

## Chapter one

### Introduction to radio documentary

Every film is a documentary. Even the most whimsical of fictions gives evidence of the culture that produced it and reproduces the likenesses of the people who perform within it. In fact, we could say that there are two kinds of film/ documentary: (1) documentaries of wish-fulfillment and (2) documentaries of social representation. Each type tells a story, but the stories, or narratives, are of different sorts. Documentaries of wish-fulfillment are what we would normally call fictions. These films give tangible expression to our wishes and dreams, our nightmares and dreads. They make the stuff of the imagination concrete— visible and audible. They give a sense of what we wish, or fear, reality itself might be or become. Such films convey truths if we decide they do. They are films whose truths, insights, and perspectives we may adopt as our own or reject. They offer worlds for us to explore and contemplate, or we may simply revel in the pleasure of moving from the world around us to these other worlds of infinite possibility. Documentaries of social representation are what we typically call nonfiction. These films give tangible representation to aspects of the world we already inhabit and share. They make the stuff of social reality visible and audible in a distinctive way, according to the acts of selection and arrangement carried out by a filmmaker. They give a sense of what we understand reality itself to have been, of what it is now, or of what it may become. Documentaries of social representation offer us new views of our common world to explore and understand.

When we deal with the course radio documentary production, our concern is the latter one, which is a documentary of social representation. Thus, hereafter anything said in this document will be about the nonfiction aspect of radio film or documentary production that is documentary of social representation.

The term documentary also refers the word document, the production is made from. And it is a systematic presentation of information based on reality and actuality that is combined from varieties of existing documents and people's stories. It is based on the sound of human voices, human activity, and music in revealing the events or recreating the events. Documentary programmes are often derived from preserved and historical documents that are used to embellish the information. The beautification of its illustration is woven together through

narration, sound effects such as music, rain or thunder effects. Under normal circumstances, documentaries last between 15 and 60 minutes. However, some may last longer than this.

Journalists might produce a documentary program from varieties of issues. Among others, race relations, urban development, pollution and the environment, or medical research might be areas or issues of concern for their documentary production. A programme might explore in detail a single aspect of one of these subjects that broadly attempts to examine how society copes with change. Other types of documentary deal with a single person, activity or event – the discovery of radium, the building of the Concorde aeroplane, the life of a notable figure, or the work of a particular factory, and theatre group or school. Essentially these are all to do with people, and while statistical and historical fact is important, the crucial element is the human one – to underline motivation and help the listener understand the prevailing social climate, why certain decisions were made and what makes people ‘tick’. The main advantage of the documentary approach over that of the straightforward talk is that the subject is made more interesting and brought alive by involving more people, more voices and a greater range of treatment. It should entertain while it informs, and as it illuminates provoke further thought and concern.

### **Radio documentary**

Radio documentary is a mind movie made with sound. It is a spoken word radio format devoted to non-fiction narrative. It is broadcast on radio as well as distributed through media such as tape, CD, and podcast. A radio documentary, or feature, covers a topic in depth from one or more perspectives, often featuring interviews, commentary, and sound pictures. A radio feature may include original music compositions and creative sound design or can resemble traditional journalistic radio reporting, but covering an issue in greater depth.

### **Distinctive features of documentary**

Documentaries always involve real people, not invented characters, in a personalization of a factual theme with an intimate, domestic feel. Audiences take pleasure in recognizing and knowing; although new insights will confer new knowledge, consumers of documentary are as likely to consider this learning process as entertainment as they are education.

A good documentary-maker will know how to exploit the pact between education and entertainment. A documentary will aim to extend the experience of the audience and to enlighten

them by immersing them in another world or theme: the word itself comes from the Latin *docere*, ‘to teach’.

When the father of British documentary, John Grierson, he is also said to be the one who coined the term documentary in 1926, came up with a now classic definition of the genre as ‘the creative treatment of actuality.’

“Actuality”: the raw materials of documentary, the sounds and images we gather with our cameras and microphones in the world “out there.” Whereas, “Creative treatment”: is how we shape the stuff we have gathered to tell a story. How we tell a story says everything about us: how we see the world, what we value, and how we talk about it.

### **News and Documentary**

The difference between news and documentary is not merely one of length. Although basic production techniques are shared, there is nevertheless a profound qualitative difference. A documentary should not simply repeat news reports; it has to provide a more in-depth understanding, or present an inside view of something that an audience would not obtain from the news.

A documentary will reveal the maker’s personal style and approach. A single theme can be explored with more time for explanation and interpretation, more time to present detailed actuality, more possibilities of marrying words with pictures in the case of film or, if the subject is conceptual, of making good use of ‘talking head’ interviews. All of these factors make the documentary medium suitable for the presentation of issues rather than just events.

### **Documentary and feature programmes**

The terms are often used as if they were interchangeable and there is some confusion as to their precise meaning. But here are exciting and creative areas of radio and, because of the huge range that they cover, it is important that the listener knows exactly what is being offered. The basic distinctions of the two types are to do with the initial selection and treatment of the source material.

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A documentary programme is wholly fact, based on documentary evidence – written records, attributable sources, contemporary interviews and the like. Its purpose is essentially to inform, to present a story or situation with a total regard for honest, balanced reporting.

The feature programme, on the other hand, need not be wholly true in the factual sense; it may include folk song, poetry or fictional drama to help illustrate its theme. The feature is a very free form where the emphasis is often on portraying rather more indefinable human qualities, atmosphere or mood.

The distinctions are not always clear-cut and a contribution to the confusion of terms is the existence of hybrids – the feature documentary, the semi-documentary, the drama documentary, fiction and so on.

It is often both necessary and desirable to produce programmes that are not simply factual, but are ‘based on fact’. There will certainly be times when, through lack of sufficient documentary evidence, a scene in a true story will have to be invented – no actual transcript exists of the conversations that took place during Columbus’s voyage to the New World. Yet through his diaries and other contemporary records, enough is known to piece together an acceptable account which is valid in terms of reportage, often in dramatic form, as already discussed. While some compromise between what is established fact and what is reasonable surmise is understandable in dealing with the long perspective of history, it is important that there is no blurring of the edges in portraying contemporary issues. Fact and fiction are dangerous in combination and their boundaries must be clear to the listener.

A programme dealing with a murder trial, for example, must keep to the record; to add fictional scenes is to confuse, perhaps to mislead. Nevertheless, it is a perfectly admissible programme idea to inter weave serious fact, even a court case, with contrasting fictional material, let us say songs and nursery rhymes – but it must then be called a feature not a documentary. Ultimately, what is important is not the subject or its treatment, but that we all understand what is meant by the terms used. It is essential that the listener knows the purpose of the broadcaster’s programme – essentially the difference between what is true and what is not. If the producer sets out to provide a balanced, rounded, truthful account of something or someone – that is a documentary. If the intention is not to feel so bound to the whole truth but to give greater reign to the imagination, even though the source material is real – that is a feature.

