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From fact to fiction: a reflexive analysis of how screenwriter and subject intersect in the transformative process of authoring a modern biopic

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From fact to fiction: a reflexive analysis of how screenwriter and subject intersect in the transformative process of authoring a modern biopic.

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Abstract

The choice to work within the fictional frame of the biopic genre gives the screenwriter powerful representational tools to vivify character. But the tension between historical fidelity, and narrative fiction, raises important ethical questions. What responsibility does the marketing phrase, "based on a true story" place on the shoulders of the socially responsible screenwriter who is essentially writing a fiction?

This practice-based enquiry responds to these questions by challenging the pervasive expectation that writers of historical and biographical fiction defend their truth claims on the methodological terms of the historian, and offers an alternative to a media studies proposal to cross-fertilise screenwriting practice with media ethics.

By reframing the conversation away from empirical notions of historical fidelity, and consequentialist models of ethical evaluation, a significant methodological issue emerges, one that stems from a profound misconception of filmmaking practice that views the making of moving images as the non-reflexive application of mechanical skills.

To counter this misconception, a working definition of filmmaking methodology is articulated, where *mise-en-scène* is shown to operate as a core reflexive strategy. This definition is intended to open up a conversation, and contribute to a better understanding of how filmmaking practice, of which screenwriting is a part, can generate and disseminate new knowledge in a range of forms and genres, including the biopic. Defining filmmaking as a creative practice also provides guidance to scholars, irrespective of discipline, who wish to engage with filmmaking as a rigorous methodological approach to conducting their own enquiries.

Thesis structure

This practice-based thesis is made up of two components, together with a short introductory text:

Part I contains a creative work, *Puncher*, in the form of a feature-length screenplay, 134 pages long (representing approximately two hours of screen time) and presented in standard film industry format.

Part II contains a written exegetical text.

It is recommended that the screenplay be read in its entirety before reading the exegesis.

Declaration

- (i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated;
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the exegesis to all other material used;
- (iii) the exegesis is fewer than 50,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, maps, bibliographies, references and appendices.

Michael Bentham

..... (Signature of candidate)

Acknowledgements

My thanks goes out to the surviving relatives of Randolph Turpin, who I first had the pleasure of meeting in 2001 at the unveiling of a statue to honour Turpin's achievements, and who kindly gave me access to sports memorabilia and artefacts during my early efforts to fill the gaps in the historical record.

I would like to acknowledge my supervisory team for their steadfast support and encouragement.

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Dr Raimondo Cortese provided additional supervision, and was my primary supervisor for the final year of Candidature. I particularly appreciate the detailed notes he provided as feedback to my screenplay, *Puncher*.

Further supervision was provided by Prof Jon Cattapan, Director, Victorian College of the Arts, who encouraged me to push my ideas concerning methodology towards a fuller articulation of screenwriting practice in the academy.

Thanks also to Prof Barbara Bolt, who provided much-needed support and advice during difficult periods of my Candidature, and Associate Prof Matthew Delbridge, who kindly chaired my supervisory team during the latter part of my Candidature.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to my wife Eleanor, for all her love and support, and my late partner, Alison Goosey, a formative figure in the early years of my filmmaking journey. RIP Chip.

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My Story

"You never really know a man until you understand things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

Nelle Harper Lee (1960), *To Kill a Mockingbird*



Image © Michael Bentham

Thirteen years ago I was in a state of personal crisis. Alison, my partner since the age of 19, was dying of an incurable disease.

As a filmmaker, one way of trying to cope with this crisis was to immerse myself in the researching and writing of biographical screenplays, the subjects of which had all experienced psychological trauma.

I was aware that by trying to climb into the skin of these historical characters was, in part, a cathartic process, and that gaining insights into the (emotional) interiority of these men might help me to navigate my way through my own crisis. The question of fidelity to the original living people was, therefore, of particular importance. That is, I felt intuitively that I needed to gain accurate insights into the lived experience of the

historical referent if I was to learn anything meaningful about my own experience of psychological trauma.

