic artfulness.

According to Pennebaker:

[H]e wanted to get away from a certain kind of filmmaking, which had to do with the way things looked, with making artful pictures [. . .] he associated prettiness in pictures with decorative art and bourgeois behavior [. . .] All these

things brought him to look for some way to mess up the image, to mess up the process. (1983, p.624)

Perhaps a display of lateral thinking, Godard's curious decision to employ direct cinema filmmakers – one of whom he disparaged both in print and on film – was an attempt to navigate both of these preoccupations.^{xx} Of course, the Godard who laid down those criticisms in 1963 was not the Godard of 1968; his pursuit of a more fundamental, formally austere aesthetic that rejected 'prettiness' in order to make plain a film's political message with as little adornment as possible prompted a rethinking of the radical viability of Leacock's methods. Intriguingly, Pennebaker contends that, with *One A.M.*, Godard hoped to radicalise direct cinema.

It is difficult to assess how familiar Godard actually was with direct cinema films prior to his collaboration with Leacock and Pennebaker. According to Pennebaker, Godard had seen, of his films, at least *Jane* and *Dont Look Back*, and it can be assumed from Godard's 'Dictionary of American Film-makers' entry on Leacock that the same could be said of *Primary* and *The Chair*, on which Leacock and Pennebaker were cameramen and editors (*ibid.*, p.619).

Although Godard's motivations were unknown to him or Leacock at the time, a study of Godard's output immediately before and after their collaboration made clear to Pennebaker the way in which Godard's understanding of the filmmakers' techniques fit with his formal and ideological progression during this period. *Le Gai savoir* and *Un film comme les autres*, which Pennebaker described as 'an impossible film' and 'the final putdown of movieness' (*ibid.*, p.619), pointed toward the formal and ideological radicalism that would reach its apotheosis in a series of collaborations with Jean-Pierre Gorin and the Dziga Vertov Group between 1969 and 1972. These films – among them, *British Sounds* (1969), *Pravda* (1969), *Vent d'est* (1970) and *Lotte in Italia* (1970) – were Brechtian sound and image experiments that rejected the illusory coherence of sync sound in favour of harsh collisions between minimalist images and a dominant soundtrack as a platform for dogmatically Maoist critiques of society and its representations.^{xxi}

One A.M., then, was one (abandoned) avenue to the Dziga Vertov films in which Godard would repurpose and reinscribe direct cinema's perceived artlessness and apoliticality with a new radicalism. It was not the first time that Godard had subverted the concept and method of direct cinema for his own ends; Albert Maysles served as cameraman on Godard's 1965 short *Montparnasse et Levallois*, which he filmed 'as if

he were faced by real events over which he had no control' but were actually organised and staged by Godard (Godard, [1965] 1986, p.212). However, it anticipates *One A.M.* only as an aesthetic exercise and lacks the latter's intended political radicalisation. As Richard Brody indicates, Godard specifically exploits the evidentiary claims and discourses of authenticity and 'cinema truth' in which direct cinema was embedded to shape the spectator's reading of the plot and characters. He praises Maysles' restrained camerawork and contends that 'this inexpressive neutrality is itself the point of the film [...] Godard could offer blandly documentary images as indisputable evidence that the woman was wrong' (2008, p.179). Furthermore, it even parallels Pennebaker's exploitation of the codification of sync sound in direct cinema for his own ideological repurposing in *Monterey Pop* and *Sweet Toronto* as discussed in the previous two chapters.

One A.M. was to see Godard push his hijacking of direct cinema beyond the subversion of its conventions in *Montparnasse et Levallois* to a radicalisation of what he perceived to be an apolitical cinematic discourse. Godard's goal was to not just make a direct cinema film about radical leftist subject matter (as, for example, in Alk's *American Revolution 2* or *Cicero March* [The Film Group, 1966]), but to add a new, politically subversive dimension to it through his own ideological repurposing, exploitation and deconstruction of direct cinema conventions.^{xxii} Pennebaker explains his understanding of Godard's thought process:

Jean-Luc I think decided that with our kind of raw . . . the kind of thing that [*Dont Look Back*] was and that most of the films he had seen of mine were, which were from his point of view very carelessly made – they were rough, the focus was bad, the camera always shook, and all the things that people saw as a lack of production value seemed to be a part of the whole way the film was made, and I think that this he saw as a kind of . . . that if he could get us to do this kind of thing in film it would [. . .] get him back to a more revolutionary pose in terms of film. (1983, p.626)

Pennebaker, obviously, did not find this, or Godard's demand that particular sequences' sound be intentionally poorly recorded, 'entirely flattering,' as they demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of what direct cinema is as well as an ignorance of the skill and craftsmanship involved in filming in uncontrolled situations (in this regard, Godard's understanding of direct cinema recalls Lennon's perception of it) (*ibid.*, p.620).

To disrupt cinematic codifications of realism in fiction and nonfiction, the documentary sequences were shot in 'very bad color' and their fictional counterparts in

black and white (cited in Merrill, 1972). For Godard, the intentional use of inexpensive, poor quality 16mm film stock serves a political function, as well: 'In America it's really the worst sort of capitalism. If you are broke they give you bad film, so I use cheap stock on purpose, explaining that this is the film that is reserved for revolutionary artists and blacks' (*ibid.*). Although he is clearly sympathetic to their causes, Godard's justification for co-opting a particular film stock used by the underprivileged specifically to capitalise on this codified aesthetic nevertheless sees him chasing a misguided and even offensive notion of authenticity. Godard has the luxury of choosing this particular stock for its aesthetic qualities, but for those groups he cites it is a necessary condition for creating any kind of film at all. Godard's action says more about the way in which he wishes to position himself rather than representing any actual political solidarity with the marginalised. Clearly, this is an example of Godard seeking a 'revolutionary pose.' Pennebaker, who has characterised Godard both as 'a banker' ('What he does is very businesslike') and 'a bank robber,' furthers this view (Pennebaker, 1983, p.629):

He's kind of a bank robber who hasn't got a fast car, you know, so he has to find a way to get the money out, and in his pocket. And I kind of like that about him, because that is what his filmmaking is – it's robbery. He's robbing from the people who make bad films and teaching them a lesson [. . .] His idea as a bank robber was Willie Sutton's, you know; you rob them because that's where the money is. (Appendix)

Godard's businesslike robbery can be understood as functioning on two fronts during the project. On the one hand, he convinced the PBL to finance *One A.M.*, then left Leacock Pennebaker responsible for his 'gigantic debt,' which pushed them to the brink of bankruptcy, but he also robbed poor filmmakers of cultural capital to increase his own currency as a revolutionary (Leacock cited in Levin, 1971, p.205). By likening filmmaking to robbery, Pennebaker also suggests a way in which the work of the social actor in documentary functions as a kind of alienated labour. This concept will be returned to later in this chapter. However, the process of making *One A.M.* does seem to have precipitated in Godard an understanding of the limitations of filmmaking as a political action:

When we shot that I was thinking like a bourgeois artist, that I could just go and do interviews with people like Eldridge Cleaver and Tom Hayden. But I was wrong. And Tom Hayden was wrong to allow me to do that because it was just moviemaking, not political action^{xxiii} [. . .] But Cleaver was correct. We paid him a thousand dollars and for him to take that money was correct. His was a

political decision – he needed the money to escape America.^{xxiv} (cited in Mauldin, 2008, p.234)

Interestingly, Godard's understanding of the way in which direct cinema could be exploited for a radical leftist filmmaking practice is consistent with the way in which it was perceived from the other end of the spectrum, mainstream Hollywood. According to Pennebaker, having screened *Dont Look Back* and *Monterey Pop* for Academy Award contention, one representative from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was personally offended by their apparently poor craftsmanship, which she found insulting – 'like you're trying to rub it in our noses' (1983, p.547). She read his films as an assault on the mainstream Hollywood film, although Pennebaker himself is ambivalent towards such a purpose: '[M]aybe I was. I really hadn't thought it through' (*ibid.*). Certainly, even beyond the films' particular formal qualities, the entire Leacock Pennebaker production and distribution operation, as an independent alternative to the Hollywood system, can be viewed as anti-establishment. Pennebaker believes that Godard embraced the scrappy, ramshackle organisation because of what it represented within the class structure of the film industry. The company's precarious financial situation 'seemed to sort of satisfy his feelings that he wasn't dealing with an oligarchy, that we were at least in the lower half of the class structure' (another example of Godard seeking a 'revolutionary pose' – attributing some measure of 'authenticity' to the underclass and seeking it for himself under the guise of 'solidarity') (*ibid.*, p.629).^{xxv}

Political Cynicism and Reframing Godard in *One P.M.*

Most of my work on Pennebaker's political address in *One P.M.* is informed by Pennebaker's September 1970 interview with G. Roy Levin, which was conducted shortly after *One P.M.*'s completion. Here, a surly Pennebaker is a confrontational, disaffected interviewee; he is particularly cynical and pessimistic – perhaps even nihilistic – when discussing filmmaking and the political potential of documentary. At the time, Pennebaker certainly had personal reasons for such a curmudgeonly attitude and cynical outlook. He was desperately trying to reconnect with his estranged children in the wake of an acrimonious divorce a few years previous; at the same time, Leacock Pennebaker was being dissolved in bankruptcy and Pennebaker was left alone – for Leacock was now at MIT – to oversee the liquidation of its assets.^{xxvi}

Pennebaker admits that he is ‘politically naïve’ (referring to politics as ‘a business, and I’m not in that business’), although he relents: ‘you get into the ball game sooner or later, but that doesn’t guide what I film, particularly, I’m not into political films’ (cited in Levin, 1971, p.256). He also expresses futility at film’s inability to impact the world, saying that ‘[art] should snap your head, suddenly [. . .] that’s what I’m trying to do, except I don’t see it as making the world better for anything’ and laments his own lack of political motivation in a media landscape overwhelmed by noise: ‘The fact is that what really film could do and should interest me to do, is try [. . .] to get involved in that feedback’ (*ibid.*, p.254).

Nevertheless, Pennebaker has constructed a highly political work; intent is not everything. What he did intend, however, was to be critical of Godard, his methods, and the process of making *One A.M.* He was fascinated with:

His relationship with people, the way he maneuvered them, the way it didn’t work finally, and his attempt to come to grips with what he considered to be the American Revolution, which I don’t think he has the foggiest notion about. None. Particularly the Panthers. None. And there was a total lack of comprehension among all the people involved. It intrigued me. The lack of communication by people who all got put in the same boat. They all signed the same anti-Vietnam War manifesto and they were all saying quite different things. In fact, if it really came to blows, they’d probably be on different sides.^{xxvii} (*ibid.*, p.245)

Richard Brody supports Pennebaker’s severe assessment of Godard’s awareness of American politics, albeit in a much gentler and generous way, when suggesting that Godard ‘wasn’t interested in those realities [referring to ‘the inner and outer realities in the participants’ self-aware performances for the camera’]; he was interested in the mythologies’ (2013). Thus, the recurrent tension between the specific and the general arises once again, but Brody’s claim also seems to conveniently absolve Godard from researching the American political situation, approaching the project with non-preconceived ideas regarding its outcome and engaging with and being responsive to the specific circumstances of his social actors as individuals. When Pennebaker describes his interest in ‘the effect [Godard] had on people, in his machinations,’ it evokes the image of Godard as an interfering deity whose very presence determines and shapes the everyday existence of the social actors with whom he comes into contact (*ibid.*). Developing this idea produced a new kind of self-reflexivity in Pennebaker that implicated his own practice and presence as an agent of interference.

Beth Mauldin contends that ‘*One A.M.* was intended to examine various forms of resistance and revolution in America, but when Pennebaker finished it, it also became about how Godard approached and framed his subjects’ (Mauldin, 2008, p.236). The concept of ‘framing’ – and, most crucially, a self-reflexive understanding of this process – is critical to understanding the political address of the film, as it is in the film’s foregrounded awareness of this practice that Pennebaker’s critique is embedded. Colin MacCabe identifies a parallel process in Godard’s practice of the same period, which he describes as a ‘determination to “decompose and recompose,” to take everything back to a zero where everything is constructed and nothing is available for direct inspection’ (2003, p.215). Throughout the film, Pennebaker emphasises the structural and material forces that mediate, shape and inform the existence and conditions of the film itself, the process of its making, as well as the everyday life of the social actors who move through it.

As *One P.M.* begins, Pennebaker plays with the materiality of film in the way a structuralist filmmaker might. The opening credits run as follows:

1. Universal leader (full countdown).
2. Written introduction by D.A. Pennebaker (white type on black background).
3. Title: ‘Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.’
4. Universal leader.
5. Copyright notice.
6. Universal leader.
7. Title: ‘1PM’ (red/white/blue typography).
8. A low-angle time-lapsed shot of a New York City skyscraper.
9. Title: ‘By D.A. Pennebaker.’
10. Random film leader.
11. Social actor credits in white and blue type (whose spacing then spells the word ‘Godard’ vertically in red).
12. Universal leader.

Sonically, the tolling of church bells breaks the silence over the Leacock Pennebaker title, which transitions into the ambient sounds of a shipyard and the rumbling, foreboding bellowing of a foghorn as the ‘1PM’ title comes to light. The cartoony sounds of a shootout – gunfire and ricochets – then overwhelm the sound design as select letters of the acting credits fire from white to red or blue. The clanging of a ship’s bell transitions into the film’s first scene. Film leader interrupts the credits five

times (countdown leader alone, four times). What this indicates to me is the deployment of leader as a device of defamiliarisation; Pennebaker strips it of its utilitarian context as a device that structures – or frames – a film reel at its head and tail and instead repurposes it aesthetically to stress the film's tactility and status as an object under construction and foreshadows the critique to follow.

One P.M. also stresses an awareness of those forces that structure everyday life – an examination that plays out across the film's profilmic spaces. Pennebaker highlights an anxiety of development and Godard's interest in the production of space and the way in which it constructs hierarchies of power, which they explore across the urban grid of New York. In *Framing Places*, Kim Dovey writes that '“Framing” implies both the construction of a world and of a way of seeing ourselves in it – at once picture and mirror. In each of these senses, the design of built form is the practice of ‘framing’ the places of everyday life' (1999, p.1). To explore this concept, I want to return to thinking about the architecture of *One P.M.* itself and its relationship to the profilmic spaces and movements of everyday life that it depicts and, specifically, the way in which Pennebaker reframes Godard's framing of his subjects through an examination of the previously discussed suite of scenes from the film's second half. Here, Pennebaker strings an assortment of separate scenes starring Carol Bellamy, Tom Hayden, Eldridge Cleaver, and Rip Torn and the students of Ocean Hill-Brownsville into a collage of ideologically loaded and overlapping political voices that produces a fascinating living document of dissent across class, racial and geographical divides in late 1960s America. Their voices, faces and spaces are transformed into synecdochical signs and markers of the political ideology of the group or institution they represent. Pennebaker weaves a rich tapestry of political noise in which each voice is responsive to the others, but not in a way that is contrived or too clever for its own good. The juxtaposition of these ideologically loaded scenes creates both linkages and collisions. The effect is twofold: these collisions foreground societal disparities across – and arguably perpetuated by – class, racial and spatial divides, which an analysis of each subject's rhetoric and representation further amplifies; the inter-group critiques, which foster an understanding of how fractured the left was at the time despite these groups' (broadly speaking) common aspirations, are also accentuated (I include Bellamy here – her views are clearly left of centre, even if Godard mocks her as 'the establishment').

The second effect has to do with interrogating the terms of Godard's representation and positioning of these political ideologies. This suite of scenes is a

particularly strong example of the film's structuralist operations; it draws attention to the way in which Godard frames his subjects and appropriates their voices in pursuit of his own hypothesis. Of course, Godard's work is, in turn, co-opted and reframed by Pennebaker in support of his own agenda, which is to cast doubt on Godard's radicalism. This is Pennebaker 'get[ting] involved in that feedback' of which he speaks above.

The suite begins with a second sequence in which a critique of the phallic verticality of Manhattan's Financial District materialises – this time, through the person of Carol Bellamy, a young – fresh out of New York University's School of Law – associate attorney at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, one of the country's most esteemed law firms (and former employer of Leacock Pennebaker's David McMullin, who arranged the interview). The site of the investigation is One Chase Manhattan Plaza – one of the tallest buildings in New York – where the firm's law offices are located on the thirty-fifth floor. Although Bellamy's episode was intended to open *One A.M.*, she does not make an appearance until the midpoint of *One P.M.* In *One P.M.*, Bellamy's sequence is divided into three scenes across two parts: she walks through the towering skyscrapers of the Financial District on her way to work and answers questions Godard poses to her via radio earpiece; in One Chase Manhattan Plaza, Godard directs Bellamy (and is questioned by security) and walks Leacock through his camera movements for a forthcoming scene; and, after two separate scenes with Hayden and Cleaver, Bellamy delivers a monologue before the commanding view from her thirty-fifth floor office on big business' role in social development.