## Classes of Documentaries

Documentary programmes are made up of historical, biographical, scientific, mythical, religious and docu-drama. We shall treat one after another as follows:

1. Historical Documentary: This is based on present as well as past events which may be of important to either the people or the nation historically.
2. Biographical Documentary: This type of documentary is based on the lives of heroes or those who have achieved one thing or the other in the society. The documentary programme takes a look at their background, frustrations, and achievements in the course of their struggles. Such programmes are based on visual, audio, pictorial and sometimes they are acted featuring characters that bear close resemblance to such persons.
3. Scientific Documentary: Such documentaries are based on issues such as science, technology, engineering, and medicine.
4. Religious Documentary: This is a religious based type of documentary and in most cases, they are acted out. Here the producer has to be conscious of the setting and location.
5. A docudrama (or documentary drama) is a genre of radio and television programming, feature film, and staged theatre, which features dramatized re-enactments of actual events. On stage, it is sometimes known as documentary theatre. In the core elements of its story a docudrama strives to adhere to known historical facts, while allowing a greater or lesser degree of dramatic license in peripheral details, and where there are gaps in the historical record. Dialogue may include the actual words of real-life persons, as recorded in historical documents. Docudrama producers sometimes choose to film their reconstructed events in the actual locations in which the historical events occurred. A docudrama, in which historical fidelity is the keynote, is generally distinguished from a film merely "based on true events", a term which implies a greater degree of dramatic license; and from the concept of "historical drama", a broader category which may also encompass largely fictionalized action taking place in historical settings or against the backdrop of historical events.

Docudramas tend to demonstrate some or most of the following characteristics

- Representation of actual historical events
- Based on what actually happened

- Use of literary and narrative techniques to flesh out the bare facts of an event in history to tell a story
- Some degree of license is often taken with minor historical facts for the sake of enhancing the drama

### **Elements of documentary**

**Narration:** Here a talent will describe the subject matter with facts, figures and articulate the narration as to create interest about the topic. If the documentary is about a historic archaeological site, it needs so many facts to be told to the listeners to keep their interest intact. Listeners would be keen in listening as when the archaeological site came into existence, how the people lived there, and what type of artifacts have been recovered from that place. It would be very interesting to find in the documentary what language those people used to speak and if still there is any one in any part of the world who could understand that language.

**Music:** it helps to explain the topic in a script frequently. This is done when a documentary is required on a personality closely linked with music; secondly it is on birds, rivers, nature and tourism. Your voice superimposed on musical notes enhances the value of script and enthralls the listeners better than a dry description for long spells of time. Documentaries which are made about tourist resorts or fascinating places otherwise are frequently marked with musical notes to highlight the points not through words but by creating an atmosphere which makes the listeners understand about those places in a rather lighter way.

**Drama:** At times an impression of drama is essential to elaborate the theme of a documentary, though this is done sparingly. Some documentaries on historical wars may carry some impressions in words or sound effects to create a sense of excitement and to make the audience understand the historical facts close as they might have happened. Over doing dramatic effects may remove some of the gloss of a radio documentary.

**Imagination:** In documentary production, the producer has to show his/her imagination in giving treatment to the subject matter. It is not as ordinary an approach as writing down a script and reading it to impart information on the subject. But putting in imagination does not mean that a producer takes the documentary to an extent where the elements of objectivity are over

shadowed by the subjectivity. In such a case a documentary may not be able to keep its essence as the piece of broadcasting.

**Insertions:** A good radio documentary is punctuated with insertions from the relevant material. If there is a mention of some paintings, you may have quotations from the books, or talk to experts who know what it is all about. This trend is getting very popular lately. In fact interviews of a number of people concerning with the subject matter of the documentary are conducted. At first all the irrelevant matter is discarded from the interviews and then the answers are inserted in the documentary in a manner of inter-cutting. This means that instead of taking long talk with a person at one go, only a brief piece of answer from the interview is inserted at an appropriate point in the documentary. Obviously making a documentary in this style requires more application of mind and an elaborate post production.

**Close to places:** Like features, a producer is supposed to be visiting the place to get a real feel of the surroundings to involve the listeners in this type of radio production. The producers who believe in sitting in a studio and making the documentary by having certain sound effects can't reach even a shade of a documentary which is made by actually visiting the place where that particular documentary is made. And it will be possible to talk to the people coming from all over the country to visit the area in the scene of the story which the documentary is talking about. This is a task not possible to be accomplished by sitting inside a studio of a radio station. The documentaries are about people, places and events of historic value.

### **Post Production**

They need more care in post production for they are usually placed in archives and kept there as a future reference as well. When a documentary is made, its various elements are recorded in a very loose form. Someone, while giving impression about a place, might have said things which you do not desire to include in the final cut of the program. Similarly there have been sounds in the background which are not making it possible to listen to the narrator's voiceover. Or some time when you are recording voices of certain elements, the voice level goes extremely down and does not remain worth broadcasting. All these flaws are removed during the process of post-production and it is also possible to include some voices and observations at this stage of production. There is hardly any program which does not go through the stage of post production

for it is the last stage where a mistake is corrected, otherwise listeners would correct you, may be, the harder way.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Types of Documentaries**

As it has been seen in the introduction, documentary is a film, radio or television program that gives information and facts. Radio documentary is the voice documentation of an event. Documentaries wholly depend on facts, written documents/records, reliable sources and interviews. Script for documentaries should be factual and informational. Honesty is the face value. To inform is the major objective. It concentrates on contemporary issues. Documentaries deal single event in its details. It is a detailed analysis of an event, activity or person. The subject for documentary can be social, political, economic, cultural or educational problems. The biography of a famous person, or unfamiliar culture, tradition or people can be discussed through documentaries. Much of documentary materials are gathered through location interviews and spot recordings. Sounds proclaim the mood of the real atmosphere. Role of music in documentary is minimized where real fact life voices get prime importance. Using appropriate background effects and voices of real people can make documentaries, more beautiful. Factual material collection is the paramount feature of documentary production. The use of a narrator interspersed with voices of real people or actors and appropriate background effects and music bring a documentary to life.

Having said all these about the whatness of radio documentary and some of its subjects, this chapter will be on the types of documentaries and the need why radio and television stations produce a documentary program.

### **Types of Documentary**

Owuamalam (2007) has identified the following five types of documentaries. These are: naturalist, realist, newsreel, propagandist and the cinema verite documentaries. A detailed discussion of these classes of documentaries will be provided as follows:

### **The Naturalist Documentary**



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These are the documentaries that make use of their natural surroundings and everyday scenery. The naturalist film makers make drawings and symbols of the mountains, rivers, deserts, erosion gullies, sand dunes and forests of all kinds so as to tap natural emotional values. The essence of using these natural phenomena is simply to depict nature. Documentaries that are made to help the audience visit tourist attraction sites, topographies, humans struggling against nature and travelling from place to place in search of food and shelter, how the universe is made and many other descriptions of nature can be made by using this types of documentaries. A radio documentary producer of this type has to be creative and descriptive enough to tell his/her audience how it looks like in an image painting way in the minds of his/her audience.

## **The Realist Documentary**

This type of documentary helps the audience to see and to listen the different forms of life through documentaries. The main circle of realist documentary is showing two sides of a coin. Contradictions of life in the cities and rural areas, the poor and the rich, clean and dirty environments, as well as other points and counter-points which are prevalent in urban and rural areas are the center point of this type of documentary production. Albert Calvanti is one of the most recognized film directors in the realist tradition. Alberto's "Rien que les Heures" (Nothing Passes time" produced in 1926, broke new ground as he attempted to show what the passing of time is like in the city of Paris. David Griffith and his other colleagues see the film as the first attempt to express creativity in the life of people in a city and urban environments.

## **The Newsreel Documentary**

It is a documentary that presents the events of the day in a straight forward manner, with little or no elaboration for effect is in the newsreel tradition. A typical newsreel documentary producer has no special viewpoint, an approach quite different from that of most documentary filmmakers who portray events for a special purpose. Whereas newsreel reportage does not take much time and may be accomplished without much thought, the documentary requires full contemplation. The present day investigative or specialized reporting and the usual bare news reporting are typical examples of documentary film approach in the newsreel filmmaking. But the

investigation reporting takes pretty time to accomplish while the normal bare news reporting can be done with minimum time and concentration.