In this context, I was acutely aware of the (ethical) tensions that may arise between 'facts' and the fictional frame of the biopic, between historical fidelity to the original life lived and the pressure of commercial storytelling imperatives.

The commercial pressures are very real. Two biopics I have researched over the last decade are being developed by independent production companies. Both received funding from the United Kingdom Film Council (UKFC) in early stages of their development, in recognition of their commercial viability as theatrical feature films. A biopic of experimental British writer BS Johnson has posed more of a commercial challenge, as reflected in the (possibly prophetic) words of author Jonathan Coe, who scribbled on the title page of *Like a Fiery Elephant* (2004), his award-winning literary biography of BS Johnson:

"For Michael, make it your life's work to turn it into a film! best wishes,
Jonathan"

But it was during this period of project development, that my concerns for fidelity were challenged from an unexpected source. It was not the film producers pushing for a marketable story that created tension around notions of truth and fidelity in relation to my biographical subjects, but a bereavement counsellor, who pointed out that all my tales of historical others were, possibly, all about *me*.

Recently, elements of my filmmaking practice have branched out into the fledgling field of screenwriting research and, as a practicing filmmaker with a specialist interest in creating biographical texts, I decided to embark on a practice-based enquiry to explore in detail the intersection between screenwriter and biographical subject in the authorship of the biopic. My biographical subject is British boxer Randolph Turpin, who died in 1966, the year I was born.

PART I

PUNCHER:
the story of Randolph Turpin

A Film
by
Michael Bentham

FADE IN:

1. INT. ROOM - DAY

Close on the face of a 38-year-old mixed-race man, RANDOLPH TURPIN. He is strikingly handsome despite bearing the scars of a seasoned boxer. He stares directly ahead with still, sad eyes.

V.O.

(West Midlands accent)

Randolph was never afraid of anything. He never, ever sidestepped trouble. If something was going to happen, he would walk straight into it, and it happened.

The barrel of a revolver is pushed against Randolph's left temple.

[The sound of a loud gunshot splits the air]

CUT TO BLACK:

2. EXT. RIVER - DAY

SUB-TITLE: *Leamington Spa, England: 1936.*

Sun sparkles across the distorted reflection of a gaggle of boys and girls, white faces against a blue sky eddying on the surface of a dark river. The children stare intently at a spot on the water where bubbles break the surface.

Beneath the surface eight-year-old Randolph Turpin, holds his breath.

A bespectacled boy checks the time on a large battered wrist watch.

BOY

Five minutes.

The other kids glance at each other, their tense faces betraying a growing, collective uneasiness.

GIRL

Why does he do it?

A TOUGH looking boy spits a lump of snot-gob into the water.

The salivary slug slips down towards a knot of limbs struggling in every direction. Randolph is drowning. His powerful arms rip at a swarm of reeds ensnaring his legs but he is stuck fast. Desperately he looks up at the sunlight piercing the surface of the water above him. He tries to call out. Water thumps into his open jaw, choking him. No-one hears.

The timekeeper looks at his watch again. Stares back at the water, squinting, trying to look beyond his own reflection. There's no sign of movement.

TIMEKEEPER
(voice spiked with worry)
Licka?

Randolph is losing consciousness. Through the gloom his glazed eyes catch sight of a figure.

[MUSIC – Arvo Pärt: *Für Alina*]

The ghostly image of a black man, LIONEL, dressed in First World War army fatigues, beckons the boy.

RANDOLPH
Dad...

Randolph reaches out. Lionel answers with a warm smile.

LIONEL
(Guyanan accent)
Don't you worry son. There is
nothing to fear.

Randolph returns the smile. He no longer looks distressed. He reaches out with both arms to hug his dad. Lionel gently strokes his son's cheek.

As he does so, Randolph's legs slip from the reeds and he floats gently to the surface. Below him the vision of Lionel leaches away into the murkiness.

Randolph surfaces to a round of applause. But the clapping falls on deaf ears, one of them oozing blood.

