

Candidate D



International Baccalaureate Form 6/FISCS

Film cover sheet: independent study

SUBMIT TO: EXAMINER ARRIVAL DATE: 30 APR (30 OCT) SESSION: MAY
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- Type or write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
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SUBJECT: Film LEVEL: HL

CANDIDATE NAME: Candidate D CAND NO:

Instructions to candidates

Please tick/check to show you have included:

- Rationale
 Script
 List of sources

Number of script pages (HL 12–15, SL 8–10): 15

Title: Mockumentary: A Study of Falsehood

Cultures examined	Films studied
New Zealand	Forgotten Silver
Belgium	Man Bites Dog
United Kingdom	Best in Show
Canada	To kill a Mockumentary
United States	This is Spinal Tap, Blair Witch Project, David Holzman's Diary, and Borat

I confirm that this independent study is my own work.

Candidate's signature:

Date: 2/28/07

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name:

Date: 2/28/07

Teacher's signature:

Film IB
Independent Study Script

Mockumentary: A Study of Falsehood

Rationale

After watching the film Best in Show, I became interested in other comedic mockumentaries. Consequently, I decided to study the genre of mockumentary for my Independent Study. As I began to conduct research, I discovered other examples of mockumentaries including Man Bites Dog and Forgotten Silver. Through my study I realized that other mockumentaries extended beyond the realm of comedy. In my script, I explore how mockumentaries are able to create false reality and trick the viewers of the audience. Ultimately, I chose the setting of the movie theatre: the location in which the trick begins.

- | <u>Video</u> | <u>Audio</u> |
|---|--|
| 1 TITLE: The Mockumentary:
A Study of Falsehood | 1 MUSIC UP (<u>THIS IS SPINAL TAP</u>
THEME) |
| 2 FADE UP ELS: NARRATOR
RECLINING IN THE MIDDLE
ROW OF AN EMPTY MOVIE
THEATRE | 2 NARRATOR: Welcome to the site
of my new mockumentary. Don't
worry you haven't missed
anything yet. I was just
listening to Orson Welle's
radio production clip of <u>War</u>
<u>of the Worlds</u> . Often viewed
as the precursor to false
documentaries, Welle's radio
clip convinced his 1930s
audience that the aliens were
invading planet Earth. |
| 3 MS: NARRATOR SITS UP IN
CHAIR AND TAKES A SIP OF
COKE | 3 NARRATOR: Now I want to
figure out how to receive
that same reaction from an
audience- the confusion of
reality. |
| 4 CU: NARRATOR CONTINUES
TALKING, RESTING HEAD ON
HAND | 4 NARRATOR: The term
mockumentary is actually a
portmanteau of the phrase
mocking documentary.
Presented like a typical
documentary, the film genre
was first applied by Rob
Reiner during interviews
about <u>This is Spinal Tap</u> . |
| 5 LS: PAUSED CLIP OF ROB
REINER ON THE MOVIE
SCREEN WITH NARRATOR
TURNED BACK TOWARD
CAMERA | 5 NARRATOR: But which film was
the first official
mockumentary? I need to
rewind back forty years to
<u>David Holzman's Diary</u> . |

- 6 MS: PAUSED CLIP OF REINER TRANSFORMS INTO A SCENE FROM DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY 6 NARRATOR VO: Jim McBride's film provides eight days in the life of a young filmmaker. The audience is fooled into believing that the film portrays real events.
- 7 CLIP: DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY- OPENING MONOLOGUE OF DAVID HOLZMAN 7 CLIP: DAVID HOLZMAN: Noted French wit Jean-Luc Godard called film "truth at twenty-four frames per second."
- 8 MONTAGE: CLIPS FROM DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY- WALKING ALONG STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY 8 NARRATOR: Ironically, the seventy-four minute film is devoid of any truth. Instead, McBride's mockumentary displays a fictional character with a fictional life.
- 9 ECU: NARRATOR'S FACE CHANGES FROM COLOR TO BLACK AND WHITE 9 NARRATOR: The fake interviews and black and white cinematography help form the documentary-like aspects of mockumentaries. Perhaps, I should switch to black and white.
- 10 MS: NARRATOR LEANS BACK IN CHAIR AS ENTIRE THEATRE BECOMES BLACK AND WHITE 10 NARRATOR: Now the screen resembles the newsreels of early films. But I still need to find people to interview. The staged interviews with supposed eyewitnesses and experts could be considered necessary for documentary. For instance, This is Spinal Tap includes a variety of fake interviews. Let's take a look as its opening scene.