### **The propagandist Documentary**

The use of film as a persuasive instrument to elicit a particular effect on an audience is the key to the propagandist tradition. Propaganda, according to Harold Lasswell in Agbanu (2005) in this regard, refers to the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols such as clinched fist, elevated eye brow, sophisticated gestures, powerful words and body movements. The propagandist uses various strategies including arguments and persuasion. Soviet filmmakers were among the first to use film for political propaganda. For instance, the rise of communist ideology in the Soviet Union coincided with the perfection of the documentary. It was therefore natural that the young nation used film to promote its special view of the world. Communist ideology has remained indelible in the minds of most Russian citizens despite the splitting of the former Soviet Union into different states. Sergei M. Eisenstein's "October" produced in 1928 and V.I Pudvokin's "Deserter" produced in 1939 are the two notable films that used familiar images and persons to create a unique propagandist impact. The propaganda film probably reached its peak during the Second World War. On one part, the German film makers were eager to influence the masses in support of the Third Reich. On the other hand, American and British filmmakers told the world of the exploits and heroics of the "Allied Troops" against the German war machine, (Kogah 1999: 36). When it comes to radio documentary, as like as of the naturalist types of documentary, producers of this types of documentaries has to be reach in descriptive words and expressions so that they can easily propagate their audiences about the subject of the documentary that they are making.

### **Cinema Verite Documentary**

The rise of cinema verite brought a boom to documentary films. Films in this category reveal the power of an event to speak for itself. Frederick Wiseman is perhaps the most effective member of the cinema verite school. Wiseman's fascination is with institutions and his emphasis was on editing rather than planning in order to document factually without intrusion of social and political narration. The film maker dispenses with the narrator's voice and allows the situation

itself to tell the story. Frederick Wiseman achieves his objectives by allowing the camera to move much as the human eye would naturally do with little or no preplanning. Wiseman's "High school" produced in 1965, his "Tactical Follies" of 1967, his "Law and Order" of 1969 and his "Hospital" produced in 1970, and all explored every aspect of the functioning of traditional institutions. What makes cinema verite popular in recent times is the portability of camera equipment plus audiences' distaste for the preaching films. In cinema verite, the film maker is able to gather all the evidence needed to communicate a message. In the contemporary society, the documentary filmmaker continues with the tradition of presenting a viewpoint with a naturally occurring phenomenon.

### **Purpose of Documentary Films**

A documentary filmmaker sets forth "not simply to register events and circumstances, but to find the most moving examples of them" (Bluem, 1972:10). It is so because every documentary is dramatic. It adds an artistic dimension to journalistic and societal aims. It aims at one or more of the following objectives or purposes:

To provide socially useful information or basically to inform the audience. The essence may be to arouse human interest to take a remedial action, on the observed lapses in the human environment. The documentary provides relevant information through compelling pictures and images, sounds or a combination of all. It deals with the focused subject so that the issue raised would be appreciated and understood.

To persuade the audience to take remedial action and to inspire or lift.

To convince people to accept a new idea or to develop a new opinion or attitude.

To persuade the audience to carry out a specific course of action.

### **Significance of radio documentary**

The lack of critical and academic enquiry into the field of radio documentary-making and argues for it as an important field of study as 'this movement in radio has contributed in a significant

way to the broader history of ideas'. Radio documentary is 'one of the most significant cultural developments of the past decade'.

The documentary as having an important democratic function as it presents ordinary people as super stars; ordinary lives become important. Producers use reality as raw material and storytelling as the format.

Radio producers can tell important stories about people and society as effectively as reality television but with different messages. Because of the strong emotional impact of radio and the medium's ability to get listeners to identify with interviewees, the radio documentary can be seen as a way to increase empathy and tolerance in the world.

The documentary film is important and very crucial to broadcasters and media professionals for many reasons.

Firstly, it gives them a chance to use the broadcast media to explore the significant issues in their immediate environments, rather than expanding their resources on what may be frivolous and ephemeral.

Secondly, it provides opportunities for experimentation and the exercise of one's ingenuity not often possible in such formula obsessed fields as drama and comedy.

Thirdly, it allows broadcasters the opportunity to re-experience creativity, outside the realm of typologies often associated with specific production formats. It allows the freedom to explore the various attributes of performance, as a communication strategy, designed specifically for the audiovisual medium or the audio medium, when it is radio.

### **Radio – the perfect medium for documentary**

Radio documentary is about sharing human stories and experiences. Unlike television which involves pointing a camera in the face of interviewees - often with accompanying lights, microphones and multiple staff to operate all the equipment - radio recordings can be done with minimal distraction and impact on people. New portable flash card recorders such as the Edirol and Zoom recorders are so small that interviewees can easily forget they are being recorded. Because of this relatively cheap and unobtrusive portable equipment radio producers can collect records of the everyday lives of people without much intrusion and distortion. Tim Crook uses

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the term ‘radio documentary feature’ and describes it as a means to ‘provide the background and human spirit or color to what has gone on and what is going on in the world’.

Radio documentaries frequently deal with contemporary and social issues such as refugees, global warming and lifestyle. They might explore broad issues and in so doing can provide background to what is going on in the world or examine how society copes with change. Or they can deal with a ‘single person, activity or event’. As such radio is a perfect medium for documenting reality and creating pictures of life in the mind’s eye of the listeners.

### **Documentary proposal writing**

A proposal is used for grant applications, sponsorship applications, and pitches to broadcasters, potential fiscal sponsors or any number of individuals who need to understand the scope of the project. The proposal should lay out a compelling case for why this documentary needs to be made using quotes, statistics and any other evidence. It answers the question “why this documentary, why now”. The length of a documentary proposal can be anywhere from 2-25 pages (or more) depending on the scope of the project. The information you include in your proposal is factual and truthful. For example, you do not want to say that the Discovery Channel has endorsed your project if they have not. Of course, you cannot predict absolutely everything about your project, so the proposal is simply a forecast of how the project is expected to unfold and who will be involved to the best of your knowledge.

Whenever documentary makers are thinking about their documentary proposal, there are three major issues that they need to think of. These are: documentary proposal, documentary treatment and documentary synopsis. There is often a lot of overlap when talking about a documentary treatment documentary proposal, documentary synopsis and documentary logline.

*Documentary Proposal* – This explains the full scope of your documentary project from story synopsis to the people you’re planning to interview to your distribution plan. This document is typically used for fundraising. Think of this as your film's business plan.

*Documentary Treatment* – The treatment is almost like a script, detailing exact scenes, characters and story structure. This is a constantly developing and organic document, adjusting as the story unfolds. This document helps the filmmaker sort through the major themes and core elements of the story and is sometimes requested by large funding agencies.

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*Documentary Synopsis* - The synopsis is usually the first section of the proposal. It is a succinct overview of what your story is about, why the story is significant and how you're going to tell it.

*Documentary Logline* - The logline is a 1-3 sentence summary of your film that captures the central hook/conflict/narrative of your story. This is typically used in the marketing of your film to put on posters, film catalogues, adverts, TV guide, etc.

Tips for writing your documentary treatment/proposal/synopsis:

Use an active voice (don't say "We may be doing this film", say "This film is.."). Make the reader believe this film IS happening.

Write colorfully – avoid generic descriptions like "unique" or "magical". Explain why something is magical or unique.

Be specific – Don't just give a general overview of your story. Describe situations, people and characters in vivid detail to make the story come alive.

An effective documentary treatment:

Tells a great story through both narrative and visual description. Captures the personal and human element of the story.