The film cuts from the flattened, two-dimensional rotation of countdown leader to the three-dimensional spiralling of the camera through the lived space of the Financial District. Leacock's spiralling camera is positioned on a streetcorner, and the spectator is given a worm's-eye-view of the surrounding skyscrapers that tower overhead and are provoked into a cine-dance by the camera. The camera pans down the length of a grey glass and steel giant to street level, where sidewalks are infested with swarms of dark suits and briefcases, whose movements play out like a white-collar *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (Louis Lumière, 1895). The asynchronous clanging of a ship's bell – last heard in the film's title sequence – fleetingly recurs here before transitioning into honking car horns. In a single graceful glide, the camera picks up Bellamy as she crosses the street. The sequence that follows (in two parts) is a fascinating investigation into Godard's process; it is as though Pennebaker has torn

away a room's drywall to reveal the piping, wiring, insulation and structural framework that operate out of view. Instead of the scene that would have appeared in *One A.M.*, the spectator is presented with an alternate, more privileged view that exposes its structural properties.

As Bellamy briskly negotiates the crowded streets, she begins to speak – to no one – by stating her name and where she is going. We cut to Godard and an assistant on sound (covered by Pennebaker), who wear headphones, carry a radio and tape recorder and follow after Bellamy at a similar pace. Godard, feeding her questions through an earpiece, asks about the buildings they walk among (she identifies Chemical Bank, Chase Manhattan, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company and Lehman Brothers, and also points out the stock exchange), her age (26), if she enjoys life today ('It's very sad in many ways, but it certainly is exciting'), and if she had any dreams the previous night.^{xxviii} To this last question, she responds, 'I was thinking about the election, and that left me with no dreams for the evening' in an expression of disillusionment with Richard Nixon's victory in the presidential election just days earlier.

The scene continues at One Chase Manhattan Plaza, where the remainder of this sequence continues Pennebaker's self-reflexive and structural focus and is particularly notable for examining the way in which Godard structures the scene and frames Bellamy. According to Pennebaker, Godard 'did terrible things to her [. . .] [I]t's quite clear that they were using her [. . .] in a way that didn't stand up, and she comes off perfectly clean,' although this is not as evident in scenes with Bellamy herself as it is in those with Torn mocking her monologue in a high-pitched, 'female' voice (1983, p.636). This raises an as-yet unexplored question: Is Pennebaker's critique of Godard an ethical critique?

In this particular scene, Pennebaker investigates Godard's process and shows him at work with Bellamy and Leacock. It is marginal, guttural footage intended for *One A.M.*'s cutting room floor, yet there is more at work here that pushes Pennebaker's footage beyond simply functioning as a behind-the-scenes documentary. Godard walks Bellamy through the lobby of One Chase Manhattan Plaza (where they are stopped and questioned by security) and tells her that her movements will allow him to explore the space of the lobby; in the next shot, they are on the 35th floor, and Godard works out the camera movements he wants from Leacock in the corridor leading to Bellamy's office. What Pennebaker's camera captures next is intriguing: initially positioned over Godard's shoulder, he pulls back to reveal Leacock, with his camera over his shoulder,

ahead of Godard. They stare down the corridor as Bellamy rounds the corner and walks towards her office, at which point the three men take after her, single file (Leacock, followed by Godard, then Pennebaker). Godard again wears headphones and carries the Nagra and radio, with which he continues to ask Bellamy a series of questions that lack any kind of logical progression. The filmmakers' layered apprehension of increasingly more complex and self-reflexive levels of cinematic reality; Leacock films Bellamy in traditional direct cinema style, if not method (the spectator is privy to the rehearsals of Godard's choreography) and Pennebaker strips back another layer of 'reality' to reveal apparatuses of structural mediation involved: Leacock's camera and Godard's Nagra and radio.^{xxix}

It is apparent that Godard sought to critique the gender politics of high finance and big business through Bellamy. However, his use of her – and she is used – failed to pan out according to his expectations, and, as a result, he then attempted to exploit her in a different way. It should be recalled that Godard chose Bellamy because – in addition to seemingly embodying American capitalistic values that the role required – she is a woman; fulfilling the role of his American capitalist with a woman would further complicate the role 'in accordance with the American myth' of the hard-working underdog who beats the odds and achieves great success. Bellamy, according to Pennebaker, was not concerned with trying 'to make political acumen out of just getting along,' which he calls 'the old New York thing – I am just getting along, leave me alone' (*ibid.*). For example, when Godard (via radio) asks her the condescending 'What will be your definition of a Wall Street girl?', Bellamy curtly responds with: 'I think the definition is no different from any person who works on Wall Street – it's a person who's interested in business . . .' Whereas Godard treats her – a woman in a male-dominated profession in an equally male-dominated geographical space of the city – as a novelty through which he can pursue his own particular political agenda, Bellamy sees nothing extraordinary, political or 'mythical' in her own position or her achievement of it, and would rather get on with her work than examine the politics of her position.

Still, Godard's critique falls flat, anyway. It should be reiterated that Bellamy merely works in the Financial District, and is, herself, not employed in finance; based on the dialogue that Godard had written for Torn to mock Bellamy's monologue in a later scene, it is possible that he did not know this. Furthermore, considering that Bellamy is an idealistic recent law school graduate and merely an associate attorney with no leverage whatsoever at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, Godard's 'critique' of

Bellamy comes across as bullying an easy target instead of confronting the true financial or political elite (of course, this may have been an issue of access, but it still does not excuse the scapegoating of Bellamy).

The scene is followed by one returning to Tom Hayden's suburban home near Berkeley, where he sits with Godard and their respective entourages and complains about 'the method of [their] discussion,' in which he finds 'an unnatural degree of motion' that 'makes it very difficult to think.' When he mistakes Godard's intentions – 'The method is to make it appear natural' – Godard quickly corrects him: 'It's the reverse of natural. It's totally not. That's why I prefer to show the things and because it's completely abstract. It's not at all natural.' While Hayden expects the completed film to be a conventional observational documentary in which the camera minimally interferes with the action it is recording, Godard informs him that his is a different methodology. 'Art is not natural,' he intones, with a drag on his cigarette. The film immediately cuts to a centred shot of a wall-mounted mirror in an editing room in which Pennebaker is framed, camera slung over his shoulder, staring at himself and the viewer, emphasising Godard's message (see figure 5.3). Recalling the scene, he says: 'I



Figure 5.3. *Pennebaker implicates himself in the proceedings.*

felt it was very important at that instant that I show myself – the shot of myself in the mirror – and I remember when I shot it thinking, I'm not blameless, I'm not removed

from this at all. Everybody was going over the thing about [*sic*] we were part of the system' (cited in Levin, 1971, p.247).

This scene in Pennebaker's workshop between Torn and Godard is followed by another with Hayden, the previously-discussed sequence in which he listens to and comments on Cleaver's tape-recorded monologue on US imperialism, which segues into the Black Panther's on-camera delivery of said speech. After Cleaver outlines his 'three classes of evil' – 'avaricious businessmen, the demagogic politicians, and the strong-arm [. . .] local police' – Pennebaker then returns to the offices of Cravath, Swaine & Moore for a second scene with Bellamy. Leacock pans away from a bird's-eye view of the metropolis offered by Bellamy's 35th floor office window to find her sitting at her desk, where she speaks about big business and social progress:

You've got to have people in the business field who have a concern for [economic] progress, as well as you have to have those interested in social progress. I think there's an immediate rejection of business as evil, and nobody's willing to go into it, to possibly make it over in the way they want it to be.

With her failure to play into his agenda and discuss the politics of being a woman on Wall Street in the previous scene, Godard changed tacks and opted to criticise her socially-oriented business philosophy and mock what he surely considered a naïve and misplaced belief in big business' capacity for progressive social development.^{xxx} He latches onto the biggest 'sitting duck' statement Bellamy makes ('I think that business perhaps plays the largest role – will play the largest role – in the development of a new and better society in this country') and develops a scene with Rip Torn, which follows, that satirises her philosophy.

Torn enters a classroom at Junior High School 271 in Brooklyn's Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district dressed as a Confederate officer, which provokes the laughter and bemusement of the class, which is entirely African American. He stands in front of the room and, affecting a high-pitched, 'feminine' vocal inflection (and very accurately mimicking Bellamy's speech patterns), announces, 'I am a woman' – to much jaw-dropping, glancing around the room, and giggling ('You're a what?') – 'I work on Wall Street lending money – you know, where people lend money to make money?' Following Godard's direction, he walks around the room and continues:

I have this very strong idea that business is going to be the most important thing to develop the under-developed countries, and I think that we're under-developed right here in our country, so I'm going to take my business techniques that I learned on Wall Street, and I'm going to develop you. I'm going to

develop the under-developed sections of our country, and then I'm going to go on and develop the rest of the under-developed sections of other countries, and, today, we'll develop Brooklyn and who knows what tomorrow.

What is at work in Torn's parodic monologue is a very accurate mapping of the urban crisis that would face the US city in the next decade. This is the reality of the 1970s which Castells outlines – an urban reality where 'class-based metropolitan inequality is derived from uneven capitalist development' ([1976] 1982, p.581). Whereas Bellamy optimistically and certainly naively foresees an opportunity to rehabilitate corporate power in the service of the social good, Godard not only utterly rejects such an idea, he subverts Bellamy's notion of 'social progress' to capitalist 'development' – suggesting that whatever façade corporate action takes, it will always be rooted in corporate capitalist interests.

The students, however, are unsure what to make of Torn's theatrics, which likely prompted him to put away his script and directly address the ongoing violent dispute between the recently-appointed, largely black community-controlled school board and the mostly white and Jewish United Federation of Teachers (UFT) labour union that now had sprawled into a community battle. The New York City Board of Education had recently decentralised Ocean Hill-Brownsville, granting the local school board the power to hire and fire administrators and develop curriculum, but the UFT protested what they considered a union-busting manoeuvre. The abrupt dismissal of nearly twenty teachers and administrators (who were all Jewish) led to a series of strikes that shut down public schools across the city for months and incited walk-outs by both students and teachers, violent protests, vandalism, and hate attacks on both sides.^{xxxi} Torn, trying to teach the students to challenge authority in all of its forms, asks them why they did not question the statements he made in-character as Bellamy that he presented as truths or protest his provocative costume. 'Do you believe what you read in the papers about this school?' he asks. 'No,' they defensively reply. The students are cannily aware of the media's bias in framing the black community as militant in order to feed white anxiety of black unrest to sway public opinion against the decentralisation project, and confidently express this to Torn. After a brief, lively and participative discussion in which Torn continues to provoke their critical capacities, he seems to run aground and returns to Godard's script. He changes into the uniform of a modern military officer and passes out toy guns to a few students, who engage him in a slapstick chase around the room to everyone's delight.

Mauldin claims that the intention of Godard's directions, provocations and manipulations was to produce a 'strange theater' through which he could 'orchestrate a microcosm of revolution;' this he defined as 'the liberation of their consciousness and the students' awakening to their own ability to create revolution' (2008, p.238). He is a constant presence in the margins and foreground of the scene as he flits across the room, micromanaging the spontaneity out of both Torn's and Pennebaker's respective performances in an attempt to stage-manage his political theatre into achieving his preconceived output. He later chided Torn for what he perceived as its failure ('It was his first political act, and he was so shaken up that it flopped') (cited in Merrill, 1972), but, as Mauldin points out, the students are most responsive to and engaged in Torn's off-script interrogation of the recent 'flare-ups' in the community and the media's representation of its racialised violence, while Godard is the one who 'barrels into the black school [. . .] ignore[s] the actual revolution, of sorts, which had already been playing out' there, and, instead, gives the students toy guns with which to play (Mauldin, 2008, p.238). If blame is to be assigned, it is to Godard for a poorly-conceived theatre that valued ill-informed myth-making over community engagement. His curious – to put it mildly – choices to play 'revolution' with toy guns – trivialising the struggle and oppression that those students had to live with every day – and to imperialistically indoctrinate them with rhetoric they could not relate to – thus attempting to define their own struggle for them – make it clear that his only investment was in his own 'revolutionary pose' and not in the affective space produced by his project.

Alienated Labour, Affect and the Non-Orchidean Space of *One P.M.*

This invites a return to the question of Pennebaker's critique of Godard being an ethical critique. Pennebaker and his filmmaking practice have a complicated relationship with the ethics of documentary filmmaking as they are commonly understood, and the case of Carol Bellamy provides a useful case in point that draws out a number of pertinent issues. His own history with Bellamy is more problematic than his previous comments extracted from his 1981 oral history indicate. In that interview, he is somewhat fascinated by the stature Bellamy had attained in the 12 years since filming her, but is mainly interested in discussing his presentation of Godard's mistreatment of her in *One P.M.* However, 10 years previously, in his 1970 interview

with G. Roy Levin, which was conducted shortly after *One P.M.*'s completion and first public screening, his opinion of her is much less flattering. He dismissively refers to her as 'that chick,' 'a sorehead' and 'absolutely unnecessary to the film' and rants about the complications she is causing for the film's pending commercial release (cited in Levin, 1971, p.247). According to Pennebaker, Bellamy, in her original PBL contract, was granted final cut privileges, which she exercised by insisting on the removal of the first scene in which she appears (in which she walks through the Financial District, is questioned with Godard by security in the lobby of One Chase Manhattan Plaza, and rehearses her scene with the filmmakers in the hallway outside of her office). Pennebaker balked at her request and was incensed that someone was 'tell[ing] me how to edit a film' (*ibid.*, p.248). For *One P.M.*'s first public screening at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Pennebaker warned Bellamy that the only way the film would be censored would be if she attended the screening and did it herself. 'If the chick has the balls,' he said, 'with a room full of people, to blot out a part of the film, that takes a lot of something' (*ibid.*, pp.247-48). And she did exactly that – by standing next to the projector and planting her hand over the lens during the scene to which she objected. It remains unclear exactly what Bellamy was trying to prevent from being shown. Perhaps she felt she looked foolish walking through the streets of the Financial District talking to herself, although, if anything, Torn's mockery of her monologue in a later scene deliberately makes her out a fool, but she did not contest its inclusion. Regardless, Bellamy's public act of protest can be understood as one of political mimesis – a concept explored in the previous chapter – that broadens the affective scope of the film. It was not the only time that a public screening of *One P.M.* provoked such a physical response.^{xxxii}

Two factors to the Bellamy situation frustrated Pennebaker: one, the scene she demanded be cut was crucial to understanding not only the sequence that follows but the entire second half of the film, and, two, as previously noted, he was particularly enraged that one of his social actors was given final cut and was now making demands on how it should be edited. 'The idea of allowing the person you're filming any kind of editorial control was unthinkable,' he maintained, a decade later (Pennebaker, 1983, p.755). Thus, he refused to even consider Bellamy's concerns, even though the standstill between the two prevented the film's release and affected his bottom line (Bellamy eventually yielded and the film was released, uncut, two years later).

This scenario illustrates the clear ethical complications that result from Pennebaker's rejection of the documentary label for his films, and, furthermore, given the treatment afforded to his social actors in positions of power, the problematic politics of inequality in the power relations established and perpetuated by his filmmaking practice, which can be extended to direct cinema in general. As has been explored throughout this thesis, Pennebaker is interested in the poetics of his films to a degree that rejects informationalism – even their documentary value (see, for example, Levin, 1971, pp.242-43) – and emphasises a strongly auteurist view of his own work. As a result, the ethics of his practice are inconsistently considered. Perhaps it is appropriate that a filmmaker with such an awkward, or even contested, relationship with the word 'documentary' should have an equally complicated relationship with documentary ethics. However, the clear exception is in his engagement with social actors who are highly vulnerable – especially victims of drug abuse. For example, in 1963, Pennebaker served as cameraman for director Dick Ballentine on *Mr. Pearson* (1964), a 'day in the life' profile of the newly-elected Canadian Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Unknown to Pennebaker, Ballentine edited scenes out of context with the intention of making a gag film that Pennebaker felt cheaply and unjustly lampooned Pearson. According to Pennebaker, the film provoked a rift between Pearson's government and the CBC and incited a national controversy that was debated in parliament and nearly cost Pearson the prime ministership (1983, pp.427-33). For Pennebaker, it was a formative experience that made him acutely aware of the vulnerability of social actors and the ethical implications of a filmmaker's aesthetic choices. During the same period, out of *David* came questions of a filmmaker's responsibility to an especially vulnerable subject – in this case, a rehabbing drug addict – after the camera stops rolling that were too complicated for him to ever really resolve; it prevented him from accepting a commission to make a film about Janis Joplin years later in the wake of her breakthrough at the Monterey Pop Festival. Pennebaker was not prepared to cynically exploit the potential cinematic drama in Joplin's spiralling drug abuse to satiate the audience for that kind of film. In the end, he found himself ill-equipped to cope with the magnitude of her situation: 'And to what avail? You're just showing somebody in trouble' (*ibid.*, p.315).^{xxxiii}

The issue raised by Pennebaker's reaction to Bellamy's exercising of her final cut privileges is that he fails to recognise her vulnerability as a social actor because it is not as outwardly obvious as that of an addict in that role – she is simply a woman who

was given a bad contract. The issue is complicated further by the fact that Pennebaker was willing to give John Lennon final cut for *Sweet Toronto*, although this was the result of financial negotiations (and indicates that it is a privilege that can be bought) and not an altruistic move on Pennebaker's part (and, as outlined in the introduction to this thesis, this contractual detail did end up causing Pennebaker significant business hassles when trying to release the film). Pennebaker's treatment of Bellamy and its attendant indication of the way in which the labour of everyday social actors is alienated under his filmmaking practice due to his denial of their collaborative participation in the project is the reason that to call *One P.M.* akin to French *cinéma vérité*, or a synthesis of *cinéma vérité* and American direct cinema techniques is inaccurate. While the method of *One P.M.*'s investigation is highly self-reflexive, as has been discussed, it is not interested in the collaborative self-reflexivity of Jean Rouch that was integral to defining *cinéma vérité*. Calvin Pryluck calls the logic of direct cinema 'the logic of complete collaboration' ([1976] 1988, p.265). Like Winston, he understands the questions of direct cinema to be ethical ones, and argues that a direct cinema film is 'a collaboration from the moment of conception' that 'would not exist without the uniquely personal speech and lines made available by the people being depicted' (*ibid.*). So, while Pennebaker's critique of Godard can certainly be understood as an ethical one, his own practice that, too, alienates the labour of his social actor collaborators is no less problematic. Michael Chanan, making a distinction between space in the fiction film and space in documentary, conceives the space of the documentary as non-orchidean; its space extends beyond the frame and includes its makers and social actors, which contrasts against the enclosed, orchidean space of the fiction film, in which a controlled world is designed to fit within the film frame (2007, p.181). The non-orchidean space of the documentary can also be extended out beyond Chanan's mapping to include its spaces of affect. In the case of *One P.M.*, this means thinking about the Godard and Pennebaker's interventions into the lives of the social actors during the film's production and reception – from providing Cleaver with the money he needed to flee the US to Algeria, to facilitating a utopian space of political exchange for the resistance groups it profiles, to provoking Bellamy's public protest and the San Francisco police's assault on a public audience – because they have real social and political consequences. Pennebaker is more accurate than he realises when, in the film, he confronts himself and his camera in the mirror and understands that he is equally implicated in any critique that is to be made of Godard.

