

**Re-considering History and Narrative Through the Short Factual Film The Archive (UK 2018)**

SPENCE, Peter

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## Re-considering History and Narrative Through the Short Factual Film *The Archive* (UK 2018)

In this paper I will consider tensions and dialogues between historical enquiry and narrative story-telling, using the case study of my own short historical documentary film *The Archive* (2018), which I propose to screen during my presentation.

Entirely compiled from archive materials including audio testimony, home movie footage of Hong Kong and China in 1952, as well as a de-classified Federal Bureau of Investigation file, the film tells the story of New York lawyer David Drucker who was tracked by the FBI over several decades. These two types of archive may traditionally have been categorised according to their status, respectively, as 'found' and 'official'. (Baron, 2014)

As well as outlining theories of the archive I will also consider how this sits within the broader new historicist debate around narrative as a methodology of the historian. I will explore this shared discourse between history and story-telling in the context of *The Archive* (2018), which narrativizes David Drucker's story as a historical thriller film.

The paper asks the question: can a factual film that mediates the past through a model for genre narrative story-telling also offer new understanding of this period in US history?

The outcome of research suggests that the particular editing strategy necessitated by the genre model challenges the traditional orthodoxy of the official government source by giving voice to a previously un-heard FBI suspect. Furthermore it asks us to question the respective 'value' of historic documents that have often been categorized according to a hierarchy of 'official' and 'found'.

Peter Spence  
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