11 CLIP: THIS IS SPINAL
TAP- OPENING SCENE OF
MARTY DIBERGI

11 CLIP: MARTY DIBERGI: Hello; my name is Marty DiBergi. I'm a filmmaker. I make a lot of commercials. That little dog that chases the covered wagon underneath the sink? That was mine. In 1966, I went down to Greenwich Village, New York City to a rock club called Electric Banana. Don't look for it; it's not there anymore. But that night, I heard a band that for me redefined the word "rock and roll". I remember being knocked out by their... their exuberance, their raw power - and their punctuality. That band was Britain's now-legendary Spinal Tap. Seventeen years and fifteen albums later, Spinal Tap is still going strong. And they've earned a distinguished place in rock history as one of England's loudest bands. So in the late fall of 1982, when I heard that Tap was releasing a new album called "Smell the Glove", and was planning their first tour of the United States in almost six years to promote that album, well needless to say I jumped at the chance to make the documentary - the, if you will, "rockumentary" - that you're about to see. I wanted to capture the... the sights, the sounds... the smells of a hard-working rock band, on the road. And I got that; I got more... a lot more. But hey, enough of my yakkin'; whaddaya say? Let's boogie!

- 12 LS: NARRATOR STANDING BESIDE A CUTOUT POSTER OF ROB REINER- COLOR IS RESTORED FROM PREVIOUS SHOT OF NARRATOR
- 12 NARRATOR: After watching this first clip, some audience members were convinced that Spinal Tap was a real band. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Reiner while you were watching the clip. He explained how many people were ultimately fooled by This is Spinal Tap. From the clip alone, one might assume that the band had, in fact, released the album "Smell the Glove."
- 13 CU: NARRATOR LEANING AGAINST OUTER SEAT OF FRONT ROW OF THEATRE
- 13 NARRATOR: But mockumentaries have gone even further. Directors Costa Botes and Peter Jackson convinced hundreds of New Zealanders that a famous filmmaker, Colin McKenzie, was missing. Their film, Forgotten Silver, created a legendary man that had secretly filmed a lost movie, Salome.
- 14 CLIP: FORGOTTEN SILVER- COLIN'S DISCOVERY OF COLOR
- 14 CLIP: FORGOTTEN SILVER
NARRATOR: Disillusioned and financially crippled, Colin abandoned his recording experiments forever. He turned his attention from sound to pictures, becoming obsessed with the images themselves. In late March 1911, Colin succeeded in creating an emulsion that reacted to distinct wavelengths of light, producing the effect very like color.

- 15 MS: NARRATOR WALKING IN FRONT OF THE PAUSED IMAGE FROM FORGOTTEN SILVER ON THE MOVIE SCREEN
- 15 NARRATOR: Yet this new film genius was only an actor. In fact, Colin had not created anything because he didn't exist. New Zealanders assumed that they could trust everything they saw on the television screen. In particular, they trusted the words of the famous director, Peter Jackson, who began the film with a personal story related to Colin's mother. Jackson actually referred to her as "Auntie." As a result, the audience immediately trusted the sounds and images that the mockumentary offered. The acclaimed author of Faking It, Jane Roscoe, describes the reaction she received from the audience.
- 16 CLIP: FORGOTTEN SILVER- CONTINUED CLIP OF COLIN'S DISCOVERY OF COLOR
- 16 JANE ROSCOE VO: The day after the screening I was working at the University of Waikato and I remember that very morning people phoning us up and saying, "how come we didn't know about Colin McKenzie? Where can we get his films from? Who's going to write the book about it?"
- 17 LS: NARRATOR STANDING BESIDE A CUTOUT POSTER OF JANE ROSCOE
- 17 NARRATOR: Mrs. Roscoe did you find the audience's reaction amusing?
- 18 ECU: JANE ROSCOE'S RESPONSE DISPLAYED ON THE MOVIE SCREEN
- 18 CLIP: JANE: "Forgotten Silver is very funny when you know it's not real. But there are implications for documentary in every piece of parody, in every mock documentary, there

is the potential for critique. What mock documentary does is it plays with something that's very sacred to the documentary form, it says, "Don't believe everything you see because we can make something look very real but it's actually fake, it's fictional."