Engages, inspires and leaves the reader feeling like "this story MUST be told" The idea behind a treatment or proposal is to have a written document that fully describes the documentary project that can be made available to potential investors, participants or supporters. This is the first step in the process to lay out the vision for your film.

Expect your proposal and treatment to be constantly updating as the project progresses. The proposal/treatment is not only a great tool for the filmmaker to brainstorm ideas and hash through potential themes and angles of the story, it's a terrific document to share with collaborators and potential funders.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Radio Documentary Treatment**

#### **Methodology of radio documentary production**

Having looked at what makes radio a suitable medium for long-format explorations of a person or a topic let us now explore the many steps involved in actually producing a radio documentary there is a methodology to journalism practice, even though this often goes unrecorded and hence unrecognized. The methodology of radio documentary production is a beautiful image of the creative process involved.

There might be differences in how producers see the mix of ingredients or the role of the narrator, but the production methodology is similar. Here it is important to note that there is a risk of restricting the understanding of what a documentary is by providing schematic and almost clinical step-by-step methods of production. That is not the intent of this point. Instead the aim is to make visible a process which is invisible for most listeners. It is also relevant to remember that the final ‘sound’ of the documentary is dependent on a range of things, e.g. the style of the individual producer, the requirements of the broadcasting network (duration, audience), and the culturally determined ‘radio sound’ of the country where the documentary will be broadcast.

#### **The Story Idea**

The obvious starting point when analyzing the process involved in producing a radio documentary is the story idea. For a format that has the potential to give such profound insights into the human condition, the story idea has to be strong. It is a matter of finding a topic or an issue that will attract and engage the listeners. Canadian producer Chris Brookes describes it as tempting the listeners to come out of their hole and join him ‘it is like swimming in this whole other reality together’.

Hedemann goes further and outlines eleven questions that should be considered when working up the documentary idea.

1. What is the theme? Is it important enough to make a documentary about?
2. Is there a generic human aspect of the story for an audience to identify with? Is it about love, regret, grief, about the relationship between parents and children, about loneliness, about loss or success?

3. Who is the main character? Is the person sympathetic enough for the listener to identify with?
4. Does the main character have a history to tell? What difficulties have he or she faced?
5. Will the main character do something in relation to the theme that will provide some ‘scenes’ to record? (e.g. a cancer patient beginning chemotherapy)
6. Has the main character set a goal to achieve? The listeners will continue to follow the story to see if those goals are reached.
7. Who or what can hinder or help the main character from achieving those goals? Can they be interviewed?
8. Is there an inner conflict within the main character? An inner conflict and thereby an inner journey will create a personal development for the listeners to identify with.
9. What sounds are linked to the main character, the scenes or the theme, that can be recorded for the documentary?
10. Is there relevant music to help build the emotional impact?
11. What is the role of the narrator? Is it as an invisible voice to give instructions between scenes or as someone personally involved in the story?

Radio documentaries start with people’s stories and it will be the producers themselves – their interest in the subject, their commitment, creativity and their skills – who will determine how the story is developed. Producer Torben Paaske feels compelled to tell stories about marginalized people in Danish society. He has done documentaries about the love-life of elderly people in residential care; about people with dementia; about trans-sexual people; about criminals. He is fascinated by the personalities and attitudes of people on the edge of society (Paaske, 2009). His Australian colleague Kirsti Melville also looks for stories that are socially relevant.

A brilliant idea will always get people listening because it is a curiosity, says British documentary producer Simon Elmes, ‘God, fancy that, I never knew’ (Elmes, 2009). He suggests developing the idea in such a way as to keep the audience slightly wondering and not too comfortable. ‘You should not be afraid of shocking the listener but at the same time you don’t want to shock them so much that they actually go for the off switch’ (ibid, 2009).

Documentary production ideas can be found from one of the following areas:



Personal experience: We experience sad, happy, bitter, sweet and memorable moments everyday both in our offices, homes, street or anywhere we find ourselves. These experiences can form the basis for a documentary programme.

Historical events or figures: A documentary idea could emanate from historical accounts about celebrities or celebrations. Most historical documentary is made up of partly fiction and factual things.

Strong feelings for or against the society or events: Bad or good feelings can form basis for a documentary idea.

A change in the societal values, norms, and social order can form material for a documentary script.

Also, the political, economic and social standard can be used for a documentary programme.

The inspiration to produce a documentary programme could also emanate from newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, drama series etc which one has read.

### **Background research and planning**

As part of the process of putting flesh on the bones the storyline is likely to change; research might show that the idea does not stand up or there might be something even more interesting buried in the material. Process is mandatory for most freelance producers wanting to sell a story idea, but it is also common for many broadcasters within the organization to have some form of internal process where producers have to pitch, or sell, their idea before getting the green light. In those instances the background research will be included in the proposal or pitching document.

The background research done by radio documentary producers is similar to the literature review required by academic disciplines. By finding out what has been written about the topic before, the documentary can be positioned in the context of previous knowledge. Some material will be used as background information while other material will become ingredients of the production. By scoping the territory the producer will find material that potentially could be included in the story, such as archival material, previous radio stories on the topic, music, readings and videos.

Background research will also unearth interviewees and other talents useful for the production. Background research involves not only looking for available information on a topic; it also includes planning the sounds for the documentary. Doing background research is the first step of the planning process. By understanding the topic and knowing what material is available, the producer can start sketching a draft story structure. It means the fieldwork will not be ‘a random fishing expedition but a clear-headed exercise to collect quite specific material’ (Phillips and Lindgren, 2006, 93). The second stage of planning involves the actual collection of material while the third stage involves the creative editing process itself.

Research is therefore important in documentary programme production because of the following reasons:

It helps in developing the point of view for the documentary.

It helps the script writer to be conversant with the subject matter.

It helps in ascertaining the budget for the documentary.

It helps in finding who is to be interviewed, and how the interview is to be carried out.

It is through research that the actual resources – both human and material – that will be used in the production are ascertained.

## **Motif**

A documentary topic is a type of hypothesis – a tentative explanation for a particular phenomenon; a theory in need of investigation. Where and when the central motif becomes clear depends on the story and the producer’s approach. In news journalism the word ‘angle’ is more commonly used to describe the central focal point of a story. Irish documentary-maker Lorelei Harris calls this revelation the ‘point of breakthrough at which that central motif of the program, whatever it was going to be or however I was going to do it, would become apparent to me’ . This is the thread that holds the program together. Harris argues that when documentaries don’t work it is because the producers have not got this central point; instead all they have is a collection of interviews Melville looks for strong emotion as the centre of the story: ‘they are the

stories that people connect with because it's something that everyone can relate to, that range of human emotion' (Melville, 2010).

Before continuing to explore the many issues and steps embedded within the production process such as collecting materials, developing narrative and editing and mixing, we need to take a detour from the methodology to examine the different components of a radio documentary – the 'building blocks' that are manipulated by the producer in the attempt to create compelling programs. The planning, research, script, collection of material, assembly and final editing. In a documentary the emphasis is on the collection of the factual material.