Critiquing Direct Cinema's Fetishisation of Sync Sound

It has been previously argued that sync sound is the defining characteristic of direct cinema. Its implementation changed the way these films were shot and edited, producing an ideological effect that was a guarantor of the new real. The previous chapter considered the politics of Altman's concept of the sound hermeneutic as applied to documentary through an analysis of Pennebaker's deployment of sync sound in *Sweet Toronto*. There, I concluded that the ideological ploy of the sound hermeneutic in direct cinema was an issue of labour and display – a relationship that Pennebaker exploited in *Sweet Toronto* to express the film's ideological voice. *One P.M.*, however, produces a new relationship between sync sound and image; it deconstructs direct cinema's fetishisation of sync sound by foregrounding its materiality in a way that critiques the stability of direct cinema and the sync sound system as a guarantor of anything. This is done by rendering sync sound into a material – and visible – object: the tape recorder. Foregrounding the apparatus brings sync sound 'back to zero,' where the sound/image relationship in direct cinema can be deconstructed. Godard called the pseudo-realism of 16mm sync sound the 'most advanced example of cinematic illusion,' and, in *One P.M.*, it is his collaboration with two of the great practitioners of documentary sync sound artistry that produces a political and structuralist critique of this system (cited in Marcorelles, 1973, p.149).

This chapter's prior analysis of the tape recorder's ubiquitous presence bears that out; the scenes of Rip Torn reinterpreting Tom Hayden's monologue are especially indicative of the film's inspection of this formal trait of direct cinema and its attendant ideology. These performed sequences, using fictional structures to probe, provoke and deconstruct – critique direct cinema authenticity. As he ascends the skyscraper, Torn cradles the tape recorder, tucks it closer to his ear, stops and starts the tape, and delivers a highly presentational performance that completely destabilises the original meaning of Hayden's revolutionary rhetoric; at the same time, he disrupts the film's ability to reproduce Hayden's message with high fidelity – thus, denying the promise of direct cinema. As Williams (1982) argues, Godard's preferred 'sonic reality' is '*mechanical* [. . .] Godard's sounds assault the spectator, force him/her to listen, to be astonished at their power' (p.202; emphasis in original). Thus, these interventions not only deconstruct the medium but the message; Hayden's rhetoric is put on display, and the

spectator is asked to consider his every word and not to take it at its face value. The clarity and cohesion of Hayden's rhetoric is not allowed; it is just another illusion, like sync sound. Therefore, as Kahana suggests, 'the concept of dissonance might be taken as an epistemological principle' (2008, p.144).^{xxxiv}



Figure 5.4. *The sound hermeneutic: Hayden listens to Cleaver's speech on the tape recorder (left) and the film cuts back in time to its on-camera delivery (right).*

In a later scene, Hayden listens to Cleaver lecture on the structural oppression of black revolutionaries on the tape recorder. His voice is unmoored from its visual signifier, but the two are unified in the following scene as the image cuts to Cleaver's delivery of that speech in Oakland (see figure 5.4). In this scene and the others like it, 'pointing the camera at the (loud)speaker' – or, in this case, the tape recorder – 'displaces' the spectator's attention from the ideological effects of sync sound and redirects it towards 'the technological, mechanical, and thus industrial status of cinema' and 'the scandalous fact that sound films began as language [. . .] and not as pure image' (Altman, 1980, p.69). Godard and Pennebaker draw on-screen attention to the technology of direct cinema to inspect and critique its markers of authenticity. Just as Godard urges the students at Ocean Hill-Brownsville to question the disjuncture between Torn's words and his appearance, he critically challenges direct cinema's terms of representation, warning the spectator not to trust everything one sees and hears (although this is nothing new or too radical – in fact, it is the very point of *Dont Look Back*'s 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' opening – but it does point to the fact that this is an ongoing issue in Pennebaker's direct cinema).^{xxxv} Of course, it is the sync sound system that enables this critique – it relies on the spectator seeing Torn enact his imitative performance of Bellamy and being aware of the disjuncture it produces. To Altman's second point, the foregrounding of the tape recorder throughout the film also

reinforces sync sound's status as the defining formal property of direct cinema. Direct cinema's revolution is often thought to be one of language. As Marcorelles notes, 'for the first time in history speech can move, breathe, be seen, take up space' (1973, p.15); after all, Pennebaker considers the development of sync sound 'tantamount to finding sound in the '30s, as far as I'm concerned' (1983, p.179). Marcorelles' decision to express the significance of sync sound by imbuing it with visual characteristics is an interesting one given the way Godard and Pennebaker materialise it in the tape recorder throughout *One P.M.* Materialising sync sound foregrounds its status as a fetish object in direct cinema. It also takes the film's deployment of sync sound beyond the question asked in *Sweet Toronto* – namely, how sync sound can be exploited for the ideological expression of the filmmaker – and instead asks: what is hidden behind its illusion of coherence and what can be gained by deconstructing the terms of representation produced by this golden calf idolised by direct cinema practitioners? In this regard, the tape recorder becomes an alienating device that destabilises sync sound's status as a normalised convention of documentary. By making the invisible visible, *One P.M.*'s critique is a political one that challenges direct cinema's fidelity to the real and exposes its codification of authenticity as an ideological construct. As Bonitzer writes of 'militant cinema,' *One P.M.* 'plac[es] on trial [. . .] the utilization of the voice as homogenous with and in harmony with the image' (Bonitzer, [1975] 1986, p.330). It is also indicative of the film's treatment of 'voice' on a broader, more conceptual level – the voice of the documentary itself. Pennebaker overwrites, rewrites and remixes Godard's initial groundwork; the result produces:

[E]ffects of rupture, dis-alignings, 'noise' in the filmic chain. A tearing in the effect of the real of the image and in the effect of the mastery of the voice is brought about. The relation among voice, sound, and silence is transformed and musicalized. (*ibid.*)

The 'noise' that Bonitzer points to which functions like music is akin to free jazz in *One P.M.* Much like free jazz, the film enacts a critique of dominant cultural, economical and political forces. Pennebaker and Godard's collaboration is not a harmonious one, and the ongoing struggle of each filmmaker to assert his voice in the performance of the film text produces a contradictory and even confused text. Perhaps this fits the film's 'political reality' (Pennebaker, 1983, p.643). As Pennebaker says, '[I]t's a peculiar record of this time, and there isn't much around that is' (*ibid.*).

Conclusion

One P.M. concludes with the time-lapsed demolition of the Schuyler Hotel, site of Jefferson Airplane's rooftop concert, condensing six months' hard labour into forty-five seconds of screen time, and, thus, alienating it.^{xxxvi} The demolition company's sign at the site reads 'Wrecking Corporation of America – Division of North American Development.' Symmetrically balancing the film's end with its opening, the scene is preceded by universal leader and followed by the closing credits, which are punctuated by leader another four times. Church bells ring out 'Angels We Have Heard on High.' In a personal interview, Pennebaker revealed his personal fascination with the sequence:

That always intrigued me – that building coming down – and [on the street] everybody's seeing just a normal – a building coming down, but when you put it in context with Godard, it was like the revolutionary! He's torn down a building, and they don't realise it! (Appendix)^{xxxvii}

It is another act of defamiliarisation that reframes the everyday, and a fitting conclusion to the film.

In *One P.M.*, Pennebaker's cynicism infuses a layered work that disavows Godard's radicalism, and, in the process, critiques his own methodology and role in the framing of his subjects – and also effectively demonstrates the political potential of direct cinema. It has taken the dialectical structure of Pennebaker's kinetic progressions on display in *Sweet Toronto* and complicated it even further through the enactment of the film's conflicting and contradictory voices of its filmmakers, Godard and Pennebaker. Just before ascending to the New York sky for the Airplane's performance, Torn is filmed from the backseat of a car as he starts and stops through the traffic-clogged city streets. He says (presumably being fed dialogue from Godard by earpiece): 'Revolution is made with all kinds of weapons: theory . . . to show the transactions that go on between men. To strip away sentimentality, to show it in alienated form.' True to Torn's words, *One P.M.* offers no high fidelity representation of specific political positions or rhetoric (for example, Hayden's advocacy of the radicalisation of the working class and the crucial role it will play in a forthcoming revolution, or even Bellamy's belief in the exploitation of corporate power for the social good); instead, its investigation is political in a broader sense in that it challenges the terms of representation of both the political message (Hayden's speech is robbed of any logical coherence by Torn, who pulls it apart word by word and syllable by syllable) and the form that conveys that message – the sync sound system of direct cinema. As

with *Sweet Toronto*, the film's interventions in the form of direct cinema are rooted in a reconsideration – here, a critical deconstruction – of the role of sync sound.

If *One P.M.* represents direct cinema under construction, then the question of the effects of its renovations remains. As this study of Pennebaker's mature-period direct cinema concludes, I want to consider what his interventions offer direct cinema and documentary as a whole. How can the effect – or non-effect – of Pennebaker's work during this period be conceptualised?

ⁱ These two scenes are the Jefferson Airplane's rooftop concert atop the Schuyler Hotel and the same hotel's time-lapsed demolition. While, most obviously, he was so struck by the Airplane's impromptu rooftop concert that he encouraged the Beatles to mimic it atop Apple Corps Savile Row's headquarters for their own documentary, *Let It Be* (and its immediate iconicity would popularise the act for other musical groups), it was the auto-destruction of the Schuyler that influenced Lennon's own filmmaking practice. It inspired the 1971 collaboration with Ono, *Erection*, which, as a time-lapsed document of the construction of the London International Hotel in Kensington, is essentially the inverse of *One P.M.*'s closing scene.

ⁱⁱ *PBL* demonstrated its remarkable breadth of critical enquiry in segments on false and misleading claims in advertising, the relationship between the military and private industry, the decriminalisation of marijuana, the costs of political campaigning on television, genetics, and President Johnson's conduct of war in Vietnam (see Figure 5.1). Its arts coverage included such programmes as *The Medium is the Medium* (Fred Barzyk, 1968), a showcase of six video artists' innovative new work; and *Who's Afraid of the Avant-Garde?* (David Oppenheim, 1968), a *PBL* special that covered the 1968 Buffalo Arts Festival (which featured Merce Cunningham's *RainForest*, filmed by Pennebaker and Leacock). For more on the *PBL* and its place within the history of public television in America, see Ponce de Leon (2015).

ⁱⁱⁱ The very first *PBL* broadcast on 5 November 1967, on the topic of race relations in the US, was only carried by 90 out of a possible 119 NET affiliate stations across the country (Gent, 1967, p.95). The programme included a staging of Douglas Turner Ward's play *Day of Absence* (director unknown, 1968), which featured some of its all-black cast in whiteface. While some stations cited financial considerations, it was withheld by WVIZ-TV in Cleveland in the run-up to the city's mayoral election, which featured the black Carl Stokes running against the white Seth Taft, due to the 'emotional thrust' of the programme (Cope cited in Gent, 1967, p.95).

^{iv} A *New York Times* article reports that the series' first season 'has attracted less than a 2 per cent share of potential viewers in the [New York] metropolitan area and on some weeks fell below a level in which statistical reporting was possible' (Gould, 1968, p.63).

^v On 4 April 1968, as Godard lectured New York University graduate students on filmmaking and politics, unbeknownst to everyone in the room, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis. The talk was filmed by Pennebaker and his associate Mark Woodcock, released as *Two American Audiences* and ran as a double feature with Godard's *Un film comme les autres*.

^{vi} According to *Variety*, 'Godard's fee is so large that in most colleges department funds have been pooled in order to pay him' (Anonymous, 1968a, p.18); the exact figure is 'reliably estimated as in the \$1,000-1,500 range for one talk in a large lecture hall, plus expenses' (*ibid.*, p.3).

^{vii} For more on Godard's reception in the US, see Brody, 2008, p.323.

^{viii} The title *One A.M.* is surely also an homage to the 1916 Charles Chaplin short film of the same name. Godard is a widely-known admirer of Chaplin.

^{ix} *One P.M.* premiered commercially at the Whitney Museum of American Art on 10 February 1972, where it ran for one week. It had previously screened at the San Remo Festival of Film Authors in October 1971 alongside *Times For* (Stephen Dwoskin, 1971), *The Sorrow and the Pity* (Marcel Ophüls, 1971) as well as Godard's own *British Sounds*, among others (Anonymous, 1971, p.7). Its first public screening was on 30 July 1970 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York as part of the 'Cinémathèque at the Metropolitan Museum' film series, which was curated by Henri Langlois and showcased seventy significant contributions to film history from the collection of the Cinémathèque Française.

^x Among those is British filmmaker Peter Whitehead, whose 1969 film *The Fall* documents the tension and violence in and around New York City in 1968, and includes extensive observational coverage of Columbia University protests and occupation of Low Library in April. Its exploration of structures and spaces of power makes it thematically similar to *One P.M.*

^{xi} Pennebaker's methodology here has much in common with Dylan and Alk's for *Eat the Document*. Both *One P.M.* and *Eat the Document* are parallel texts to never-completed films – *One A.M.* and *You Know Something Is Happening*, respectively – and, furthermore, rework and repurpose some of their source film's intended footage and heavily rely on marginal, elliptical material intended for the cutting room floor, which works towards a highly deconstructive and self-reflexive enunciation.

^{xii} Stephen Mamber quotes Frances Flaherty, the filmmaker's wife, who describes the concept of non-preconception as 'a method of discovery as a process of film-making' (cited in Mamber, 1974, p.9).

^{xiii} It should be noted that, contrary to misconceptions about a rigid 'direct cinema dogma' to which its practitioners subscribe, Pennebaker's own practice is quite liberated and 'goes beyond any kind of organizable theory' (1983, p.389). He outlines his three principles as: one, immerse yourself in filming so intensely that 'you don't really know where the film leaves off and your life comes in'; two, memorize your footage; three, it is your imagination, not the equipment that makes the film, so trust the instincts that come with being intimately involved with the material ('[Y]ou just have this absolute sense that it must be this way. You don't have to know why.') (*ibid.*, pp.389-90). Decisions about jump cuts and match cuts 'don't matter at all' – such obsessions miss the point and derail the exploration of 'outrageous idea[s]' (*ibid.*, pp.390-91).

^{xiv} While the overarching structures of the two films do not develop this sense of 'duration, of lived experience' through the traditional spatio-temporal organisation of classical direct cinema (and are unique in this regard), discrete sequences within both films do adhere to this concept (hence, Mamber recognising a 'mosaic' structure in *Monterey Pop*, although chapter four of this thesis makes it clear that I disagree with this), as, for example, chapter three's analysis of Ravi Shankar's dhun to conclude *Pop* illustrates.

^{xv} Here, the countdown leader actually indicates the start of the film's second reel. Again, it is interesting that Pennebaker has chosen to foreground the material conditions inherent to the film's projection and display instead of invisibly masking them.

^{xvi} Castells identifies 'the shortcomings of community movements during the sixties' as 'their localism' and 'their *social* and *political isolation*, at the same time with respect to other groups and in relation to the political system' ([1976] 1982, p.582; emphasis in original).

^{xvii} For more on the American urban crisis of the 1970s, see also Castells, 1977.

^{xviii} Despite investigation, the site of *One P.M.*'s vertical trek remains unidentified.

^{xix} Giuliana Bruno also extracts a structuralist effect from *La notte*'s opening camera scroll. She writes: 'Through such exploration of architectural composition, the making of cinema's language is laid bare and the very physicality of its fabrication is revealed. We feel the textures of architecture and cinema haptically collide as the building turns into a celluloid band' (2002, p.98).