- 19 MONTAGE: NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS AND LETTER RESPONSES TO FORGOTTEN SILVER
- 19 NARRATOR: All of these newspaper reports and critiques regarding Forgotten Silver were very interesting. Many of the people had positive responses like Mr. Chadwick who said, "Congratulations to the perpetrators - it was the best New Zealand entertainment in 10 years! But I'm afraid New Zealand society is now irretrievably divided into two sectors - those who encountered Colin McKenzie before, and after, his cover was blown."
- 20 MS: NARRATOR STANDING BESIDE THE PROJECTOR IN THE PROJECTION ROOM OF THEATRE
- 20 NARRATOR: The reason Forgotten Silver is such an archetypal mockumentary is because it applies the conventions of documentary film. For instance, there is an authoritative voice of a narrator. Hm, maybe I should try that sometime.
- 21 MONTAGE: NARRATOR POSING IN DIFFERENT "ARCHIVAL" PHOTOGRAPHS
- 21 NARRATOR VO (authoritative): Mockumentaries like Forgotten Silver also provide montages of archival photos. In these pictures, I could have

seemingly lived for centuries. And if you had not seen me before, the quick succession of cuts between photos might have convinced you that they were real.

22 MS:NARRATOR SITTING IN A
CHAIR IN THE PROJECTION
ROOM

22 NARRATOR: Although mockumentaries have received a large degree of appreciation, other critics do not prefer the crafty depiction of falsehood. In the case of Forgotten Silver, many viewers criticized the television broadcaster that had allowed the film to air. Additionally, other negative responses attacked the use of the public's funds in order to support the film's production. But the comedic mockumentaries have had a more popular following. Most of the comedic mockumentaries do not contain laugh tracks, but instead rely on the reaction of the ordinary extras in the scenes. A great example of a comedic documentary includes Christopher Guest's Best in Show. This fake documentary details the story of contestants that have entered a national dog show. It parodies the seriousness of the dog owners that enter their various breeds into such competitions.

23 CLIP: BEST IN SHOW-
STEFAN VANDERHOOF
DISCUSSING THE CALENDER

23 CLIP: Stefan Vanderhoof:
We're not gonna sell, just
give it out to friends.
Scott Donlan: I think we

should try to sell it.
Stefan Vanderhoof: Really?
Scott Donlan: Yeah.
Stefan Vanderhoof: Well, if
we could give the money to
Shih Tzu rescue.
Scott Donlan: They have
plenty of money.
Stefan Vanderhoof: Well so do
we.
Scott Donlan: What Shih Tzus
need rescuing anyway? You
don't see Shih Tzus
stragglng around the streets
in an old coat "help, alms
for the poor".
Stefan Vanderhoof: Like the
little match girl.

24 LS: NARRATOR SLOWLY
WALKING DOWN THE AISLES
OF THE THEATRE

24 NARRATOR: Christopher Guest
actually relies on the
improvisational skills of his
actors. His mockumentary
scripts are merely the first
stepping stones for the
movie. By allowing the actors
to improvise, he creates a
more realistic interaction
between the characters. Also,
Christopher Guest does not
give them specific
instructions for their
costuming, hair, or make-up.
Instead, he encourages the
actors to study their
characters' backgrounds and
create the look off those. As
a result, Guest creates an
unpredictable mise-en-scene
which continually changes
with the characters, just as
the mise-en-scene is
uncontrolled in a
documentary.

- 25 CU: NARRATOR CLOSELY EXAMINES ARTICLES OF CLOTHING
- 25 NARRATOR: Unfortunately, I will not be changing my costume or hair because my look reflects the realistic portrayal of myself. But I might be able to learn from Christopher Guest's unique style of editing. Most films are cut during the actual production of the film. Guest, however, does not cut while he shoots the movie. Instead, he waits until he has finished and then sits down to watch hours of filming. With all of the hours of documenting improvisation, Guest is able to edit a new mockumentary. Again, this represents one of the features of a mockumentary which closely resembles the documentary. Filmmakers that are documenting real events are unable to control what happens until they begin the editing process.
- 26 MS: NARRATOR CONTINUES WALKING AND THEN STOPS TO POINT AT MOVIE SCREEN
- 26 NARRATOR: Now that we are on the topic of "real" events, I want to focus on the more dramatic depictions of mockumentaries. Man Bites Dog is an excellent Belgian example of a mockumentary. In this film, an independent crew consisting of Remy, Vincent, and Andre follows a serial killer.
- 27 CLIP: MAN BITES DOG- DINNER PARTY SCENE IN WHICH BEN USES HIS GUN
- 27 CLIP: BEN: For me?
REMY: From the whole crew.
BEN: How thoughtful. Thanks Andre and Vincent.