### **Planning**

Following on the initial idea is the question of how long the programme should be. It may be that the brief is to produce for a 30-minute or one-hour slot, in which case the problem is one of selection, of finding the right amount of material. Given a subject that is too large for the time available, a producer has the choice either of dealing with the whole area fairly superficially or reducing the topic range and taking a particular aspect in greater depth. It is, for example, the difference between a 20-minute programme for schools on the life of Chopin, and the same duration or more devoted to the events leading up to Chopin's writing of the 'Revolutionary Study', directed to a serious music audience. Where no overall duration is specified, simply an intent to cover a given subject, the discipline is to contain the material within a stated aim without letting it become diffuse, spreading into other areas. For this reason, it is an excellent practice for the producer to write a programme brief in answer to the questions 'What am I trying to achieve?' 'What do I want to leave with the listener?' Later on, when deciding whether or not a particular item should be included, a decision is easier in the light of the producer's own statement of intent. This is not to say that programmes cannot change their shape as the production proceeds, but a positive aim helps to prevent this happening without the producer's conscious knowledge and consent. At this stage the producer is probably working alone, gradually coming to terms with the subject, exploring it at first hand. This initial research, making notes and in particular listing those topics within the main subject which must be included, is followed by decisions on technique – how each topic is to be dealt with. From this emerges the running order in embryo. Very often, the title comes much later – perhaps from a significant remark made within the programme. There is no formally recognized way of

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organizing this programme planning; each producer has a preferred method. By committing thoughts to paper and seeing their relationship one to another – where the emphasis should be and what is redundant – the producer is more likely to finish up with a tightly constructed, balanced programme. Here is an example of the first planning notes for a local radio programme. This radio station serves a coastal region where the trawler fleet has been seriously affected by the loss of fishing rights in international waters:

Working title: A stolen childhood

Aim: the aim of this mini documentary is providing the listener how street children in Dilla Town are suffering. And also. The documentary tries to show their fight against life and all the challenges that these children are facing to lead their lives in the streets of the town.

Duration: 30 minutes.

Information: numbers of children in the streets, their family background, pushing and pulling factors to the streets.

Content: the major content of this documentary circulates in the lives of street children. It clearly shows how a child's yesterday, today and tomorrow is taken out by different factors for life long. Thus, the documentary will attempt to figure out why these children are in the streets? The shadow and the footprint leaves both on the physical and mental state of the children will be among the contents that will be displayed by this documentary.

Key questions: what are the major driving factors for these children to live their lives in the street? What are the physical and psychological impacts of growing in the street? What will be the fate of these children once they grew up? What are the roles played by the city administration in order to help these children grow with their family? How long this trend will continue? It is normal for a city to be with street children?

Interview sources: street children, their families (if possible), the city administration, children and youths bureau of the town, NGO's working with children, residents of the town, the city police officers.

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Reference sources: news papers, magazines, brochures that have stories of street children. Prior documentaries (radio or TV) made on the lives of street children.

Actuality: ambient sounds, hyenas and dogs screaming, lightning and sound clips of peoples interviewed for the documentary.

A final point on planning. A producer's statement of intent should remain fixed, but how that aim is met may change. Initial plans to reach the goals in a certain way may be altered, if in the course of production an unforeseen but crucial line of enquiry opens up. The programme material itself will influence decisions on content.

## **Research**

Having written the basic planning notes, the producer must then make the programme within the allocated resources of time, money, people, etc. Now the decision is whether to call on a specialist writer or to write one's own script. Depending on this will rest the matter of further research – perhaps it is possible to obtain the services of a research assistant or reference library. The producer who is working to a well-defined brief knows what is wanted and in asking the right questions will save both time and money. The principle with documentary work is always as far as possible to go back to sources, the people involved, eyewitnesses, the original documents and so on.

## **Structure**

The main structural decision is whether or not to use a narrator. A linking, explanatory narrative is obviously useful in driving the programme forward in a logical, informative way. This can provide most of the statistical fact and the context of the views expressed, and also the names of various speakers. A narrator can help a programme to cover a lot of ground in a short space of time, but this is part of the danger, and may give the overall impression of being too efficient, too 'clipped' or 'cold'. The narrator should link and not interrupt, and there will almost certainly not be any need to use a narrative voice between every contribution. There are styles of documentary programme which make no use at all of links, but each item flows naturally from one to the next,

pointing forward in an intelligible juxtaposition. This is not easy to do but can often be more atmospheric.

### **Collecting the material**

Much of the material will be gathered in the form of location interviews, if possible while at sea during a fishing trip. If it has been decided that there will be no narrator, it is important to ensure that the interviewees introduce themselves – ‘speaking as a trawler owner ...’ or ‘I’ve been in this business now for 30 years ...’. They may also have to be asked to bring out certain statistical information. This may be deleted in the editing, but it is wise to have it in the source material if there is no obvious way of adding it in a linking script. It must be decided whether the interviewer’s voice is to remain as part of the interviews. It may be feasible for all the interviewing to be done by one person, who is also possibly the producer, and for the programme to be presented in the form of a personal investigative report. Pursuing this line further, it is possible for the producer to hire a well-known personality to make a programme as a personal statement – still a documentary, but seen from a particular viewpoint that is known and understood. Where the same interviewer is used throughout, he or she becomes the narrator and no other linking voice is needed. Where a straightforward narrator is used, the interviewer’s questions are removed and the replies made to serve as statements, the linking script being careful to preserve them in their original context. What can sound untidy and confusing is where, in addition to a narrator, the occasional interviewer’s voice appears to put a particular question. A programme should be consistent to its own structure. But form and style are infinitely variable and it is important to explore new ways of making programmes – clarity is the key.

### **Impression and truth**

The purpose of using actuality sounds is to help create the appropriate atmosphere. More than this, for those listeners who are familiar with the subject, recognition of authentic backgrounds and specific noises increases the programme’s authority. It may be possible to add atmosphere by using material from sound effects discs. These should be used with great care, since a sound only has to be identified as ‘not the genuine article’ for the programme’s whole credibility to suffer. The professional broadcaster knows that many simulated sounds or specially recorded

effects create a more accurate impression than the real thing. The producer concerned not simply with truth but with credibility may use non-authentic sounds only if they give an authentic impression. The same principle applies to the rather more difficult question of fabrication. To what extent may the producer create a ‘happening’ for the purpose of the programme? Of course, it may be necessary to ‘stage manage’ some of the action. If you want the sound of ship’s sirens, the buzzing of a swarm of angry bees or children in a classroom reciting poetry, these things may have to be made to happen while the recorder is running. Insofar as these sounds are typical of the actual sounds, they are real. But to fabricate the noise of an actual event – for example, a violent demonstration with stones thrown, glass breaking, perhaps even shots being fired – this could too easily mislead the listener unless it is clearly referred to as a simulation. Following the work of broadcasters in wartime, it is probably true that unless there are clear indications to the contrary, the listener has a right to expect that everything heard in a documentary programme is genuine material to be taken at face value. It is not the documentary producer’s job to deceive, or to confuse, for the sake of effect. Even the reconstruction of a conversation that actually happened, using the same individuals, can give a false impression of the original event. Like the ‘rehearsed interview’, it simply does not feel right. Similarly, it is possible to alter a completely real conversation by the switching on of a recorder – a house builder giving a quotation for a prospective purchaser is unlikely to be totally natural with a ‘live’ microphone present! Faced with the possibility that ‘reality’ simply won’t happen, either in an original recording or by a later reconstruction, the documentary producer may be tempted to obtain material by secretive methods. An example would be to use a concealed recorder to get a conversation with an ‘underground’ book dealer for a programme on pornography. This is a difficult area that brings the broadcaster into conflict with the quite reasonable right of every individual to know when they are making a statement for broadcasting. Certainly, the BBC is opposed in general to the use of surreptitious production techniques as being an undue invasion of personal liberty. If such a method is used, it is as a result of a decision taken at a senior level. The implications for an organization broadcasting material derived from the subliminal or secret are such that this is a question which producers, staff or freelance, should not take upon themselves. Clearance must be obtained from the programme boss. Of course, if the subject is historical, it is an understood convention that scenes are reconstructed and actors used. Practice in other countries differs, but

in Britain a documentary on even a recent criminal trial must of necessity employ actors to reconstruct the court proceedings from the transcripts since the event itself cannot be recorded. No explanation is necessary other than a qualification of the authenticity of the dialogue and action. What is crucial is that the listener's understanding of what is broadcast is not influenced by an undisclosed motive on the part of the broadcaster.