^{xx} As previously mentioned, Godard had heavily criticised the muddled discourse of Leacock's brand of so-called 'cinema truth' in a 1963 entry in Godard's 'Dictionary of American Filmmakers' feature for *Cahiers du Cinéma*. See Godard ([1963] 1986, pp.202-03). In a further dig, Godard's 1963 short film *Le Grand Escroc* features Jean Seberg revisiting her *À bout de souffle* (1960) character – here renamed Pat Leacock – in a role that functions as a critique of both American direct cinema and the Jean Rouch school of French *cinéma vérité*.

^{xxi} For a concise yet thorough analysis of Maoism, its appeal to Godard over the many radical ideologies with a stake in the revolutionary struggles of '68, and its deployment in the Dziga Vertov films, see MacCabe, Eaton, & Mulvey, 1980, pp.54-73.

^{xxii} To once again return to Thomas Waugh, whose extensive criticism of direct cinema has been previously addressed in earlier chapters, it appears that the basis of his objections are less a matter of form than content. Whereas scholars such as Winston, Ruby and Pryluck built a school of direct cinema criticism based around the more nuanced, considered and intertwined problems of ethics and self-reflexivity, Waugh's denunciation is much simpler: direct cinema simply 'failed to focus consistently on potentially radical topics or to be exploited systematically for radical ends' ([1976] 1988, p.153). In fact, he sounds like a naïve direct cinema enthusiast when praising its techniques at work in *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* (Joris Ivens, 1976), which captures the last days of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, simply because the film's radical content aligns with his own beliefs. For Waugh, Ivens' camera succeeds in 'unobtrusively witnessing' a community debate (*ibid.*, p.154); one particular sequence

exemplifies 'the artist's self-effacement before the natural shape of an event instead of the imposition of his or her own ideologically determined shape upon it' and 'respects the integrity of the events before the camera'; and, overall, the filmmakers 'minimized their own subjectivity' (*ibid.*, p.156). Whereas Waugh can be contented with an explicitly leftist intervention in direct cinema on the level of content alone, Godard's goal was decidedly more radical.

^{xxiii} But even Godard's disillusionment with the real political impact of filmmaking is complicated by the reception and alleged impact of *La Chinoise*'s run at the Kips Bay and Columbia University in April 1968. Both Pennebaker and American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, who attended a screening of the film with student radicals at Columbia, attribute some measure of influence of *La Chinoise* on the political rhetoric of those involved in the on-campus protests that would culminate in the student occupations later in the month. See Brody, 2008, p.326.

^{xxiv} A bit of a discrepancy exists over the sum paid to Cleaver; it has also been cited by Godard as \$500 (as in Brody, 2008, p.342). However, the point still stands.

^{xxv} In another move parallel to Pennebaker, Godard, in 1973, founded an alternative video production company (an alternative distribution model was also included in initial plans) with Anne-Marie Miéville called Sonimage.

^{xxvi} Pennebaker's political and affective cynicism is indicative of broader social trends prevalent at the tail end of the 1960s. For more on the emergence of cynicism as a cultural form of the American Left in the late 1960s into the 1970s, see Goldfarb, 1991, chapter six.

^{xxvii} It must be acknowledged that Pennebaker's personal feelings towards Godard have softened considerably in the intervening decades. In 2012, he said of *One P.M.*: '[T]hat film was my sense of Godard, and how much I liked him, and how much I thought he understood of the world that offered itself to him' (Appendix).

^{xxviii} The US financial landscape scarcely resembles that of 1968. Of the banks Bellamy lists, Chemical acquired Manufacturers Hanover Trust in 1992 and Chase Manhattan in 1996, but then adopted the Chase brand; a 2000 merger with J.P. Morgan & Co. formed JPMorgan Chase. Lehman Brothers, at one time the fourth-largest investment bank in the US, filed for bankruptcy in 2008.

^{xxix} This recalls another documentary experiment from the same year, William Greaves' *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* (1968), which utilises three separate film crews to, likewise, document increasing layers of self-reflexivity in a discrete filmmaking situation (the first crew films a pair of actors, the second crew films the first crew, and the third crew film ancillary footage that fits the project's themes – including the other crews).

^{xxx} However naïve and idealistic Bellamy may have been as a young attorney, her subsequent career demonstrates that her idealism, dedication to social progress and belief that the system can be changed from within did not decay into cynicism and disillusionment with age. Bellamy went on to become a prominent local politician and global humanitarian; she has served as a New York State Senator, president of the New York City Council, director of the Peace Corps, executive director of UNICEF, and president and CEO of World Learning in her long and distinguished career.

^{xxxi} For an in-depth historical overview and analysis of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville crisis, see Podair (2002).

^{xxxii} In a personal interview, Pennebaker spoke of *One P.M.*'s opening in San Francisco, where 'for some reason, the local cops were very upset about it, and they were dropping tear gas bombs down the vents, so the people had to see it with [handkerchiefs] on! I mean, it was just a great screening, I understand. I wasn't there for it, but I thought that was worth the film (Appendix).

^{xxxiii} See also Bauldie (1987a) for Pennebaker's discussion of his uneasiness with Dylan's frequent and obvious amphetamine abuse on the 1966 tour and his struggle to address it in *You Know Something Is Happening* without exploiting the situation: '[T]here was a kind of core of reality underneath it that made the thing frightening – particularly where the drugs were concerned. And I guess my sense was that you'd have to find a way to deal with that; you couldn't ignore it' (cited in Bauldie, 1987a, p.25).

^{xxxiv} In many ways, Godard's investigation of sync sound here anticipates his experiments with sound/image relationships in the Dziga Vertov films, which, interestingly, are much more straightforward and less effective as critiques. See MacCabe, Eaton, & Mulvey, 1980, pp.58-59.

^{xxxv} For more on this reading of *Dont Look Back*'s opening scene, see Rothman, 1997, p.149.

^{xxxvi} The Airplane had played three songs – 'The House at Pooneil Corners,' 'We Can Be Together' and 'Somebody to Love' (but only 'Pooneil' appears in the film) – before the performance was broken up by

the police and arrests were made. For more on the Jefferson Airplane's involvement with *One P.M.*, see Glatt, 2014, pp.179-80 and Adler, 1968a; 1968b.

^{xxxvii} He furthers: 'The idea of the building being torn down, all those things were things that naturally, you know, popped up in [Godard's] life, and he put them into film, and I thought that's the way it should be! Not buying a script from somebody, and then buying somebody's services. All those things are [. . .] commerce' (Appendix).

Chapter 6

Conclusion: To Free Direct Cinema

Introduction

To conclude this study, I want to briefly return to the idea of ‘unorthodox collaborations’ in Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema by discussing his partnership with Godard on *One P.M.* and considering its implications for direct cinema as a form. As previously discussed, following the filmmaking phase under study in this thesis, Pennebaker’s direct cinema returns to a much more conservative deployment of the form in which he also disavows collaboration. Following this discussion of the impact of Pennebaker’s collaboration, I would like to make a number of recommendations for future research on direct cinema and summarise the contributions to the study of documentary film that this thesis has made.

Unorthodox Collaborations: Pennebaker, Godard and the Consequences for Direct Cinema

This thesis has explored the way in which Pennebaker’s mature-period direct cinema is the consequence of his highly personal engagement with cultural stimuli. For example, in chapter three, I discussed the ways in which it emerged as a critique of a critique – that is, as a response to Dylan and Alk’s attack on classical direct cinema’s ideology and conventions in *Eat the Document*. Furthermore, the very concept of kinetic progressions, as proposed in chapter four, represents a complication of direct cinema’s conventions and evolution of its process of signification that is necessarily developed as a response to the subjects of his films. This is evident first in *Monterey Pop*, then more confidently in *Sweet Toronto*, where his kinetic progressions’ dialectical structures self-reflexively engage with the key direct cinema ideology of authenticity (embodied by the deployment of sync sound) to foreground his authorial voice. Throughout his career, Pennebaker has consistently adapted the direct cinema form based on his personal response and engagement with the profilmic event.¹ *One P.M.* demonstrates this clearly by adapting the dialectical structures of kinetic progressions to showcase unified conceptual space as opposed to unified diegetic space in order to better respond to the crisis at hand in that film.

The circumstances of *One P.M.*'s unorthodox collaboration between Godard and Pennebaker are so unusual, situation-specific and borne out of financial necessity that developing a sustainable model of collaboration for direct cinema from them is difficult, if not impossible. 'I had no business making his movie. We trusted each other about as much as Chinese pirates,' Pennebaker said shortly after finishing *One P.M.* (cited in Levin, 1971, p.245). Of course, it is not a collaboration at all in the traditional sense; there is a tension within its authorship that produces a different – and very evident – effect than the unified voice of other films that claim collective authorship, like those of the Dziga Vertov Group, Newsreel or the Film Group. What is the effect of the collaboration with Godard on Pennebaker? It produces a new self-reflexivity in his filmmaking practice, which comes about as a result of his scepticism, distrust and doubting of Godard that incites Pennebaker to question him and the terms of his representation. As explored in chapter five, everyone is implicated – even Pennebaker. If anything, their 'collaboration' is based on a critical distance.

Interestingly, *One P.M.* also marks a return to the hallmark of Robert Drew's direct cinema, the crisis. However, the crisis afflicting late 1960s America that Godard investigates and Pennebaker further interrogates is far too systemically pervasive to be contained within any 'crisis structure.' Pennebaker has remarked on his disdain for Drew's 'unsubtle, unsophisticated style' whose simplified, didactic structure was made '[c]omprehensible to the most number of people. No shenanigans. No artistry. Just straight-on old middleclass humor [. . .] or drama [. . .] Nothing tricky. Nothing arch [*sic*]. No Godard. I mean, [*One P.M.*] was as far removed from Drew's vision of what films should be as you could get (Pennebaker, 1983, pp.365-66). Pennebaker's comments here are very interesting, considering the similarities in *One P.M.* to the early direct cinema of Robert Drew (in addition to considering the direction Pennebaker's late-period direct cinema would take). Of course, structurally, the language of direct cinema – especially its engagement with sync sound – has been evolved far beyond anything Drew could imagine or would approve of, but the commonalities are there.ⁱⁱ As previously mentioned, *One P.M.*'s narrative is conceived of as a crisis, which is twofold. It is the systemic crisis of everyday life – here considered as an urban crisis – but it is also a crisis of representation. It also marks a return to direct cinema's roots in broadcast journalism – *One P.M.* is an investigation into this crisis. This seems to suggest that direct cinema has somehow come full circle at the same that it has

progressed forward, or perhaps ‘the crisis’ is more of an intrinsic characteristic of direct cinema than previously theorised.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the goals of this thesis was to revise and expand (or free) the present understanding of direct cinema. By drawing attention to its evolution and the way in which one particular filmmaker appropriated and transformed the form and its conventions, I argued that the dominant narrative of direct cinema within documentary history is in need of reconsideration. The sheer diversity of direct cinema in the 1960s and into the 1970s, as particularly explored in the first chapter, suggests that further unknown or forgotten narratives of the form could potentially produce a more complex and varied understanding of direct cinema.

What most naturally follows from and builds upon the research presented in this thesis is a study of Pennebaker’s late-period direct cinema. In chapter one, I described the aesthetic and narrative shift and the smaller-scale, community focus that characterises his productions in this phase as a consequence of Leacock Pennebaker, Inc.’s bankruptcy and the need to be as cost-effective and profitable as possible. A study of this period, which would focus on Pennebaker’s immediate ‘post-collapse’ films, *Original Cast Album: Company*, *The Children’s Theater of John Donahue*, as well as his return to more ambitious projects, *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1973), *The Energy War* (with Chris Hegedus and Pat Lowell, 1978) and *Town Bloody Hall* (with Chris Hegedus, 1979), could, as this project has done, foreground an industrial and economical analysis of direct cinema. There is a need for greater consideration of these factors in the analysis of direct cinema production and reception. Pennebaker’s personal films from his mature/late period – such as *Eclipse*, *Moscow – Ten Years After* and his untitled, ongoing project for his son Jojo – would further challenge established conceptions of Pennebaker as a filmmaker as well as yield a more complete understanding of his filmmaking practice during this particular phase of his career.

As previously mentioned in this thesis, the legacy of direct cinema would benefit immensely from returning Howard Alk and Shirley Clarke to the conversation. With their most significant films now commercially available on home video, the time is ripe for reappraisal. Alk’s politically urgent direct cinema, as seen in *The Murder of*

Fred Hampton and *American Revolution 2*, continues to speak to contemporary social concerns. As this thesis recognised, his dialectical and confrontational film structures are unique in direct cinema and presage Pennebaker's own mature-period work. In addition, contemporary perspectives on Ed Pincus and *One Step Away*, William C. Jersey and *A Time for Burning*, and King, Murray (perhaps the latter in conversation with *Salesman*) are needed to better understand the diminished impact of these once-provocative films and filmmakers on direct cinema's historical narrative.

One further underrepresented topic within direct cinema that would benefit from a dedicated study is the role women played in the production of this film cycle. Such a study would go beyond a focus on filmmakers, such as Clarke, Joyce Chopra (*Joyce at 34* [1972]) and Charlotte Zwerin, and examine the marginalised – but crucial – roles women played in the establishment of the language of direct cinema and the production of its most notable and successful films. For example, at Drew Associates in 1960, two rival teams of editors – one led by Pennebaker and Leacock, consisting of personally-trained apprentices, including Nell Cox, and the other led by Robert Drew, consisting of traditionally-trained professionals – were each assigned to produce a cut of *Yanki No!* The difference in the cuts, recalls Pennebaker, 'was so electric' (1983, p.199). It was at this moment that Drew recognised that this new, emerging mode of documentary was evolving beyond his control and could not be grafted onto existing, traditional models of television documentary (*ibid.*). As this story indicates, direct cinema was shaped by the invisible and underappreciated contributions of editors and sound recordists such as Cox, Hope Ryden, Kate Taylor and Mary Lampson. An investigation into the gender politics of the production of direct cinema is sorely needed.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I conducted a re-evaluation of direct cinema by first proposing the periodisation of the film cycle in order to draw out its evolutionary properties, and by then focusing on an analysis of what I identified as D.A. Pennebaker's mature period. I argued that this is a particularly crucial phase of direct cinema, for it represents a fulfilment of the potentiality of early direct cinema; Pennebaker produces a sensorial cinema that emphasises mood over informationalism and redeploys his modernist preoccupations in a way that demonstrates the political potential of the form. The thesis developed four key contributions to the study of documentary film beyond the act of

focusing critical attention on a critically neglected period of a key documentarian's history. I foregrounded the economical and industrial context of Pennebaker's mature period – which is an approach that is rarely considered in studies of direct cinema – and demonstrated why this is crucial to developing an understanding of it; I privileged a textual analysis of sync sound across Pennebaker's mature period – a critically neglected analytical approach to this form of documentary – which demonstrated its cruciality to the very idea of direct cinema; I furthered the concept of the performative documentary; and proposed the concept of kinetic progressions as Pennebaker's dialectical process of signification that exploits classical direct cinema's emphasis on present-ness and found symbolism to evolve further the formal language of direct cinema in a way that fulfils its potentiality for political discourse. It is my hope that the current revival in scholarly interest in Pennebaker continues to swell and produce research that continues to reappraise and redefine direct cinema.

ⁱ The Maysles brothers are perhaps even more adept at this. As Beattie observes that direct cinema filmmakers need to 'respond to specific situations and exigencies . . . the brothers were willing to restyle and re-inflect – and even abandon – extant principles and understandings of direct cinema in their approach to film-making (thereby casting doubt on assumptions concerning direct cinema as a proscribed set of practices') (2011, cited in Tyree, 2012, p.50).

ⁱⁱ Interestingly, Mamber argues that *Gimme Shelter* (produced during the same period as *One P.M.*) is also 'crisis oriented' and 'seems more closely related to the Drew-Leacock films than to their own' (1974, p.170).