ANDRE: Happy birthday Ben!

BEN: What is it? It's not very heavy, it can't be a bomb. I'll open it... a holster and just the right color- who picked it out?

REMY: Andre.

BEN: Thanks so much. It was the perfect choice. Help me put it on Remy. It's just what I needed but never thought of it myself. Quality leather too. Can you get me my revolver, I'll try it right now. Found it, Valerie? You can really move around in a thing like this.

(BEN shoots the man sitting across from him at the dinner table.)

BEN: Can I have some more bubbly?

28 LS: NARRATOR SITTING IN
MIDDLE SEAT OF LAST ROW
OF THEATRE

28 NARRATOR: Not only is this film a disturbing black comedy, but it also deconstructs the variety of pretensions that exist within documentarists. Usually, documentarists display moral presuppositions before creating a film. Thus, documentaries may display the whims of the filmmakers. While the films claim to display the whole truth, perhaps documentaries only display half-truths. Perhaps, documentaries actually offer subjective truths, edited according to the desires of the filmmakers. Man Bites Dog then parodies the compromises that are adopted by subjective documentarists. As a result, the crew begins to

sympathize with the serial killer's world. Eventually, the documentarists go as far as to help the serial killer escape from his prison! Yet they know from the very beginning of the movie that the killer is seriously disturbed.

- 29 CLIP: MAN BITES DOG-
OPENING SCENE WHICH
REVEALS BEN'S CHARACTER
- 29 CLIP: BEN: I've just finished ballasting the corpse, see? That means you fill it with certain things because you may not be aware that a corpse underwater swells up with air, see? So it tends to float to the surface. You have to load it with ballast so it sinks. You weigh it down with stones and other heavy stuff. There's a ballast ratio for corpses... three times the body weight for an average adult like this victim. But for children and midgets, it's different. Kids are lighter. So it's four times body weight.
- 30 CU: NARRATOR'S DISGUSTED
FACE AFTER VIEWING CLIP
- 30 NARRATOR: That last clip was able to reveal the flaws of the documentarists- the inability to create an objective viewpoint. But it also reminded me of another element of the mockumentary genre: footage of "real" events that seem plausible.
- 31 LS: NARRATOR STANDING
OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOORS
OF THE MOVIE THEATRE
- 31 NARRATOR: Now that I am outside of the theater I have natural lighting and ambient sounds. Many mockumentaries

do not use any artificial lighting or artificial sets in order to keep the integrity of a realistic setting. However, that does not mean that some mockumentaries are not shot in a studio that resembles the "real world." Often, mockumentarists want to reveal the "shot-on-location" aesthetic of documentaries. My eyes aren't adjusting well to the light so let's go back inside and watch an example of a horror mockumentary.

32 CLIP: BLAIR WITCH PROJECT-CLOSE UP OF HEATHER DONAHUE APOLOGIZING

32 CLIP: Heather Donahue: I just want to apologize to Josh's mom, and Mike's mom, and my mom. I am so sorry! Because it was my fault. I was the one who brought them here. I was the one that said "keep going south." I was the one who said that we were not lost. It was my fault, because it was my project. I am so scared! I don't know what's out there. We are going to die out here! I am so scared!

33 LS: NARRATOR SITTING IN THE FRONT ROW OF THE THEATRE WITH NECK TILTED BACK

33 NARRATOR: In this scene, there is an apparent use of a handheld camera. The awkward, shaky camera angles contribute to the intensity of the movie. This particular cinematography reflects the attempts of mockumentarists to resemble documentaries as closely as possible. In fact, the mockumentary genre

greatly enhanced the horror genre. Films like Blair Witch Project have begun to erupt in which the audience believes that the actors are actually experiencing real events.

34 MONTAGE: CLIPS FROM TO KILL A MOCKUMENTARY-OPENING SEQUENCE

34 NARRATOR: Interestingly, mockumentaries have also greatly enhanced the mockumentary genre! The film To Kill a Mockumentary was released in 2006. To Kill a Mockumentary provided one of the greatest parodies of mockumentaries. The film actually creates a documentary of a group of mockumentary filmmakers attempting to create movies. Not only does the film provide the audiences with the key characteristics of a variety of mockumentaries, but it also forms into a mockumentary by itself.