## **Music**

The current practice is to make little use of music in documentary programmes, perhaps through a concern that it can too easily generate an atmosphere, which should more properly be created by real-life voices and situations. However, producers will quickly recognize those subjects that lend themselves to special treatment. Not simply programmes which deal with musicians, orchestras or pop groups, but where specific music can enhance the accuracy of the impression – as background to youth club material or to accompany reminiscence of the depressed 1930s. A line from a popular song will sometimes provide a suitably perceptive comment, and appropriate music can certainly assist the creation of the correct historical perspective. Again, as with drama, one of the many specialist MCPS 'mood music' libraries can help.

## **Compilation**

Having planned, researched and structured the program, written the basic script and collected material, the producer must assemble it so as to meet the original brief within the time allotted. First, a good opening. Two suggestions which could apply to the earlier example of the program on the fishing industry are illustrated by the following script of page one:

The start of the program can gain attention by a strong piece of sound actuality, or by a controversial or personal statement carefully selected from material that is to be heard within the program. It opens 'cold' without music or formal introduction preceded only by a time check and station identification. An opening narration can outline a situation in broad factual terms or it can ask questions to which the listener will want the answers. The object is to create interest, even suspense, and involve the listener in the program at the earliest possible time. The remainder of the material may consist of interviews, narrator's links, actuality, vox pop, discussion and music.



Additional voices may be used to read official documents, newspaper cuttings or personal letters. It is better, if possible, to arrive at a fairly homogeneous use of a particular technique, not to have all the interviews together, and to break up a long voice piece or statement for use in separate parts. The most easily understood progression is often the chronological one, but it may be desirable to stop at a particular point in order to counter-balance one view with its opposite. And during all this time the final script is being written around the material as it comes in – cutting a wordy interview to make the point more economically in the narration, leaving just enough unsaid to give the actuality material the maximum impact, dropping an idea altogether in favour of a better one, always keeping one eye on the original brief.

### **Programme Sequence**

There are few rules when it comes to deciding the programme sequence. What matters is that the end result makes sense – not simply to the producer, who is thoroughly immersed in the subject and knows every nuance of what was left out as well as what was included, but to the listener who is hearing it all for the first time. The most consistent fault with documentaries is not with their content but in their structure. Examples of such problems are insufficient ‘signposting’, the reuse of a voice heard sometime earlier without repeating the identification, or a change in the convention regarding the narrator or interviewer. For the producer who is close to the material it is easy to overlook a simple matter which may present a severe obstacle to the listener. The programme maker must always be able to stand back and take an objectively detached view of the work as its shape emerges.

### **The ending**

To end, there are limitless alternatives. Here are some suggestions:

- 1 To allow the narrator to sum up – useful in some types of schools programme or where the material is so complex or the argument so interwoven that some form of clarifying résumé is desirable.
- 2 To repeat some of the key statements using the voices of the people who made them.

3 To repeat a single phrase which appears to encapsulate the situation.

4 To speculate on the future with further questions.

5 To end with the same voice and actuality sounds as those used at the opening.

6 To do nothing, leaving it to the listener to form an assessment of the subject. This is often a wise course to adopt if moral judgments are involved.

### **Interviewing For Documentary**

Documentary-making does not mean putting words into the interviewee's mouth. The best parts of an interview are when clear truths emerge spontaneously. However, an interview may be an intrusion into old wounds and tragic memories: 'In the name of the public good we delve into people's lives, invade their privacy, and expose their souls' (Rosenthal, 1996: 152). The dilemma is that the interviewer will want emotions and drama, anecdotes and colorful stories, as well as facts. Facts can be presented with television graphics or by voice-over narration in radio and TV, but there is no substitute for individual human feeling.

The more a documentary-maker knows about the subject involved, the easier it becomes to conduct successful interviews because the questions will be more focused. Although the interviewer should run through the topics to be covered (if this is a formal interview situation), there is always a danger of over-rehearsal so that the participant burns out in advance. Nevertheless, the interviewer must make the person feel at ease and less suspicious of the process; the eventual performance will benefit from any empathy that has been created. Sometimes, though, interviewers should not be too deferential, because this may inhibit them from asking tough questions, especially if the documentary is an investigative or current affairs adversarial style. In more formal situations, the interviewees sometimes asks to see the questions in advance and may want to adhere only to those questions. However, prepared answers will destroy a normally spontaneous, natural, conversational style. The interviewee may also want to hear or view the recording. This is fine as long as participants do not demand a veto over the final edit.

## Interview Techniques

It is important to distinguish between the different reasons for conducting an interview. What is needed from the interviewees will be determined to a large extent by the genre of programme. For example, the specialized knowledge of the interviewee may be all-important in science-based Documentaries. In a travel programme, by contrast, the interviewees often need only to be entertaining. There are three aspects to be taken into account: the initial briefing of the interviewee, the manner of the interview itself, and the way in which what is said is incorporated into the programme. Interviews may be designed to elicit different types of material, including:

- Factual or expert information: in which case there will be a need to assess the weight of information given, partly by judging the reputation and standing of the interviewee, partly by preliminary research into other sources.
- Expert opinion: in which case there will be a need to draw out the opinion by putting alternative opinions to the interviewee, and bearing in mind the question of balance.
- Personal, non-expert opinion: Information journalists can receive from any willing passerby.
- Witness accounts: in which case it will be important to ensure that the interviewee is indeed a competent and genuine witness.
- Anecdote: in which case the interviewee should be a good raconteur or have a good camera presence
- Emotion. For interviewees to express emotion during an interview designed for television is sometimes described as therapeutic. However, the interviewer should always be aware of the potential distress that may follow in the aftermath of such an interview. Interviewers may adopt various different strategies, partly depending on whether the interviewee is a personality in their own right, to be featured in the programme, or on whether their questions are merely prompts for the interviewee, to be edited out in the final programme.

Strategies of making an interview in order to receive all or one of the above types of documentary sounds, the interviewer applies the following strategies, among others.

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- Effectively eliciting information or opinion. In this case the interviewer will be as self-effacing as possible
  
- Challenging the interviewee, usually in a political interview. This involves putting contrary opinions with provocative emphasis. If the documentary is about politics, maladministration, corruption, money laundering, abuse of power and anything which is not soft and human interest in the face of journalism, the producer has to be aggressive enough to challenge his/her guest based on the reference documents at hand to say so.
  
- The conversational interview. This often takes the form of an interviewer and interviewee chat, possibly on a sofa in a daytime television show, or strolling informally through a park.
  
- The intimate interview in the manner of Face to Face, first evolved by John Freeman in the 1960s, and then revived by Jeremy Isaacs in the 1990s. The interviewee, often a well-known personality, agrees to respond to extended probing, in which they reveal many personal details.
  
- The emotional interview. It is an interview documentary producer's choice their interviewee and conducts it because of the personal and emotional nature of the stories they have to tell. The interviewer's job is to encourage that story to come out, often merely through sympathetic nodding. Noble documentary makers like Angela Huth said on this regard that 'If somebody was in a poor way and the tears were rising', you did a bit of nodding and didn't say anything'' then they will start to tell you everything of what happened with a grief emotionally. Questions like, Can I ask you a personal question how the accident did happen? Is it okay for you if I let my audiences know about the situation of the time? And others will help the producer to know more about the situation from the horse mouth.