Filmography

- The 400 Blows* (François Truffaut, 1959)
- À bout de souffle* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960)
- Adventures on the New Frontier* (Robert Drew, 1961)
- Alice Cooper* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1970)
- An American Family* (Craig Gilbert, 1973)
- American Revolution 2* (Howard Alk, 1969)
- Awake at Generation* (D.A. Pennebaker, unreleased)
- Basic Training* (Frederick Wiseman, 1971)
- Beau Travail* (Claire Denis, 1999)
- Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927)
- Beyond the Law* (Norman Mailer, 1968)
- Birth and Death* (Arthur Barron and Gene Marner, 1968)
- Breaking It Up at the Museum* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1964)
- Bridges-Go-Round* (Shirley Clarke, 1958)
- British Sounds* (Dziga Vertov Group, 1969)
- Bullfight* (Shirley Clarke, 1955)
- The Canterville Ghost* (John Robins, 1966)
- The Chair* (Robert Drew, 1962)
- Chiefs* (Richard Leacock, 1968)
- The Children Were Watching* (Robert Drew, 1961)
- The Children's Theater of John Donahue* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1972)
- La Chinoise* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967)
- A Christmas Memory* (Frank Perry, 1966)
- Chronique d'un été* (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961)
- Cicero March* (The Film Group, 1966)
- Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (Robert Drew, 1963)
- Cry of Jazz* (Ed Bland, 1959)
- Cut Piece* (Albert Maysles and David Maysles, 1965)
- Dance in the Sun* (Shirley Clarke, 1953)
- Dancers in School* (D.A. Pennebaker and Kate Taylor, 1971)
- David* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1961)
- David Holzman's Diary* (David McBride, 1968)

Day of Absence (Paul Bogart, 1968)
Daybreak Express (D.A. Pennebaker, 1953-57)
The Dirty Dozen (Robert Aldrich, 1967)
Don't Count the Candles (Lord Snowdon, 1968)
Dont Look Back (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967)
Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, 1969)
Eat the Document (Bob Dylan and Howard Alk, 1972)
Eclipse (D.A. Pennebaker and Frazer Pennebaker, unreleased)
Eddie (Robert Drew, 1961)
Elizabeth and Mary (D.A. Pennebaker, 1964)
The Energy War (D.A. Pennebaker, Chris Hegedus and Pat Lowell, 1978)
Erection (John Lennon and Yoko Ono, 1971)
Evening Primrose (Paul Bogart, 1966)
Faces (John Cassavetes, 1968)
The Fall (Peter Whitehead, 1969)
Fathers and Sons (Don Lenzer, 1969)
Festival (Murray Lerner, 1967)
Un film comme les autres (Jean-Luc Godard, 1968)
The Flower Thief (Ron Rice, 1960)
Free at Last (Greg Shuker, Nick Proferes and Jim Desmond, 1968)
Gimme Shelter (Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin, 1970)
Le Gai savoir (Jean-Luc Godard, 1969)
Le Grand Escroc (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963)
Les Grand Meaulnes (The Wanderer) (Jean-Gabriel Albicocco, 1967)
The Great American Novel (Arthur Barron, 1968)
Grey Gardens (Albert Maysles, David Maysles, Ellen Hovde, Muffie Meyer, 1976)
A Happy Mother's Day (Richard Leacock, 1963)
Harlan County, USA (Barbara Kopple, 1976)
Hear Us, O Lord (Elizabeth Farmer, 1968)
High School (Frederick Wiseman, 1968)
Hospital (Frederick Wiseman, 1969)
How Yukong Moved the Mountains (Joris Ivens, 1976)
I'm Not There (Todd Haynes, 2007)
Jane (D.A. Pennebaker and Hope Ryden, 1962)

John Glenn (D.A. Pennebaker, 1970)
Johnny Cash! The Man, His World, His Music (Robert Elfstrom, 1970)
A Journey to Jerusalem (Michael Mindlin, 1968)
Joyce at 34 (Joyce Chopra, 1972)
Keep on Rockin' (D.A. Pennebaker, 1972)
King, Murray (David Hoffman and Jonathan Gordon, 1969)
Kustom Kar Kommandos (Kenneth Anger, 1965)
Lampman's Boogie (D.A. Pennebaker, unreleased)
Let It Be (Michael Lindsay-Hogg, 1970)
Land Without Bread (Luis Buñuel, 1933)
Lindsay for Mayor (D.A. Pennebaker, 1969)
Lonely Boy (Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroitor, 1961)
Lotte in Italia (Dziga Vertov Group, 1970)
The Love Song of Barney Kempinski (Stanley Prager, 1967)
Made in U.S.A. (Jean-Luc Godard, 1966)
Maidstone (Norman Mailer, 1970)
Marjoe (Howard Smith and Sarah Kernochan, 1972)
A Married Couple (Allan King, 1970)
McCarthy (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968)
The Medium is the Medium (Fred Barzyk, 1968)
Model (Frederick Wiseman, 1980)
Moment in Love (Shirley Clarke, 1957)
Monterey Pop (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968)
Montparnasse et Levallois (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)
Moscow – Ten Years After (D.A. Pennebaker, 1969)
Mr. Pearson (Dick Ballentine, 1964)
The Murder of Fed Hampton (Howard Alk, 1971)
Neon Signs (Shirley Clarke and D.A. Pennebaker, 1958)
No Direction Home (Martin Scorsese, 2005)
La notte (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1961)
N.Y., N.Y. (Francis Thompson, 1957)
On the Pole (Robert Drew, 1960)
On the Road to Button Bay (Robert Drew, 1962)
One Plus One (Jean-Luc Godard, 1968)

One A.M. (Charles Chaplin, 1916)
One P.M. (D.A. Pennebaker, 1972)
One Step Away (Ed Pincus, 1968)
Original Cast Album: Company (D.A. Pennebaker, 1970)
Ornette: Made in America (Shirley Clarke, 1985)
Portrait of Jason (Shirley Clarke, 1967)
Pravda (Dziga Vertov Group, 1969)
Primary (Robert Drew, 1960)
Pull My Daisy (Robert Frank, 1959)
RainForest (David Oppenheim, 1968)
Ramblin' (D.A. Pennebaker, unreleased)
Renaldo and Clara (Bob Dylan and Howard Alk, 1978)
Robert Casey (D.A. Pennebaker, 1970)
Rodgers and Hart Today (Bill Davis, 1967)
Salesman (Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin, 1969)
Sex in the Sixties (Irving Gitlin, 1967)
Scorpio Rising (Kenneth Anger, 1963)
Sherman's March (Ross McElwee, 1986)
Showman (Albert Maysles and David Maysles, 1963)
The Sorrow and the Pity (Marcel Ophuls, 1971)
The Store (Frederick Wiseman, 1983)
A Stravinsky Portrait (Richard Leacock, 1966)
Susan Starr (D.A. Pennebaker and Hope Ryden, 1962)
Sweet Toronto (D.A. Pennebaker, 1971)
Symbiopsychotaxiplasm (William Greaves, 1968)
A Time for Burning (William C. Jersey, 1966)
Times For (Stephen Dwoskin, 1971)
Titicut Follies (Frederick Wiseman, 1967)
Town Bloody Hall (D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, 1979)
Two American Audiences (Mark Woodcock, 1968)
Underground (Emile de Antonio, 1976)
Warrendale (Allan King, 1968)
What's Happening! The Beatles in the USA (Albert Maysles and David Maysles, 1964)
Who's Afraid of the Avant-Garde? (David Oppenheim, 1968)

Wild 90 (Norman Mailer, 1967)

The Wild One (László Benedek, 1953)

Woodstock (Michael Wadleigh, 1970)

Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory (Louis Lumière, 1895)

Untitled Jojo Project (D.A. Pennebaker, unreleased)

Vent d'est (Dziga Vertov Group, 1970)

Yanki No! (Robert Drew, 1960)

You Are What You Eat (Barry Feinstein, 1968)

You Know Something Is Happening (D.A. Pennebaker, unreleased)

You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You (D.A. Pennebaker, 1964)

Zabriskie Point (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1970)

Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (D.A. Pennebaker, 1973)

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APPENDIX

Subject: D.A. Pennebaker

Interviewer: Frank Verano

Date: 8 November 2012, 11.00am

Location: The offices of Pennebaker Hegedus Films, 262 W 91st Street, New York, NY 10024, USA

D.A. Pennebaker: Mitch Bogdanovich, by the way, is name you should have in your – in terms of developing the equipment.

Frank Verano: Okay.

Pennebaker: He was the first person we – he had a machine shop in midtown that we used quite a lot. And then I ended up using a filmmaker I knew who had a machine shop upstate New York and he used to let me use that.

Verano: First I just want to congratulate you on your honorary Oscar.

Pennebaker: Oh, well, thank you.

Verano: Did that come as a surprise to you?

Pennebaker: Yeah, it did indeed. It did indeed. But, I think, it's really the work of Michael Moore, who's a friend, and who has a very strong feeling about documentaries – that they're really important and they should remain, somehow, at a higher position in the universe [laughs] than they sort of started off at. They were never perceived as really a . . . kind of a rival to the Hollywood film – the acted, written film. They had a hard time getting into public theatres, which is, in a sense – if you're going to try to stir anything, in the public wheel, you kind of have to go where that is, and that tends to be movie theatres. To hope that television will show them is to hope that they'll be available in the local grocery store. It's very unlikely that people making independent films are going to find much of a market in television, so they have to find a way of getting at a fairly broad public base, and Michael feels very strongly about that. Of course, he broke through that barrier by creating a kind of Chaplin-esque character of his own. In a way, it's the whole concept of branding. Branding is the way people view getting at any kind of a public base. You have to be a brand – even if it's one people laugh at. If you're Bon Bread [?], everyone knows who it is. That's kind of what good writers do. You buy certain books because you know who the writer is. A writer can turn out a book a year, or reasonably often, so that kind of works as establishing a line in the marketplace, whereas filmmakers tend to make one film, and it's a long time, maybe, before they make another. The money's hard to get, and they're not used to making films – they don't sit down and make them every morning like a painter who paints something every day, or a piano player who practises . . . It's not quite an artform in that sense, although it's something. Nobody's quite sure what it is. It's somewhere between an artform and a form of journalism. My own feeling is, it's a language that's developing, but very slowly.

Verano: Okay. I want to go back to the sixties and the beginnings of direct cinema. For the purposes of my research –

Pennebaker: Direct cinema, by the way, I think that Al and David [Maysles] were the ones that used that. I don't know where it came from –

Verano: Yeah, Albert's the one who coined it.

Pennebaker: Well, the idea of *cinéma vérité* came from France. It came from Jean Rouch, and it was applied, actually, to newsreels [initially]. It was never anything that I particularly – I had no feeling about any of it. The idea of labelling it, I always thought, was not my business. People will label it and there's not a thing I can do about it. If they want to call it upside-down cake, that was their business. I never think of what I'm doing in terms of that kind of . . . definition, although I do think, in some ways, that what we do is to take things that are in view, as can be seen by a camera, to rely on those, primarily, to tell our story, and to not rely on the writing, or the music, or the editing, although those all factor. The main thing is that the camera is a device, the less you trick it, doesn't lie. And that's maybe the first such device that's ever appeared in public . . . and the transfer of information. And, of course, television uses it, but we don't quite trust the way television uses it, because we know that they have an agenda, and they're out to make money, which they have to, to survive, to pay for all of their overhead. So, the idea of the independent film is something which doesn't have much overhead – at least we don't see the overhead, and we don't think of it as having overhead. We think of it as the use of that device to show us something which we have never seen, or don't understand, or haven't seen a lot. It's there like a kind of viewing sense, that you can climb up to a high place and see what you normally can't see. And, as such, I think most documentary filmmakers [inaudible]. Some big companies make documentaries, for various reasons. People invest money in documentaries in order to promote something, so it's used in ways that anything else is used. So you have to kind of be careful about what you accept. But people should be, anyway. In the old days, when you got money, before there was paper money – which has no value, really – when money was silver coins, or gold coins, or brass coins, people bit them to make sure they were what you said they were. They didn't care who issued them, because you have a thing of value in your hand. Now, with paper money, you rely on some kind of rules that you had nothing to do with. You assume that money will get you what it says it'll get you. Well, I think documentary films are sort of like that. You assume that what you see is what happened, what took place, and you assume that it's not doing any other work – that somebody isn't relying on it to sell you fracking, or anything else. They're relying on it to show you something that you've never seen, or haven't seen recently, or whatever.

Verano: Would you say that “direct cinema” never existed as such? I'm trying to come up with a way to contextualise it.

Pennebaker: You mean as a concept? Well, I think that until the camera was invented, the way you found out – for instance, during the early 1800s, the big thing that people wanted to see was that volcano in the south of Italy [Mount Vesuvius]. And everybody would come down from Europe, hoping it would go off. Or, when it went off, they'd all rush down, because they'd never seen a volcano go off. And, you could paint a picture of it, you could have somebody write about it, or tell you about it, but that wasn't the same thing as seeing it go off. So that became a . . . kind of early *cinéma vérité*, in a way – there it was, and it really happened. I think that journalism, which depended on the integrity of the people who are writing. Some of them were people

you believed, because you liked the way they wrote [laughs], or you liked who you thought they were, whatever it is. There was a need for a kind of assumed integrity. When the camera was first invented, which was in the 1840s (whatever it was), [when] people started taking pictures of people, it was assumed that they were similar to paintings, and, for a long time, photographers tried to make their pictures look like paintings, because that's what people wanted to see, and bought. So, it wasn't until the late 1890s, 1880s, that film actually started playing in places where you could go sit and watch it. And, as such, it suddenly didn't have to have that peculiar quality of the painting in the gallery, which required people to – somebody had to tell you what it was. You had to believe that it was such-and-such's painting, otherwise you'd have no way of knowing. The film could present itself, even when it was a cartoon, even when it was the moon pictures. You saw what was there, and it kind of had a reality because it moved and a kind of life-effect, a liveness to it. You knew it was what you saw, what you saw was what happened – you didn't have to take anybody's word for it. I think that there was a lot of very early work that was – Flaherty, of course, turned the whole thing up on its head, because he said, rather than try to make a film as was done about – there was a couple of films made about Indians, because there was a fear that we were losing them and that they wanted to make a record of what [inaudible] . . . It was probable that most of the films – most of the things that you saw in those films were arranged, because the guy only had so much time – he wasn't an Indian, he couldn't spend his life making it – so he wanted to have them, you know, "I want you to have a dance like you normally do, whether you do it now or not." And so, the Indians did whatever they were told, and it was a kind of directed ensemble that they got. Flaherty did something more interesting. He had a friend – and he wasn't really a filmmaker, he was in his forties when he did *Nanook*, but he was a person who went around, especially in the north, up in Canada, looking for possible mines – iron ore – that was his business, that's what he did. He knew this Indian – I mean, well, he was sort of Indian, but he was really an Eskimo, a [inaudible] – and he knew him as a kind of friend, because, I think, anybody that had any dealings with Eskimos, you almost had to be a friend, because they didn't have time for social frivolity. He made a film [*Nanook of the North*, 1921] about the friend, just because most people had never seen an Eskimo, or what kind of life he lead, and he thought, "This will be interesting to people to see this," even though he himself . . . And he did it with great difficulty – he had to take a camera, and process the film, and look at what he'd shot, project it on something. It was a very hard thing to do. But, in the end, it was a direct – people who saw it knew something they didn't know before. It didn't matter whether he asked Nanook to do something or not. It wasn't Nanook's social life, or Nanook's religious beliefs – it was Nanook exposed to the violence of the atmosphere that he lived in, and the way that he dealt with it. It was kind of true by its very nature. And I think that that changed movies a lot, even though Flaherty, when he did *Moana*, it was – not much was going on in *Moana*, in the islands, as there was in . . . It didn't – everybody thought they knew about the Pacific Islands story before they saw it, so it didn't have that quality of "this is something you never saw before." But, it still had a kind of truth involved in it, because he tried to deal with people in it, and whatnot, and it just was never the signal film that *Nanook* was, which, when it came out, went worldwide. It really amazed me, because Hollywood believed that the only way a film could survive was if it had people that were known – celebrities, actors, who'd been paid a lot of money and were, hence, valuable. The idea of a film being interesting just because it showed something people had never seen – I don't think that that was any – a main factor in any filmmaking, but there may have been other films like that that never made it, I don't know. But

Flaherty's was the first film that I ever saw that sold me on the absolute conviction that, if you pointed that camera at something that interested you, it would see something that interested somebody else, or itself, and that that was the key to documentary filmmaking.

Verano: I have some questions about the cameras that you and Ricky Leacock were developing.

Pennebaker: Yeah, there's two of them over there.

Verano: Well, how –

Pennebaker: Handmade!

Verano: Yeah, about how much do they weigh?

Pennebaker: Ten pounds.

Verano: About ten pounds? And so how would that –

Pennebaker: That's with film.

Verano: With film. And how would you hold them? How were they positioned?

Pennebaker: On the shoulder.