35 MS: NARRATOR WATCHING THE OPENING CREDITS FOR FANDOM: A TRUE FILM

35 NARRATOR: While mockumentaries have inspired other mockumentaries, they have also inspired the creation of a new combination. An example of a dramatic mockumentary, the film Fandom: A True Film mixes the realistic elements of a documentary with the fictional aspects of the mockumentary. Fandom: A True Film details a journey of one obsessed fan as he tries to meet Natalie Portman. A variety of fan-inspired documentaries and

mockumentaries have appeared with similar plots. As mockumentaries develop more and more, the genre grows more popular. For instance, let's take a look at the popular film Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstans.

36 CLIP: BORAT: CULTURAL LEARNINGS OF AMERICA FOR MAKE BENEFIT GLORIOUS NATION OF KAZAKHSTAN
TRAILER

36 CLIP: BORAT: My country send me to United States to make movie-film. Please, come and see my film.

37 ECU: NARRATOR WARNING THE AUDIENCE WHILE WALKING TOWARD THE EXIT OF THE THEATRE

37 NARRATOR: Well, that was our last example of a mockumentary. Although you may not have been convinced by the acting of Sacha Baron Cohen, I am sure other mockumentaries are able to better fool you. In fact, I am sure one day you will soon watch a certain clip from a documentary and begin to question the truth as it appears through the camera lens.

38 LS: NARRATOR CLOSING THE DOORS OF THE THEATRE

38 NARRATOR: Ultimately, the genre of mockumentaries provides the audience with entertainment. At the same time, however, some mockumentaries are able to inspire the audiences to question social conventions. These parodies allow the audiences to laugh at the hilarious scenes, yet realize that the greatest irony may

be that the mockumentaries
do, in fact, contain glimpses
of real truth.

Annotated Bibliography

Best in Show. Dir. Christopher Guest. Perf. Parker Posey, Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara.

DVD. Warner Bros, 2000. Christopher Guest's movie provides an excellent example of a comedic form of the mockumentary.

The Blair Witch Project. Dir. Daniel Myrick. Perf. Heather Donahue, Josh Leonard, Michael C.

Williams. DVD. Artisan Entertainment, 1999. This film was incorporated in order to display the horror aspect of certain mockumentary films.

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan. Dir.

Larry Charles. Perf. Sacha Baron Cohen, Ken Davitian. 20th Century Fox, 2006. The popular film inspired a renewed look at the nature of the mockumentary and was another comedic example of the film genre.

C'Est Arrivé Près De Chez Vous (Man Bites Dog). Dir. RéMy Belvaux. Perf. Benoît

Poelvoorde, André Bonzel, RéMy Belvaux. DVD. Acteurs Auteurs Associés, 1992. The mockumentary film allowed viewers to see how documentarists are able to form biases toward their subjects- in this case, a serial killer.

David Holzman's Diary. Dir. Jim McBride. Perf. L.M. Kit Carson, Eileen Dietz, Lorenzo Mans.

DVD. Direct Cinema Limited, 1967. This film is often cited as the first example of a true mockumentary that embodies the characteristics which would later be used by Rob Reiner.

Forgotten Silver. Dir. Peter Jackson. Perf. Costa Botes, Peter Jackson, Harvey Weinstein. RCV

Film Distribution, 1995. Peter Jackson offers this film as a mockumentary which creates a fictional New Zealander director.

Handman, Gary. "Fake and Mock Documentaries:." Media Resource Center. 2007. UC Berkeley. Nov.-Dec. 2006. <<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/mockumentaries.html#mock>>. This specific website provides a range of examples of mockumentary films and critical reviews regarding those films.

Roscoe, Jane, and Craig Hight. Faking It: Mock-Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001. 1-206. Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight highlighted the qualities inherent in a mockumentary through the various chapters of their book.

Roscoe, Jane, and Craig Hight. "Filmography." Mockumentary: the Subversion of Factuality. 2006. Nov.-Dec. 2006 <<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/film/mock-doc.shtml>>. This website is an accompaniment to the book written by Hight and Roscoe in which they further detail examples of mockumentaries.

This is Spinal Tap. Dir. Rob Reiner. Perf. Christopher Guest, Rob Reiner, Michael McKean. DVD. MGM, 1984. Rob Reiner's film offers the quintessential example of the mockumentary from which Reiner first coined the term "mockumentary."

To Kill a Mockumentary. Dir. Stephen Wallis. Perf. Jason London, Mickey Rooney, Edie McClurg. Damn Good Entertainment, 2006. This film is a great example of a mockumentary that delves into the nature of mockumentaries by parodying the genre itself.