### **Practical points**

There are some practical points that are useful for most types of interview:

- Consider if the interviewee is competent and will come across well.

Ask only one question at a time, and it will contain only a single point. If the question consists of several parts, the interviewee will inevitably forget or ignore one of the elements. The 'tell me'

gambit ensures usable, self-contained statements. The documentary-maker may have to ask the same question again at the end of the interview, if the first answer needs amplification:

‘Tell me again about how you . . .’ will result in a more succinct, relaxed, usable answer the second time round, especially if the point is important but the interviewee stumbled during the first take. Alternatively, there may be a two-way conversation featuring the presenter or reporter as well: this is necessary for a confrontational dialogue. Walking interviews are a good idea if using an on-screen television presenter (but, it doesn’t work when it comes to radio).

- Decide if the interviewer’s questions will be part of the documentary or will be edited out. This will change the way in which the questions are asked. If the questions are to be edited out, all the information must be included in the narration.
- If dealing with an inexperienced interviewee, explain the procedures to them. For example, if it is important to play devil’s advocate and challenge their view, the interviewee should understand that this is to clarify the issues for the audience, and they should not take it personally or get annoyed (unless, of course, this is the interviewer’s intention!).
- Have a list of questions prepared before the interview. Make them precise and designed to elicit the type of answer needed. However, it is important to maintain eye contact with the interviewee, rather than be constantly consulting prepared notes.
- Decide on the best place for the interview. The interviewee is likely to be more relaxed in their own home amongst their own things. Questions may be:
  - Requests for information
  - Follow-up, or supplementary questions, and requests for examples
  - Leading questions that expect particular answers
  - The carefully judged moment when the interviewer says nothing, allowing the interviewee space to expand on their thoughts.

### **Actuality sequences and observed conversations**

In radio, actuality sequences are good for creating ambience, and they will work if they are announced in some way by a social actor, who may say something like ‘Now we’re going to

have a meeting to discuss . . .’ or ‘I’m going to visit the manager to find out . . .’ There may be gaps in the mental picture that is created by the recording of a particular scene, and these must be filled either by the presenter or by a participant.

With a visual medium, it is better to show, not tell. Visually, every shot matters, so they should be thought about carefully. People who are new to a camera are often beguiled by the power of the zoom: in fact, editors detest zooms, unless they are accompanied by other options (at the beginning or the end). ‘Zooms work best when they are motivated by the action in the shot, or combined with another camera movement’ (Watts, 2004: 136). They can progressively reveal content in a scene, such as when a shot starts on medium and moves to close-up as a person starts to show anger or sorrow.

Usually, directors film an interviewee doing some activity before or after the interview: walking into their office, fetching a file from a cupboard, entering or leaving a building. This can serve several useful purposes: it provides shots over which voice-over can be used to introduce the person before coming to the first extract from their interview; it also provides cutaways which may be necessary as edit points, enabling a film-making style that shows activity and movement while also conveying a sense of location and context for what the person does. The participant’s own interview can be used as voice-over for such shots to ‘relocalize’ visual portrayal, encouraging viewer empathy.

### **The Importance of Sound Quality**

As far as the course is dealing with radio documentary, sound is the foundation stone of its production. Thus, once a producer is thinking about his/her production, what needs to come to their mind is, the quality of the sound that they are collecting from the field. Since, the purpose of location sound recording is to collect material that will be required in order to build a soundtrack later; its quality has to be up to the standard and has to be filmed in a way that fits to the ears and minds of the audience. . . When a sound operator arrives at a location, he or she will listen to the ambient noises, then take a level and do a test run before going for the main recording. The reason for such preliminaries is to get it right.

### **Scripting**

When the producer has edited down each of the different elements of the story (interviews, actuality, recorded readings etc) it is time to put them all together. As part of the first stage of

editing, a rough structure will have been developed where the many elements are all placed on a timeline in an attempt to create a compelling narrative. This means only two production steps are left: the narrator's script which glues the components together and mixing them all in the studio into a seamless program.

All textbooks covering radio have a section or chapter on writing for radio with tips on how to structure sentences (generally make them short); how to paint pictures with words; what words to choose; how to ensure simplicity to assist aural understanding (how to avoid abbreviations and acronyms); pace; differences between scripts written for the eye and for the ear and so.

Writing the script for a radio documentary is like filling in the space between bricks with mortar. It makes the different elements join together into a coherent structure since the final script is being written around the material (so it may provide some extra detail or remind us about who is speaking). This does not, however, mean that the script itself is not a creative element in the production. On the contrary, the script – and the presenting of the script – is often where novice producers encounter the most problems. Writing for radio is a skill which seems simple as it is supposedly language 'just as we speak it'. However, writing for radio is surprisingly complex – just as the production of radio itself. Radio language is much more formal than most listeners would believe. The apparently natural flow of radio speech lies something altogether more formal, more structured and pre-determined'. When writing scripts journalists have to carefully construct a text which:

- simplifies complex issues and data which may be difficult to absorb on a single hearing;
- conveys emotions;
- describes events and persons; and
- reminds listeners of the storyline.

At the same time the spoken words have to end at the precise moment when the red light is switched off in the studio, so scripting is always done with exact timing in mind. Although radio is a mass medium, we listen alone and the radio script caters for one listener. Former head of BBC training Elwyn Evans argues that radio speech must be directed at an individual listener to create the sense of intimacy, which is imperative for radio as a medium. The speaker

*... may be reading a script but he sounds as though he's talking to me alone. My conscious mind may be aware that he isn't doing anything of the sort – but, as in the theatre, it's the*

*subconscious impression that counts. If a radio speaker, thanks to the way his script is written, makes me feel he's talking to me personally, it becomes much harder to switch him off (Evans, quoted in Shingler and Wieringa, 1998, 36).*

Returning to Hedemann's description above of the **many roles of the narrator** in the radio documentary all the different personalities are **created through the process of writing and presenting the script**. In the radio documentary every script has to be **crafted to suit the topic, format and style** of the finished program and requires that the journalist therefore be fluent in many different writing genres. In the words of Braun,

*So it's like looking at a rock; you see the structure in the rock and now you are beginning to stonemason what the material wants, how to use it et cetera... And then of course you can't just be a writer, somebody who is putting one word to the next, you have to be a kind of composer as well (Braun, 2009).*

### **Final editing - mixing the documentary**

It is in the studio where the final version of the documentary is created. Some public service broadcasters still have sound engineers who help the journalist/producer mix the program to achieve the highest standard of sound quality. Producers working for the documentary department with the Norwegian broadcaster (NRK) have, at time of writing, ten days in the studio with a sound engineer to mix the program (Hedemann, 2009). In Australia, Radio National producers are allocated three days in the studio to mix a 54-minute program.

Obviously there are as many ways to do a final mix of a program as there are production teams, but usually the producer will hand over sound files with the edited segments and a script to the sound engineer. There might still be missing components such as special sound effects or music that will be decided on during the mixing process. Some producers will have a rather rigid structure to follow where mixing is a matter of making the transitions from item to item as smooth and inconspicuous as possible. Others see the mixing session as a creative process in itself where elements are moved around, scripts amended and interviews recut. It is at this point that the recorded ambient sound is laid under an interview, the cross fades of two sound sources are adjusted for strongest impact, and the style of the script is tested against the other components to ensure consistency. Whichever method is applied, the mixing is where the final 'sound' and duration of the documentary is set and the documentary is captured in its finalized



shape for broadcast. It is very difficult to describe on paper the process of creating a radio documentary in the studio. As with editing, it is easier to appreciate by listening to examples in real life. As Berit Hedemann points out:

These aspects are almost impossible to describe. It's as difficult to explain why four special bars in a music piece are beautiful. It has to be heard. Usually these storytelling techniques are done in the studio, not on a piece of paper when the story manuscript is written (Hedemann, 2006, 150).