Verano: On the shoulder. How did that –

Pennebaker: There's a picture of, somewhere, there's a picture of me holding one. I don't know quite where it is. It used to be over there somewhere. Yeah, it went on your shoulder, and for a very good reason, that . . . the steadiest part of your standing frame is your cheekbone, because it holds your eye, and the eye needs to be in a steady container. So, if you can have the camera so that it lays against that cheekbone, which this did, and, then, the problem with a handheld camera is if – especially if you were using a long lens, that is a zoom [inaudible] – that any attempt to focus or change the lens settings you were working out at a distance from the fulcrum of the camera, couldn't help but shake your – or, you know, affect your picture. So, what you wanted was to have it so that you could have the camera tight on your shoulder, which held the weight, and against your cheek – then you could do anything you wanted with this hand, and it would stay fairly steady. It took us – I think the first film we did with it was *David*, which was out in Santa Monica, at a place called Synanon, which was a place where junkies all went, because they could all, sort of, be together in a large group. The rules were you could leave anytime you wanted, but you couldn't come back. And that – the kind of social excitement implicit in that kind of concept – held them, and they were a tremendous group of people. That was where – we went out to make a film, in theory, and – this was when I was working with Drew, at Life. The idea was that we were to make a film in which we would film the people who lived in the neighbourhood, and try to get what they thought – their feelings about having a lot of junkies living right on the beach. And then, about three days after I got there, Bill Ray and I, and Nell Cox – that was our team – it became clear to me that that was not

interesting at all, as an idea. Who cared what they thought? [chuckles] These people were doing something that was almost revolutionary, in terms of dealing with drugs, and controlling people who were into drugs, and so I saw that just by living there and filming some of the people in it, and letting them decide what they wanted, you know . . . In other words, dialogue controlled the action, just like in a play. It was like a play. And that, I saw, was a film – was the way to make a film, and it had just as much drama as when you could write, because most people wrote about these people by talking to and watching them and trying to figure out what they did, whereas they knew what they were up to. They all knew that, in a way, the measure of contentment for people who used drugs, and had used drugs, and had sort of figured out how to deal with them, was actually the social excitement implicit in a group – and that held them together. It was . . . what went on in that house was as interesting as any place you could go to, of a group of people. They weren't lying around, like, as people pictured it in Chinese dramas, you know, unconscious and with an opium pipe in their chops. They were living a full life, and they weren't taking any drugs, but they were people who wanted to take drugs, who had taken drugs, so they were people who had been somewhere that most people haven't been. So they, kind of – when you filmed them, that kind of entered into the dialogue, to what they said to each other, what happened, and the way that they dealt with each other. For instance, in the house, there were several married couples, and even some single women, and a lot of single men. The married couples . . . the rule – and they were like rules of gravity, they weren't announced on billboards or sheets of paper in the dining room – these were rules that you learned as you spent time there. Nobody even explained them to you – you had to sort of figure them out. But, anybody that wanted to fuck anybody else, there was a little house on the top of the building, and that was called “the fuck-room,” or whatever it was, and you could do that, if both people wanted to do it, no matter if the person was married or not, to somebody else – but you had to be ready, in the Synanon sessions, which were meetings of maybe 30 or more of the people within the house – not everybody, but all that wanted to come – uh, you had to be ready to talk about it, if somebody asked you a question. You had to be able to synthesise it somehow, and make it understandable to your companions in this group, and it was very interesting. And those Synanon sessions were amazing, because some of the people in it were black, black, black, really black . . . and some of them were almost, well, they were more than passing – they were light, but they were of who-knows-what origin. So, everybody had to talk from where they had come, and there were people – there was a guy named Candy, who kind of ran it, and he later became head of the New York State Drug Commission, but he was an amazing man! He was like somebody out of a Shaw play, you know, a natural philosopher, and Candy – well, everybody! Everybody there was interesting to me. The band – there were two or three musicians, and they were terrific. And now I think there's a record of music that was recorded there, and they made a record of it. It was like . . . it was like a ten year-old in a candy store. And I saw that you just had to point a camera, and not pose any kind of a threat to anybody. You weren't exposing anybody, or doing this for some local paper – you were just doing it because it was interesting. And that role, I have never changed much since.

Verano: Well, how do you . . . how do you balance that idea of imbedding yourself in a situation that's enfolding, and then to give the viewer that sense of being there, while also maintaining an observational distance?

Pennebaker: I don't think about an observational distance. I think . . . and it became very – I mean, the place it really, uh, I mean, I did four or five films with Drew, Jane Fonda [*Jane*] . . . we did one with the president – several! Several with the president – Kennedy, and Bobby [*Primary, Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment*]. My role was like a person in some kind of time warp, that could be there to see – to tell anybody that wanted to know what really happened. In other words, I was the historian that you couldn't say was awry, or had some . . . I was the truthful possibilities of the event – but I was also a person. I was a member of that group, and they accepted me as that, and I never had to defend what I did, ever. And even when I would show the film – later, when we showed *The War Room* to James [Carville] and George [Stephanopoulos], that was our arrangement – a handshake. The same was with Dylan – always a handshake; pieces of paper are useless. But, if the person – when we showed it to them, James looked at it and said, well, there were some things in it that embarrassed him – but it was what happened, and that's all you could ask. It was really what he knew had happened, and he prized that fact – that it was true to what he knew. And George, the same way. So, it was like – that was kind of what they must have expected, or they wouldn't have let me in. But, when they asked – when we went to see, down to Little Rock, for *The War Room* – when we first went down there, we said we just wanted to sit around during the whole election period, up in, you know, the whole, a couple of months before, and James said “Well, why should I let you do that?” Because he was used to people from the press who dealt with the six o'clock news, and to them, that was crucial! That six o'clock news was how they got their news out, and my just wanting to sit there and not be any news use, why would he do that? And I said, “Because you want to.” So, we went back to our motel, and an hour later, he called and said, “Okay,” and that was it! We just sat there, and became as much as much a part of that group as anybody who was doing work for the governor. It was like, they just – we were part of what they needed, and they hadn't realised they needed it before. They thought – they assumed that people with cameras were always attached to local TV stations, but they were going so far beyond that, and they were already dealing with computers, and sending up stuff from far away, and bringing it in instantly, that the idea of a new companion in their work . . . they could deal with it. We would have had a hard time with Bush in the White House, and we never got a chance, because they didn't even want to talk to us. But, when I talked with Kennedy, it was the same way. Kennedy did not care when I turned on, or when I turned off. And the fear was always, if they say “Turn off the camera now, because this is an important thing,” then how do you get it back on? You can't then ask them in the middle of something. So, the idea was you try to sense when they might turn you off . . . but, you know, with Kennedy, it never came up! I never had a feeling he would say – even when they were discussing things that were crucial – I could have put that film out somewhere, and it might have been injurious to what they were trying to do. For instance, one morning, I went in and he was on the phone – nobody else was in the office, just Jack . . . JFK – and he was talking to his mother-in-law, and he was saying, “Yes, Mrs. . . .” – oh, God, I can't remember her name now, but Jackie's [inaudible]. Anyway, he was – and she was balling him out because there had been something in the newspapers about the chef quitting for some reason, and she thought that was very tacky, to have that happen, and to have it get out, you know. And he was saying “I understand, you're right,” and he was kind of looking at me and smiling, and I was filming it. He had no idea what I might do with that film, but he knew it was happening, and that I was the, sort of, token historian, and that, therefore, was what I did, and it didn't bother him.

Verano: I want to shift gears, and talk about some specific projects. Some of the things that I'm really fascinated with are projects like the cycle of films you did with Norman Mailer . . . *Eat the Document*, *One P.M.* I really think they're extremely rich and compelling complementary texts to, you know, the usual –

Pennebaker: Well, you try to reach out a little bit. Norman . . . I'd known Norman before, but not very well, and, one day, he called me and said "I'm down here with Buzz [Farbar], and another friend [Mickey Knox] in a bar, and we want to talk to you. We want you to come down." So I said "Okay," and I went down, and they were doing this thing that they had evolved a little bit amongst themselves, where they would affect being somebody else. And it didn't matter that they were being accurately somebody else; what mattered was they could, sort of, put lines out, and somebody would have to respond. So, they were in a constant responsive, kind of, operation amongst themselves, and it was done, I think, probably, off a lot of booze, to make it seem usable. But, what they wanted to do was see if they could make a film. And they had an idea, and the idea was that they were – three of them were Mafia guys that had gone underground; that is, they had to hide, because they were being hounded by the boss, or whatever it is. At first . . . and, I said I had an empty – a loft, near the floor where my office is, and we can shoot it there. So we went up, and it was a mess, but, you know, they didn't mind that, and they had a table, and they sat there, and at first I kept thinking, you know, this isn't the way Mafiosos talk to each other, I'm sure! I didn't know, but it all seemed totally distant. But it served for them, and so I realized that I wasn't really – that they weren't really affecting a true image of something that they understood. They didn't know anything about Mafia, any more than I did, so they just sat and shot funny lines at each other, and got kind of . . . They made a film – this was *Wild 90* – and, what interested me was, it was all made up as they went along. There were no scripts. Nobody told anybody what – it all emerged as they talked. And at the end, the most marvellous moment – and this was all I knew. It was the end of what we had been shooting – we were shooting over several days – Norman came up, and he started to recite a poem, which I realized instantly he was making up as he recited it, and I thought, "it's fantastic – I'm filming a guy, who is a sort of half-poet, writing a poem in the air. It's never going to be touched on paper; it's all going to be in my camera, and that's such a fantastic event." So, I circled around him, so you could see that he was just there – there wasn't a lot of people watching or anything, and that was always . . . for me, that's what that movie was about, in my mind. It allowed me to film somebody that I knew and liked very much, but couldn't get at. I mean, to get at Norman, you have to read a book, and he had to sit down and write it. So, I thought, "Well, maybe if we do these films, maybe I can get him to sit down and edit one of these films, and do what he does at writing, but do it . . ." And that's how we got to the last one [*Maidstone*]. And I tried to do it with Dylan; I tried to do it with a couple of people, and it was very hard, because, basically, their problem always was that I spent weeks at this, which I don't really know very well, or I could sit down and write a book, which would be very [chuckles] – I'd get a lot more out of it, and a lot more money. So, it was hard to get them – and I couldn't force them to do it; they had to want to do it, you know, and I'd hoped that that would happen. It sort of happened in the end with Norman, and we became . . . well, because of what happened with Rip Torn, and the whole thing that happened with the fighting, he realized that what he got was something you could never have figured out, or written, or put in to any kind of script. But what he got was an explosion of emotions and feelings that normally only came out in

dialogue! It was like it was theatre for him. I mean, it was interesting that – his reaction to it, and he – we became much better friends after that.

Verano: Let's talk about *Eat the Document*.

Pennebaker: Okay.

Verano: Do you think that Dylan's finished film functions as a sort of critique of your own practice?

Pennebaker: What happened was, that I made *Dont Look Back*, and he was aware of it – I mean, we never tried to hide the process – it wasn't like – there was a program on television where they hid cameras in places, and watched people do funny things [*Candid Camera*]. It wasn't that, and he understood that, and he kind of . . . What I had was, I had a person working with him, Bob Neuwirth, who understood instantly what I was doing. Neuwirth, he's like, some kind of a creature that knows exactly what time it is, and he . . . When we did that film, I edited; nobody bothered to tell me anything about anything. I only had one feedback from Bob after it was released. I had an early print that I gave to him to look at, and he called me up, and he said – and there was a scene in it where Wilson – John Wilson, a black guy – sort of looked like he was asleep by the side of the piano, and Dylan was clanging away at the piano, and Dylan played a very, kind of, clumsy piano. At first, it just sounded like somebody who didn't know how to play the piano, but if you understood what he was doing, he was chopping out a song. It was like somebody chopping out a statue with an axe instead of a fine knife, and so it was very rugged, very rough, but I thought it was fantastic, and I had the whole thing. And then I thought – when we went to release the film – I thought, you know, I'm looking for people who are not necessarily Dylan fanatics, who just want to see a film and be entertained as much as possible, so I cut it. And he called up one day, and he had just seen that scene, and he said, "I want to ask you a question. Have you ever filmed anybody writing a song?" And that's all he ever said. That's all he had to say, and I thought about it, and I put it all back in, because that was it! And I undercut myself, which was – which I didn't do often, but that was the first film that I was ever going to try and release theatrically, and I was on my neck. I put up the money to shoot it. If it didn't work . . . and I knew the audience for it, because I had shown it in a couple of places, where I'd had a lot of kids come in, and I could tell that, for them, this was an important film. But when I showed it to people in the distribution company, they didn't even want to look at the second reel. They said "It's too ratty looking!" And it was ratty looking – I could see that – but I knew that there was an audience, if I could just get over that wall that these people all made around stuff that made money for them. And so, I was ready to make some allowances for that, and it was a mistake, and I've learned since, never do that, because you'll lose whatever you've got. You'll lose it for everybody in the end, and you've just got to go with what that camera sees that's real. The camera is really the one that measures it, that tells you what to do. You know, a lot of times, you don't really make up your mind much. You just go with what happens in that camera. It's like, if you had a piano that played itself, but played whatever you wanted it to play, you wouldn't throw it out! You know, you'd try to figure out how to use it.

Verano: So how had . . . well, so, on the '66 tour, that became *Eat the Document* –

Pennebaker: Well, then he said, “Okay [laughs], you have your film, but now I’m going to direct a film, and I want you to film it.” And I said “Okay,” and we had a handshake, and that was it! It was his film. Theoretically, I was going to get paid like any functioning filmmaker for my time, and for the film, and everything else. In the end, I didn’t get paid, but you know, it was such a . . . to have gotten him to actually want to do it was such a step, that I really felt . . . I felt good about it! Only the stuff I shot was so interesting, and so incredible, and such a jump from *Dont Look Back*, that I, sort of . . . It made me sad that I wasn’t going to be able to edit it, to make a film out of it. But then, I thought, “You know, I do have my film,” and that’s really all you can ask. And Dylan, they fucked around with it. I think the version that they made of *Eat the Document* was like – at the beginning, I think he sort of thought that he could – by, sort of, making a joke out of the idea of “the document,” that “the document” was not really as important as I had tried to make it in the first film. I think he got over that. I don’t think that that, in the end – but, then, it was a friend of his [Al Aronowitz] that had given him that title, so he used it. But, it set a stage for people to try to see if they could make it kind of a – not a joke out of it, but make it so that it showed the adverse aspects of this kind of filming. In the end, of course, everybody – what they saw, finally, of what I shot – and Marty [Scorsese] saw it the clearest – was that what we shot was a fantastic thing of Dylan performing in a way that you could never have gotten him to – even in *Dont Look Back*, he never performed that way. He did the most amazing things, and he did them on stage, and some of that stuff has never come out. Jeff [Rosen] knows it – Jeff, who manages Dylan – and he and I both happened to like – we made a film. Neuwirth and I made a film called *You Know Something’s Happening*. Never got released, and I didn’t think that the value of the film was worth turning on my agreement with Dylan – my handshake. I mean, I felt bound by that, and I still do. And, I’ve shown it to a few people that I know won’t – it isn’t like putting it in distribution – but I feel a little sad that most people don’t know how Dylan handled himself in that film completely, because it was incredible, and everybody going along knew it was incredible! It’s just, nobody knew how to make a film about that – neither Dylan nor anybody, and they all had a go at it, because it looked so easy. The closest anybody’s gotten is Scorsese, but it’s not the film that is in there. And someday, that may get made and shown, but it’s not my call, so I don’t – I only feel a little sad about it, but, you know, some of the other things that come out of it overwhelm that. I don’t really . . . It’s not a big sore in my head now.

Verano: I understand that Dylan’s performances with the Band – the intensity of them – really made an impact on you.

Pennebaker: Well they were, and I started because we had filmed it before offstage, and usually, sometimes, with a longer lens. And he had four of them up there – five of them, sometimes – performing. The long lens from a distance didn’t do it. I wanted to be right up between them and amongst them. So, I got out a couple times, and I got onstage. The Band would be onstage first, and then Dylan would come out; so I got onstage with the Band, and when he came out and saw me, he really cracked up. And I filmed him right onstage, and that was quite a different feeling than *Dont Look Back*, much more . . . Well, he was like a dancer! He was dancing out there. He was so excited and happy to be doing it, and to be making – it was like he was swimming in the music, and it was such an amazing thing to film, that I never – I’ve never gotten over it. And that’s never been released, that feeling, because you’ve got to make it work. You’ve got to edit it and make it work. You can’t just run the shots.

Verano: Had your relationship with Dylan changed on that tour, and did that affect the way you filmed him?

Pennebaker: Well, at the time . . . It's always difficult, because he wasn't sure whether he liked me for what I did, or – no matter whether he liked the thing itself – what his feelings toward me were, and it took a while for him to sort that out. But we're partners, and we've been ever since, and that's worked from – I don't spend a lot of time with him. He came over a few times, and we had, sort of, dealings with him. He's not a close friend, in that sense, but we share something that's incredible, and he knows it as well as I do.

Verano: You know, I do see some parallels between *Eat the Document* and *Daybreak Express*. I think that idea . . . the emphasis on movement –

Pennebaker: [Simultaneously] That's interesting. Like what?

Verano: The emphasis on movement and disorientation, and creating a highly subjective experience with the camera, but *Daybreak Express* is more of a celebration –

Pennebaker: Well, *Daybreak Express* was really my . . . almost my first, but it was made with a camera I don't have here; I have upstairs. It's a windup camera, with hundred foot rolls, so, in a sense, it's kind of limited, in terms of what I later used as a camera, but not really. I mean, I made an entire film in Russia with it, and that film's now being distributed there. During – this was very soon after *Daybreak Express* – the fact is that . . . What seemed to me, when I finished *Daybreak Express*, I had – I made it with a record of Duke Ellington's that I had always liked, and had always felt was a kind of a train record. And when I did it, I went to get . . . I wanted to get permission to use it, so I went to see Ellington, and he was in his office down at the Brill Building, and I had a little tiny projector, and I had a windup tape recorder. So I took it down and showed it to him, on the wall of his office, and he really liked it. He loved it. Ruth, his sister – I had a deal with her, a little bit – and she said he always loved the film, and felt very, you know, personally about it. And at the time, it was – I mean, I didn't know anything about filmmaking. I didn't know how to edit. I pasted it together with pieces of adhesive tape, because I didn't know how to – I didn't know anything about it, but I felt this kind of film was a different kind of film than people were showing us. There was a group in New York then, making sort of abstract films, and it was kind of a New York filmmaking group [the Film-Makers' Cooperative], and this was not like that. The way that I thought I could say that was to not put a title on it. There's no title on it – never been a title on it – and it just says at the end – when Ellington said, "I'll get you the rights," and called up RCA and got them to give me a tape of the music, he said, "You're going to give me a credit on it, right?" and I said, "I guess so." I hadn't even thought about it, so I did, I had to put him down at the end, and . . . the thing about the film – when I finished it, I thought, "Well, I got a lot of records. I got two or three thousand 78 records, and some of them are marvellous." I loved them, but I could never make another film like that. And I thought, "Why's that?" – it's so easy to do. Like, I started one of a storm, of a little hurricane that hit Miami, and I shot some stuff – I shot quite a bit of stuff, and I was trying to think of music that would work for it, and I thought, "I don't want to do that. I want films with dialogue like plays, and the dialogue drives whatever the film is about – the drama. And I need to get people

talking. I can't . . . [laughs] These musical films are not going to get me anywhere." So I abandoned the whole idea, but in that film, I thought, you know, the one thing about that film was I went out – I shot it in about two days – I went out with a camera, and two good lenses – and it was a windup camera – and I shot. I didn't have any – I hadn't sat down and written a list of shots. I had no sense of what it was all going to be, because they said they were going to tear down the Third Avenue El, and I happened – I have a picture somewhere – but, my favourite painter was a guy named John Sloan, and he used to paint pictures of the elevateds in New York, and they looked . . . They're the best pictures of city life that I know, because the people under them all looked like they were having a good time! And I didn't see that in too many pictures of New York – paintings – but those pictures of the train overhead, all lit up, roaring by, I thought it was our version of the big tower in Paris, of the Eiffel Tower. And when they tore them down, I thought that that's even worse than tearing down Penn Station, which was beautiful and lovely, but these were alive, and that was just a place to go to, and so I thought I was going to make a film about it. But, when I went out to do it, I just filmed what I ran into. It was a kind of – it was an early sense of what *cinéma vérité* became, as you film what happens, and not what you look for, and you let your . . . whoever you're filming, you let them decide what to do, and I kind of let the train decide – I don't know. I didn't think of it that way, because I didn't know anything about filmmaking, or anything else, but I thought, "I'll just film what I find." It was like a little search, and I had no idea of what form it would take, but I knew it would be about the train, so I knew that the music would fit. And I didn't – I tried as much as possible when I laid the track in to not have the film cut with the music. I wanted it to be independent of the music somehow – I don't know. I had all these ideas, but they were all very [laughs] – they weren't ideas that had much knowledge or skill attached to them. I mean, they were just vague thoughts that I had about what things should be, you know. And, remember, I'm thinking of these – of the paintings of John Sloan [laughs], which, of course, are not movies, and don't – I mean, I have a couple of them that I – they're not – I had somebody paint them to look – to be like the original paintings, which is all I can do – I can't own a John Sloan. But I still feel very strongly about those pictures, and when I look at them, I think of what drove me to do *Daybreak*. And it was kind of *cinéma vérité* event – you're right – but I've never gone into it very much, or nobody's asked me very much about it, because it's just a kid's film. It seems like that, and it's not. By then, I was not a kid anymore, and what went into that film was much more my, kind of, sense of the aesthetics that interested me, and the world – you know, paintings, music.

Verano: I want to move on to talk about *One P.M.*

Pennebaker: Okay.

Verano: Did Godard's subject matter and methodology pose a challenge to you?

No, whatever Jean-Luc . . . Jean-Luc is still one of my favourite filmmakers in the world. I love him, and he's a friend, you know, although I don't see him much anymore. But, whatever he wants to do is what we'll do! I mean, I don't – but later, I could see that he was getting antsy about what we were doing. But I think what he was also getting antsy about – he was getting bored doing it. And he was trying to make money, so we sent him on a tour – a speaking tour, so he could earn some money – and then, we went out, and we went, you know . . . He needed money. He's kind of a bank

robber who hasn't got a fast car, you know, so he has to find a way to get the money out, and in his pocket. And I kind of like that about him, because that is what his filmmaking is – it's robbery. He's robbing from the people who make bad films [laughs], and teaching them a lesson, you know, and he's fantastic! And I think that, in the end, he wanted to go make *Wind From the East* with the guy from California [Jean-Pierre Gorin], and that's why he never edited it, so I had – but I had signed a contract with PBS that we'd deliver a film with Godard, so I had to make a film. That's why that became *One P.M.*, which he calls "One Pennebaker Film," and that was okay. I mean, neither of us minded that. I gave a print of it to the Cinémathèque [Française], and they show it once in a while, and it's . . . I don't think he feels offended by it. But he really – what he likes to do is to come into a situation with a revolutionary and outrageous idea, and throw everybody into a thing of "Oh my God! This is not what we thought it would be," and have them rethink whatever they think of in life, you know? But he doesn't want to spend a lot of time with that – once he's gone in and done it, he wants to go do something else. So, that film was really – in the end, I could see – that film was my sense of Godard, and how much I liked him, and how much I thought he understood of the world that offered itself to him. The idea of the building being torn down, all those things were things that naturally, you know, popped up in his life, and he put them into film, and I thought that's the way it should be! Not buying a script from somebody, and then buying somebody's services. All those things are . . . that's all, you know, commerce. His idea as a bank robber was Willie Sutton's, you know; you rob them because that's where the money is. And you rob, and make that kind of film because that's where the real interest is, but people won't admit it. They keep seeing, sort of, the same old pastry. And he wants to make something that'll just, you know, nails in your teeth.

Verano: What was the mood like, you know, when you were travelling from coast to coast –

Pennebaker: With him?

Verano: Yeah, during that time.

Pennebaker: Quiet. He didn't talk a lot. He would ask me strange questions sometimes, but you don't have long discussions about theatre, or French, or anything [laughs]. And he was . . . He was here with his first wife, whatever – no, not his – his second wife, and he wanted her to – it was like . . . what was her name . . . oh, God. She was terrific, too! She was – she was a still photographer.

Verano: Anne?

Pennebaker: Anne Wiazemsky. But, he had her stuck in this hotel, down [laughs] on 44th Street, and he kind of wanted to sit up there and listen to Donovan records, or something – I don't know what he had in mind – and she didn't want to do that. Everyone was hanging out in our studio, and everybody's girlfriend was hanging out. The place was just alive with a lot of different, youthful kind of voices. And so she appeared and hung around there, and I think it pissed him off a little bit. I told her to shoot all of the stills that she could get, and she shot a lot of stills for us that we used – of the Jefferson Airplane on the roof, and all of the stuff that went on, and I really liked her. And later, when she became – when she did – she had done *Chinoise*, and we were

distributing *Chinoise* at the time. Later, I ran into her later in Paris, and by then she wasn't living with Jean-Luc. They were apart, and she hated him, and I don't know why. Who knows what their life was like. But he's really Swiss, you know, and that makes a difference. The French are very suspicious of Swiss. They [chuckles] don't exactly trust them!

Verano: Why was the Schuyler Hotel chosen as the spot for the Jefferson Airplane's rooftop concert?

Pennebaker: Because it was across the street, and it was going to be torn down! And a big sign appeared there one day saying . . . I forget. The sign was wonderful! It said the "Something of America" –

Verano: The Wrecking Corporation?

Pennebaker: Yeah [laughs]! I shot that sign, and then I had to rig up a camera that would shoot six frames a day for six months. It was an Arriflex, and I built this thing for it, and it would be – every day it would be going "click," you know, and I kept wondering, "What the hell is it seeing?" You go crazy wondering, but you can't look. You can't touch it, unlike video, you can do it with video . . . So, when I finally got the film out of it after six months, and the building was all down, and I thought, you know . . . I remember driving the – and it was all Kodachrome – driving the roll of film down to a lab that I used. It was a cheap lab – I didn't send it to Kodak – and they would do the stuff for me, and I said "Can I wait for it?" and the guy said, "Well, it'll be a couple of hours," and I said, "I'll wait," and I had the car parked outside, so I had to run out to make sure I didn't get a ticket. And, eventually, I got the film back, and I remember driving back with it on the steering wheel, trying to look at the frames as I drove. I was so excited. And when I looked at it, I couldn't believe it, because what I hadn't counted on was the sun circling. So, you got this incredible thing, kind of – I don't know what it was like. At first I thought, "Oh, it's ruined," but then I thought, "No, it's really fantastic!" So, I – when we stuck the thing in . . . I think I cut it down a little bit, because it was kind of long, but it was so marvellous. It was like the sun was tearing the building down, not these people with their hammers and nails, and I loved that idea. So, we stuck it in the film, and it was just . . . And when Lennon saw it – John saw it, and he loved it, and he did the same thing with a balloon [Pennebaker seems to be confusing 1970's *Apotheosis* with 1971's *Erection*]. They [Lennon and Yoko Ono] made a film with single framing [*Erection*], but I said, "It's really tricky, because I don't think you . . ." Anyway, he was very – he loved that film, especially the end of it. And, later, they [the Beatles] did a performance on the roof, and they tried to shoot it, but they couldn't. They couldn't get that the way it was in *One P.M.* But that always intrigued me – that building coming down – and [on the street] everybody's seeing just a normal – a building coming down, but when you put it in context with Godard, it was like the revolutionary! He's torn down a building, and they don't realise it! And only the Jefferson Airplane are here to tell you about it! I thought that was just such a marvellous thing [chuckles]. But, you know, that film had a great opening out in San Francisco. They played it in the theatre across the bridge, and the people inside, it was – for some reason, the local cops were very upset about it, and they were dropping tear gas bombs down the vents, so the people had to see it with [laughs] things on! I mean, it was just a great screening, I understand. I wasn't there for it, but I thought that was

worth the film. But I never expected the film to have any life. I'm always amazed that people do watch it, that we do send it out.

Verano: Why . . . So, out of . . . out of all the bands, why was Jefferson Airplane chosen?

Pennebaker: Because I knew them, and I liked them, and they were kind of friends. Well, since *Monterey [Pop]*, we'd become friends, and . . . I don't know, we had done some other things. They wanted to go – they wanted me to go with them to Russia, and they were going to do a thing, appearing one night in revolutionary. And I said, you know, "They'll send you away. They will do it, because they need to control that kind of thing." This was, I think, before Khrushchev came in. No, this was about – it was possible, but I knew the difficulties, because I'd been there, and they . . . they just thought that they could get away with anything, because, here, they could, you know. And, I mean, at one point, when, in *One P.M.*, we gave Godard a camera, I said, "Now, Jean-Luc, I know that you always have" – the guy that moves his camera, who's terrific [Raoul Coutard] – and when he wasn't there, I said "You're going to be the cameraman on the building." So we set up with a 1200 foot roll of film – I think it was 1200 foot, it was a big roll – and a zoom lens, and a tripod right across the street, so he could look out from our window and see the building with Jefferson Airplane on the roof. He had . . . he always used to say to Ricky [imitating Godard], "Now, Ricky, don't zoom too much. Don't zoom too much," because he was used to those very steady 35[mm] takes, where there was no zoom. They didn't have a zoom. And he got on that camera – and the place was full of people, all people that I knew. And Anne was there – actually, Anne was on the roof with me – and they were all kind of there to see Godard. I mean, there was a couple of people from *The Times*, who were writing. I mean, it was a big event! But, for us, it was a shot that we had to get of the Airplane and the building, and he got on that thing, and he started to zoom. I left every frame of what he shot in, the zoom. And then, he started – he went up to the top of the building – the RCA building – and it says 'R-C-A,' but, of course, he didn't know what RCA was. He didn't know that that was The Jefferson Airplane. If I said, "We'll do this. We can use the Jefferson Airplane because we're going to put RCA in the film," he would have said [chuckles], "No way, no way!" But the fact is, he did it, and he zooms on the RCA [laughs], and the Jefferson Airplane is singing right below it, and they . . . That was so funny. I thought, "He just has no idea what he's doing," and it's marvellous! It's just marvellous, because it's so un-thought out. It was just all reckless. He was totally – I loved him, because he was so ready to be reckless. And it was the same with – when we brought in . . . uh, what's the actor . . . what was it –

Verano: Rip Torn?

Pennebaker: What?

Verano: Rip Torn?

Pennebaker: Rip! When we brought in Rip. Rip just loved the idea of being in anything with Godard, because he felt the way I did. And the two of them were just marvellous when they would do scenes! I mean, we don't have too many of their scenes together, but I thought . . . it had nothing to do with his idea for the film, but it had to do with just two people, who were normal, things would never meet. And they

were meant to meet, only they . . . they met through this dumb film they were making. I think that was wonderful.

Verano: Well, how did you arrive at the film's structure?

Pennebaker: It was his idea. We would put a roll in, and shoot it completely, and then we would shoot another roll, and we would fasten them together.

Verano: Well –

Pennebaker: Only in the end, that got kind of boring, so when I edited it, I changed it a little bit. But that was the initial concept.

Verano: Yeah, but –

Pennebaker: And he talks about it when he comes in. And that early stuff, when we're in the office, and he comes in . . . and that was all shot by Robert Leacock, Ricky's son, and that's the first thing he ever shot with one of my cameras. I gave him a camera, and I said, "Here's where you turn it on," and "Look through this to see what you're doing," and he . . . It was terrific, because it had that feeling of, kind of, reckless craziness, you know? Nobody had thought this through very carefully, so it was not very well done, and I thought that was marvellous, that whole beginning. So we left – that was the beginning of the film, and we never intended it to, but later, we stuck it on the front, and that became the opening of the film.

Verano: Okay, I just want to talk a little about *Company*. I think it was just a really unique project, especially compared to many of the public musical performances that you filmed in that same era. It's interesting how I think the space of the studio – that really confined space – you know, really posed a challenge.

Pennebaker: I guess. It was . . . Well, the thing was, Dan Melnick was . . . he was the director – well, he was really the producer – of the whole thing, and he said, "We're going to do this as a trial thing. It's the first one to show what it'll be like, and then we'll have a whole series, and it will all be called . . . uh, it'll all be recordings from different shows that go on Broadway, and you'll do it. Will you make the first one? But you've got to make it really cheap." So, I think I made the whole thing for like 20,000 or 25,000 dollars, which was, of course [laughs], impossible. But it was such a marvellous thing to do, that I never . . . and I knew Elaine [Stritch] – I'd known her a little bit before – and she was . . . she just performed exactly right! She was great! And I knew Steve [Sondheim] a little bit – not very well – so it was like I was, kind of, with friends. I didn't feel like I was stuck out somewhere doing a heavy production for anybody, and, like anything, nobody told me anything to do. I could do anything I wanted, so it had, kind of, a nice reckless quality, and I had Jim Desmond and Ricky, and that was it – the three of us. And I had a babysitter for my all my children, who was in the next room somewhere, and it was just so easy to do, in a way, because . . . the only thing that was hard about it was there were all these mics everywhere. The place was a – you could hardly move without knocking one over. And Tom [Shepherd, record producer], the guy who was – he was Mr. Tough Guy, you know – he said, "If I hear one peep out of any of the cameras, you're all out. The whole thing's dead." And so, we were all a little nervous. And so, I figured that everything we shot, we had to be

able to shoot in its entirety. So when Elaine got out and sang “Ladies Who Lunch,” I think, “Maybe I’ll have some other footage, but I better not plan on it,” so I just shot it as if it was going to be a single take. Which it was, because a single take was the best way to show Elaine – and editing her didn’t help her any, but the . . . In the end, we put it together, it was – we weren’t going through a network. We were selling it piecemeal, so I had to divide it into three sections. That’s why it has those peculiar [chuckles] . . . and each one has its own little – and it was like a painting on some kind of a screen, where you had the three screens, but the whole painting was the whole screen. And I kind of liked that idea! I had never done that before. I liked that. It helps with something with as little drama inherent in it as a musical thing. It wouldn’t have worked, I think, with the Synanon film, but it worked with that. And then, the thing is that Danny had set it up so that he . . . it would be sold to each station singly, but they wanted to do it really on the cheap, so they used a union – a performing union – that was about to go out of business, so whatever we got could never be used again. And so, when it was done, everybody, you know . . . a guy I knew in England, in – I forget, at one of the channels – wanted to use it, so I had to sneak him a print of it to use, because we had no rights to sell it or anything. Everybody just loved it so, so we figured out – and then, the company went bust [inaudible] had arranged for me. Danny went out to take on – he was made head of MGM, so I never saw him again, for a while. And so, what we did was write letters to all the people that were in it, and got them to give us a release, so we could re-release the film, and it took a long time. But that’s the way we’re doing it now. And we pay them all every time it gets . . . They get a percentage – all of the performers, including Steve – he got a big check – and Hal. I think everybody got a check, so it was like a . . . It was kind of like, I wanted to preserve the history of that particular thing that we did, because it was so unusual. And since then, a couple people have tried to do it, but it’s never quite worked. The music has to be fantastic, in the first place, but the performers were all – they were all like kids! They were beginners, you know, so they were all so excited to be doing something, and it had that wonderful quality in the film, I thought. And then Elaine, with her wonderful – and, you know, she was a little drunk [chuckles], just before she went into AA. It just . . . it was New York, total New York, and I thought you couldn’t get it any other way. You had to have these people, because they were all New Yorkers. Even though they’ve only been here three weeks, they were still total New Yorkers, and I thought that’s what you make a film about – that kind of sensibility.

Verano: Yeah, I think my favourite sequence in that film is Pamela Myers’ rendition of “Another Hundred People” –

Pennebaker: Yeah?

Verano: – which is like a quintessential New York song.

Pennebaker: From behind her?