What makes one documentary stand out compared to another is not always its dramaturgical framework or how closely someone is miked during an intimate interview. It is more often about the relationship between music and other sounds; about the transition between different sounds; and about the rhythm of the piece.

### **Ethical Guidelines**

Your operation of the documentary making has to be based on the principles of independence, impartiality and reliability. The documentary maker and the station must resist any attempts to influence our journalism. Political, commercial or similar interests have no influence on the editorial content of the documentary.

### **General ethical guidelines of the production**

Not only for documentary production, in all practices of journalism, you have to bear in mind the following ethical considerations in the course of dealing with sources and production procedures, among other ethical guidelines that you are familiar with in different courses of journalism and communication that you took so far and are planning to take ahead.

1. The production must be built on truthful, relevant and diverse communication of information. Interaction with the public must exist. Journalists must seek information from diverse sources in an unprejudiced manner to ensure that the work is impartial, independent and reliable. Journalists must take all relevant facts and different perspectives into account, and give parties who receive criticism an opportunity to be heard as soon as the criticism has been presented.

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2. The production and the content must include as wide a variety of opinions, values and social phenomena as possible. We promote pluralistic social discourse and interaction. Our programs must reflect many different opinions. Equality is an objective of our programme and content production operations as a whole, as well as an objective of individual programs. However, if equality cannot be achieved in the case of one individual programme, we will ensure that it will be achieved with other similar programmes within a reasonable period of time.
3. Audiences must be given the opportunity to differentiate facts and their background information from opinions and fictional content. When presenting factual content, we do not use image or sound in a manner that distorts the events or information. We make sure that the image and sound give a truthful impression of matters and events. When we edit factual materials in a fictional direction, the context or the manner in which the materials are used must make it evident that editing has been done. In our programmes and web materials, we make a clear difference between editorial materials and the space reserved for the opinions of the public.
4. The production and content publishing must be independent of all external sources of influence, and all pressure, persuasion or bribery must be rejected. The production must remain independent of any political, commercial or other external interests. A station does not allow external interests to influence its journalism. We base our decision to publish any content on substance and journalistic criteria. We do not accept benefits that would jeopardize our independence, impartiality and reliability as producer.
5. The human dignity of every individual must be respected. Pluralism is one of our basic values. The gender, age, origin, native language, religion, worldview, health, disabilities or other personal characteristics of a person must not be portrayed in an inappropriate or demeaning manner. We respect the protection of privacy and human dignity. We aim to make sure that the messages sent to our live programmes or website by members of the audience does not violate anyone's human dignity. Examples of violations of human dignity include discrimination, incitement to violence, and incitement to hatred towards an individual or population group. We reject such content and remove it when it is brought to our attention.

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6. Acquisition of information must be open, and based on reliable sources that can be verified when necessary. We carefully ensure that facts are correct. When acquiring information, we prefer sources that can be verified through interviews, documents or other similar methods. We only use anonymous sources as the sole source of information in exceptional cases. Careful verification of materials, preferably from several different sources, is particularly important if the materials could be defamatory.
7. A critical attitude towards information sources is necessary. When assessing the reliability of a source, the source's potential ulterior motives of gaining benefit or inflicting damage must be considered. A critical attitude is particularly important when an anonymous source is used. A critical attitude towards the source of information is also important when dealing with controversial issues.
8. All information must be verified as far as possible, even when it has been published previously. Verification of previously published public information is a central factor in reliability. The more significance the information has, the more important it is to verify it.
9. Exceptional methods can only be used to acquire information if conventional methods do not yield information that has great social importance. When we use exceptional methods to obtain information, we tell the public why we have chosen to do so. Exceptional methods include filming or recording without the subject's knowledge (but not in a way that violates any laws) and withholding information about the reporter's profession or identity. Exceptional methods must always be agreed on beforehand with the supervisor and responsible editor. We also ensure that information acquired with exceptional methods is not used in a misleading manner or in a way that inflicts damage on outsiders.
10. The journalist and publisher are entitled to maintain the confidentiality of their sources. Journalists have the right and obligation to follow any agreement made with the source to conceal the identity of a person who has provided information in confidence. When publishing information received from an anonymous source, it is recommended that the audiences are told how the reliability of the anonymous source and the received information has been verified.
11. We must act in an open manner when approaching an interviewee. We must always inform the interviewee beforehand whether the interview will be published or whether its purpose is

to acquire background material. The interviewee must be told about the context in which the interview is meant to be used and, if possible, when it will be published.

12. Information or images considered to be private that are detrimental to the subject can only be published with the consent of the subject, unless publishing is considered necessary to be able to discuss a matter of social importance related to the subject, or his or her position in life. We are bound by law when defining protection of privacy. We consider the different levels of influence and social position that individuals possess, as well as whether the subject has purposefully set out to become a public figure. The higher the position of influence a person holds or the more important the matter related to him or her is, the smaller is the sphere of private life that we cannot present. We do not publish information that could cause damage or suffering to the subject if published and which is considered private, unless the subject has power in society. The responsible editor makes the publishing decision in such cases. Protection of the privacy of an individual may also be narrowed down to cover a smaller sphere of private life if he or she has achieved something or has acted in a manner that increases public interest. However, public figures also have a right to privacy. We always consider these cases carefully and respect the human dignity of the subject. Information on an individual's way of life, intimate matters and children is generally considered to fall within the scope of protection of privacy. We can only publish such information with the consent of the individual. We exercise particular care in cases where the information is related to the individual's physical or psychological qualities, or his or her personality. When an interview concerns the private life of a person belonging to the interviewee's circle of acquaintances, the consent of that person must also be acquired.
13. Not all public materials are necessarily suited for publication. Not all public documents are automatically suited for publishing. Documents may, for example, include personal or financial information pertaining to a person's private life that falls into the scope of protection of privacy. We cannot publish such information without the consent of the person.
14. Persons targeted by intense criticism have the right to defend themselves. If a programme contains forceful criticism targeted at an identifiable person or community, the target of criticism must be given the opportunity to be heard at the same time if possible.

15. When filming children and teenagers, special care is necessary. Websites targeted at children and teenagers must also be supervised with special care. We protect children as both performers and the target groups of programmes and content through taking particular care. Permission from parents or guardians is generally necessary when children of primary school age or below are filmed or interviewed. Children can, however, be filmed and interviewed without the permission of parents or guardians in a neutral context and as part of a large group. The parents' or guardians' consent does not automatically constitute a permission to publish personal information that may be harmful to a child or teenager. Decisions to publish information relating to a child must be made with regard to protecting the integrity and interests of the child. In other words, the interests of the child must be foremost in your mind when thinking about whether or not to publish information that may be harmful to the child, even if the parents or guardian have given their permission. We always take special care when interviewing children and teenagers in crisis situations.
16. Activities taking place in public locations can usually be reported and filmed without the consent of those involved, with certain restrictions. People can be filmed when in a public location. When using the materials thus produced, we observe statutory regulations on the protection of privacy and personal dignity, as well as ethical guidelines. We take the wishes of people being filmed into account unless journalistic considerations require otherwise.
17. Images or sound must not be used in an offensive or tactless manner. We take special care when publishing materials on the victims of accidents or crimes. We use tact when filming or interviewing disabled or sick people, or people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.