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: Oh, I know, with her little squat figure. I’ve seen her since. I’ve seen all those people since, and that’s what – they all remember that as the year we won the basketball championship over Ohio State, or something [Pennebaker seems to be

referring to the New York Knicks' victory over the Los Angeles Lakers in the 1970 NBA Finals]. You know, it has that quality for all of us.

Verano: And, of course, the relationship between Sondheim and Elaine . . .

Pennebaker: Yeah [laughs]. And they still . . . they don't really talk to each other much, but they have this strange admiration for what the other can do. And I see Steve a lot. I mean, I tell him jokes [inaudible]. And he must sit by his email machine, because he answers instantly whenever I write him a letter. And Elaine . . . We did a couple things since with her [*Elaine Stritch at Liberty*, 2004]. It's like . . . she's kind of like my sister. We're exactly the same age, and she never lets me – whenever I say anything, she says [impersonating Stritch], "That's bullshit!" [laughs] She's like a mean sister, and I just love her. I just think she's fantastic. She has a sense of music that I don't think anybody else I know has, which . . . And only she could combine two different songs by Rodgers and Hart that really always meant to be put together, but nobody had ever done it before. And she did it! And she understood that that would work. I thought, "That takes more than just an actress – that takes somebody as smart as Rodgers" – who I knew, too, slightly. Well, yeah.

Verano: Okay, that about does it.

Pennebaker: Really? Oh, well, okay, it's been interesting. It's helped me remember a few things I'd almost forgotten. But it's interesting that you . . . did you ever see a film that we did called *Down From the Mountain*?

Verano: No.

Pennebaker: We did it for the Coen brothers, and they had done this feature film, which was . . . what was it called?

Verano: *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Pennebaker: Yeah. But they loved the music, so we went down, and we rented this hall down in Nashville, and we got everybody – they got everybody that was in the movie to come down and perform. And we just went down – Chris [Hegedus] and I, and Nick [Doob] – I don't know, there were only two or three of us filming, but the music . . . Well, the performances are so great. T-Bone [Burnett] was in charge of getting the music recorded, which he's terrific at. It's a marvellous film, and nobody knows who owns it now! It's one of those weird things that you get [phone rings] . . . but we went to see it in a theatre out in Oregon, and I asked, "Where'd you get a print?" and they said, "Oh, we just went online and bought one" [laughs]. You can buy it from one of those places, but the idea of it being distributed . . . It kind of intrigues me that it rolls around like a free-standing football or something, that nobody – it's going to have a life, but nobody knows how, you know? But it's such a marvellous film, when you watch it, because those people are just – the music is so incredible, and both – well, Joel and Ethan are very good friends, so I kind of – and they tried to buy it back from the guy who was producing it, and he wouldn't sell it [laughs]! And then he went out of business, and nobody . . . I don't know. It's like some barrel floating around at sea, but it's an interesting film to see.

Verano: Yeah, I do want to see that. There's a lot there. Well, there are some missing pieces of your filmography that I need to –

Pennebaker: Well, there . . . there's a film called *Baby*, which is really the very first film I made, in which I'd just bought the camera, and I had a three year old daughter, and I . . . then, I – that was before I had gotten to understand [phone rings] what I did for *Daybreak*, but the . . . I sort of thought that you made a film by making squares, and filling in pictures and writing, you know –

[intercom: Chris, it's Jojo.]

– and I made a whole little thing of this story, that we were going to go to the zoo, and she was going to have a balloon, and she was going to – the animals were all going to be watching her. That was the fantastic notion I had [chuckles]. So we went, and the very first – I bought this Cine-Special, which is a wonderful camera, and I . . . it was somebody's present to a girlfriend, so nobody had ever used it, I don't think. It came in a big box with velvet – beautiful! And it came with a tripod, and I didn't know much about tripods, either. So, the first scene, you can see the camera's on a tripod, and I'm trying to move it to keep up with my daughter, who's trying to get a drink of water or something, and, as I move it, it shakes and jumps. So, I finally take it off the tripod, and you see the tripod thrown away, and I don't think I've used a tripod since, really [laughs]. So, and then I started following her through the zoo, and she got really bored with the whole idea of “Now, you've got to wait here a minute, because I've got to get this tiger,” you know, and so she took off. She [chuckles] was not interested in doing that film, so I ran after her – I chased her – and the film is, kind of, watching her finally come to the merry-go-round, which – she had never seen a merry-go-round before. And she got on the merry-go-round, and I got on and filmed her, and I thought, “Shit. This is her film.” She's figured out what she wants to do, and watching her do it was so interesting, as opposed to these stupid animal shots that I was getting, that I thought, “This is what filmmaking should be!” You watch the person you're filming, and let them decide what to do. And that changed my whole thought of filming, and from then on, I never made scripts, or even had a yellow pad. I just – it was all just whatever you want to do. It's your game, you know. I'm just watching. It's watching! It's kind of a thing I thought of when I was trying to think of a . . . something that described it, was “witness.” What was it? Witness . . . *verité*? No, witness . . . something. Something like that. But it's a witnessing process. It's not a filmmaking process, in that sense, and it doesn't . . . “Directing” doesn't exactly describe the person doing it. He's not directing anything, if he does it right. He's watching everything carefully, and it's like . . . Have you read *Wolf Hall* [by Hilary Mantel]?

Verano: No.

Pennebaker: You know the book. It just got the prize. Well, there's two. *Bring Up the Bodies* is the second one.

Verano: No, I haven't read it.

Pennebaker: But the woman that wrote it is . . . It's all about Henry VIII.

Verano: Okay.

Pennebaker: It comes . . . You can get an audiobook of it, which . . . You don't even want to read the book – you want to get the audiobook, because the guy doing it is so fantastic. And it's like somebody was there, watching Henry VIII and the other people around him. And the voices . . . The whole thing is so wonderfully complete, that you just get absolutely caught up in it. It's such a . . . It's like *cinéma vérité*, only it's only audio! But it works, and it's because of the way she writes it. I don't know how to describe it, but it's something. It's an amazing piece of work, and, if you get a chance, you can read it. I'm sure it reads – I haven't even tried to read it, but we got the audiobooks, and we listen to it, and I've played parts of it over three and four times, and they never stop being interesting, because they're such a witnessing! It's as if you were able to witness Henry VIII, and what went on. And it's like . . . He's not made a fool, he's not some incredible curmudgeon – he's just a person with the same kind of problems that everybody else had in that role, and it's . . . it's a wonder, because it's – I'm sure that that's going to change the nature of audiobooks for a lot of people. I mean, we got them, because a lot of times when we're driving someplace, we'll put them in the car and listen to them. But this one is as different from most things, as our early films were from what was going down as documentary. Well, I'm sorry. I'm keeping you too long here.

Verano: No, no, that's fine!

Pennebaker: So, who else are you going to see?

Verano: Just on this trip, I was just seeing you and Albert.

Pennebaker: And you're not going to see Drew?

Verano: I did email his office –

Pennebaker: Did you call him and talk to him?

Verano: I haven't talked to him, but I emailed the office –

Pennebaker: His son is running the company now.

Verano: Yeah. I'm trying to get a hold of some of those early films. Like, I still haven't been able to find, like, *Jane*, or –

Pennebaker: You don't have *Jane*?

Verano: No, things like –

Pennebaker: We have a copy of *Jane* we can give you. There's another one, that's called *Susan Starr* [1962], that's interesting, that I did with the same woman [Hope Ryden] that I did with *Jane*.

Verano: Okay.

Pennebaker: And then there's the first one. Do we – we have a thing of that, because we made it for HBO – of *David*. Yeah. But you haven't . . . You should see those, because they're interesting. That was where the thing was evolving. And, in *David*, was where I first figured out how to do the camera. We took a handle off an Arriflex, and we screwed it on the front of the camera we were using, and then I wired the switch in, so I could turn it on and off by holding it, and that solved a great problem. The idea of holding a camera this way is ridiculous. But it's an interesting film, and then there's another one. This one called *Blackie*, that's kind of about an airline pilot who's going to retire, and it's going to be his last flight. And we went with him on his last flight.

Verano: Wow.

Pennebaker: And that was an interesting film, in some ways. Bill Ray and I did that. And then there's *Crisis*.

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: You've seen *Crisis*?

Verano: I've seen it, yeah.

Pennebaker: It's good. That was when I quit, but I . . . Greg Shuker and I did that, and it was . . . Drew didn't want to do it. I had to use my own film for it, because he didn't – for some reason, he didn't want to get involved with it. I think he was just separating from the magazine then. I wasn't sure. And he had some deal with ABC, and they didn't want to do anything with Kennedy. They hated Kennedy.

Verano: Really?

Pennebaker: Especially after we did . . . And there's another one that's interesting, that's a fantastic film! I don't know whether Al has a copy of it or not, but Al – we did a thing called *Yanki No!*, in Cuba – you ever see that?

Verano: Haven't seen that one.

Pennebaker: Al shot the most incredible stuff of Fidel, and I became a *Fidelista* the minute I saw that. It's so fantastic. It's just beautiful. I don't know where you could – I think we have a copy. Do we have? We've never made . . . I think we have a print of it, but I don't think we ever made a video. *Time* wouldn't distribute it. They were so nervous about the Cuba thing [chuckles], and when it went on ABC, the head of news for ABC quit, because we ran it on the air. But it was . . . It's an amazing film, and I still think it holds up! I think that . . . We just all felt so strongly that what was being – had been done down there, to Cuba, was now being redressed by this guy, and he seemed out of – oh, I don't know. If we . . . We've got to make a copy, if we don't have one. But I thought Al would have, because it's stuff he shot – Fidel and these women, who were just going crazy for him! Fidel and the brother, Christo. Christof? What was his name – the brother's name?

Mitchell Wu [assistant]: I don't know.

Pennebaker: Walter [Salles] made a film about him, what was that?

Wu: Oh, oh, uh – it wasn't his brother –

Pennebaker: What was his name?

Wu: He's on, like, all the –

Pennebaker: Yeah, the –

Verano: Oh, Che Guevara?

Pennebaker: Yeah, Che Guevara. Yeah. Walter, he's got a new film called . . . It's going to be *On the Road*. He's finally done an *On the Road* film, and I liked it, but it didn't get a very good reception, I think, although, he's showing it next week I think, or this month, so I . . . But it's – it's hard to cast people who have such a strong imprint on people's minds. I mean, Allen Ginsberg – it's very hard for anybody to pretend they're Allen Ginsberg, really. I don't know why. They can pretend they're President Kennedy, but it's hard to be Allen Ginsberg. And all of them, it's kind of like that. Kerouac . . . nobody really knows what Kerouac was like, unless they spent time with him, so they could get away with that, but everybody else in there, you kind of think you know, and these people all look like strangers, which is a problem when making that kind of film. Well, okay.

Verano: Yeah.

[Frazer Pennebaker walks into the room.]

Pennebaker: And you met my son, Frazer?

Frazer: Hi.

Verano: Hi.

Pennebaker: Okay, so I [chair squeaks, dialogue inaudible].

Frazer: Frazer.

Verano: Hi, Frank Verano.

Pennebaker: If you want to try to talk to Bob, I don't know how . . .

Frazer: What, Bob who?

Pennebaker: Do you want to talk to Drew? He talked to Al, and me, but I think he –

Frazer: Just call him on the phone. I mean –

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: Well, his son runs things. I think he could probably –

Frazer: His email's like bobbdraw –

Verano: I have . . . I did email him, only last week, to just start a dialogue.

Frazer: Well, that would help –

Pennebaker: Drew had such a strong view of what he was getting into, but it changed. In the beginning, he was just going to do a series of, kind of . . . I don't know, of films for the magazine, and they were going to be different things. Each film would be an hour long, but it would be many different things in it. And I think after the film on Synanon, and after Ricky – Ricky did a film called *Toby and the Tall Corn*.

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: When he thought about those, he realized that he had a chance to really do something important in filmmaking. And the first thing they put up a lot of money for . . . [aside, to Wu] Oops, that thing's going to go.

Wu: Hm?

Pennebaker: I think that light's going to go. You'd pull it better. Well, I don't know – the leg, it looked like it was starting to bend. [to Verano] Yeah, I think that he . . . I think he sort of understood that there was a . . . I mean, we once had a talk – Al and I and Ricky, sitting and confronting Drew – and this was after *Yanki, No!* – and Drew said, “What should we do next?” And Ricky kind of was ready to go with a sort of journalistic format. Al had no idea what he wanted to do. He just wanted to get sent off places and shoot, because he's a cameraman! He can't edit. He had no idea how to edit, and wasn't interested to edit. He thinks if it's well shot, then look at it, you know? [chuckles] Don't bother to cut, edit or change this or that. And I kind of respect that. When we did *Primary*, he was hopeless – he'd just run it back and forth. But he has a sharp eye for what's going down, and if you give him a chance to use it, he's terrific! He's terrific. That's why we had him in Monterey, and I spent three months with him in Russia, you know, and I still remember those days there. But the . . . When Drew figured it out, and the money . . . A lot of the money for building the camera came from Time-Life. They didn't know it. We were sneaking it out in purchase orders for stuff, but that enabled us – that camera enabled us to really . . . to get dialogue. That was such an important – and there was no other camera, which was amazing to me. All stuff like that was always shot in studios, under, you know, studio control, and the idea of being able to go out into the world and shoot people really talking to each other nobody thought was a good idea. And Drew got it. And that's the measure . . . Although, well, the magazine went down – it sank totally – by its own problems, but he kept that thing alive – that whole . . . for two years, I guess, or whatever it was. And he still . . . you know, he doesn't . . . My problem was the narration.

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: And he remembers that now. So when we re-released *Jane* – we got Jane [Fonda] to okay re-releasing it – and he said, “Okay, we'll release it, and we've got to

take all the narration out.” And I thought about it, and we looked at it and I said, “You know, you can’t!” It was made with the narration, and that’s what it is. You can’t undo it [chuckles], unless you make a whole new movie. The thing is – and he, sort of, saw that. So then, really, my argument – my problem with him, which was narration always, sort of dissolved, and I thought, you know, that’s part of the – when you see those films now, that’s the way they were made then. It’s like reading *Beowulf*, or something, you know? I mean, you read it the way it was written.

Verano: Yeah.

Pennebaker: And Drew is still an interesting person to talk to, if you want. You might give him a call. You got a number for him?

Verano: No, I don’t think so.

Pennebaker: The thing is, he’s not . . . The trouble is, he’s up in Connecticut.

Verano: Okay.

Pennebaker: So, he’s not even in New York, so getting there might be difficult, but you should have some sort of . . . To understand the beginnings of the way this evolved, you need to have some sort of dialogue with Drew.

Verano: Okay.

Pennebaker: I think, more than almost anybody else. Because even though the films are flawed in many ways, he came . . . They somehow came to change his original idea, which was just purely magazine writing, you know, magazine construction, to a new kind of filmmaking. I didn’t even realize that when I quit – I quit *Crisis* because I could see that I would – because of the nature of the way the magazine was run, I couldn’t ever really make a film myself. It would always have to be – have somebody else’s input, and so I didn’t – I wasn’t thinking of *Dont Look Back* at all. I just thought, “I gotta get out of here,” and I quit. But it was a hard thing to do, because that was the only job I had. I’d never had a job before, and there was – I had a child! It was a hard moment to walk out of the place, and become an independent. And then Ricky joined me, and the two of us just farted around for a while, making films.

Verano: The first thing you did was *You’re Nobody Till Somebody Loves You*? Was that the first one you did after you got through?

Pennebaker: Well, somewhere in there I did that, yeah, with [Michael] Blackwood. But the thing is, we did the film *Happy Mother’s Day* – Ricky did that. We did that for the *Saturday Evening Post*, and they didn’t like it. Ricky did – it’s the most amazing film. When I saw that film, I thought, “This is worth it. Whatever happens to us, we’re really going to . . . This is new ground.” And the *Post* said, “We don’t like it. We’re going to re-edit it.” And I said, “No, you’re not. We’re going to buy it back from you,” which we did. We bought it back from them, and left it as it was. And Ricky and this guy I got to put narration on [Ed McCurdy] – because I thought we had to sell it to television – they wouldn’t even look at it. We never could sell it. We could never sell what we were doing, but we still kept doing it. That’s the amazing thing. We were so stupid, in

a way – we were so naïve – that we thought somehow . . . These films are so good, that they'll justify it, someday, and it took a while. It took a while. Even *Don't Look Back!* Nobody . . . I had a hard time. We had to distribute it ourselves! And *Monterey*, same way. Nobody would distribute those films. Now they're jewels in people's firmament, but at the time, it was a new thing, and new things have a hard time, if they aren't taken under the wing of heavy hitters, you know. And that's what Drew . . . I don't know how many other people are interesting to it, but that . . . It's such a story of how that thing . . . Because it's the beginning of – now, there must be a million people with video cameras, running around making films that they can't sell. It's incredible. Who would have thought that would be possible? It still – I'm filled with wonder, and, I think, in twenty years, it will sort of figure itself out. If it's a new language, then it will be used in the way that new languages are. For instance, if a person wants to run for president, he will have had to make a film, and that's how you find out about him! Then it will have a kind of effect on the way that people relate to each other, that we can't imagine now. It's interesting how it evolves, I think. But anyway, good luck to you.