Randolph chokes up water and drags in a lung full of air.

As he comes round, Randolph sees the other children clapping and cheering. Despite his injuries, his face creases into a broad smile.

TITLE: PUNCHER

3. EXT. TERRACED VICTORIAN HOUSE — DAY

SUB-TITLE: *Leamington Spa, 1958.*

It is pouring with rain. A shapely 32-year-old woman, GWEN, struggling with shopping bags, is intercepted by a short, dishevelled LANDLORD in a raincoat.

He points his finger aggressively in Gwen's direction.

4. INT. BEDROOM — DAY

A small Standard-8 projector cranks into life.

A B&W image flickers onto a whitewashed wall accompanied by a trumpet fanfare.

C.U. of Randolph Turpin, a 23-year-old heart throb. He looks directly into the camera, wearing a self-conscious, frozen, smile.

PRESENTER V.O.

Meet the new middleweight champion
of the world.

Watching the show, 4-year-old GWYNETH and 2-year-old ANNETTE, wild black curly hair framing their olive-skin faces, sit either side of a rain-filled bucket positioned beneath a steady drip from a hole in the ceiling.

Gwyneth points at the projected image.

GWYNETH

Daddy!

The image cuts to a smartly suited Randolph Turpin. He turns away from camera, obviously responding to a cue, and waves to his fans from the ramparts of a castle, as if he were king.

PRESENTER V.O.

While 23-year-old Randolph Turpin was training at Gwrych castle in North Wales, he looked like he meant business. And the huge crowds that came to watch were impressed.

Castle owner, LESLIE SALTS, a long cigarette holder clenched in a big smile, is basking in reflected glory. As is Randolph's bespectacled manager, GEORGE MIDDLETON, brothers, DICK and JACKIE, and cigar-chomping promoter JACK SOLOMONS.

PRESENTER V.O.

But beat legendary world champion Sugar Ray Robinson? No! Few would believe it.

[The sound of a bitter argument disturbs the film show.]

Randolph, now 30 years old, with close-cropped hair, and wearing a sweat shirt and jogging pants, stops the projector to cries of disappointment.

GWYNETH and ANNETTE

Again, again.

Distracted by the argument outside, Randolph forgets to switch off the projector lamp. He walks over to an upstairs window to see what the commotion is about.

Behind him the heat from the bulb smoulders and melts the frozen film image. Randolph's brothers, manager and promoter warp into monstrous shapes that begin to devour the smiling boxer.

Gwyneth points at the image and bursts into tears.

5. EXT. STREET — DAY

Outside in the pouring rain, Randolph's shy wife is trying to calm down their LANDLORD.

LANDLORD

(Birmingham accent)

I'm not a bloody charity, so you
can take your darkie husband and
your brood of half castes and
you can all get out of my house...

GWEN

(Welsh accent)

Leave us alone, why can't
you?

6. INT. STAIRWELL — DAY

Randolph hurls himself down a flight of stairs and bursts
out of the front door.

7. EXT. STREET — DAY

At the sight of Randolph's intimidating presence, the
landlord backs off fast. Randolph strides towards him.

RANDOLPH

(Leamington accent)

Come 'ere.

LANDLORD

Look, I don't want any trouble...

RANDOLPH

I said come 'ere.

The landlord turns on his heel and scarpers off like a
frightened rabbit.

LANDLORD

I've warned you.

8. INT. HALLWAY — DAY

Randolph helps Gwen inside with the bags.

RANDOLPH

If he ever comes round 'ere
again, I'll knock his bloody
block off.

Gwyneth and Annette come bundling down the stairs. Gwyneth is still in tears.

GWEN

What is it love?

GWYNETH

Daddy burning.

RANDOLPH

Oh no.

Randolph legs it back upstairs.

9. INT. BEDROOM – DAY

Randolph switches off the projector lamp which has burnt a hole clean through the frame. He blows at the smoke pouring from the gate and pulls the plug from the socket.

RANDOLPH

Fuck.

10. INT. HALLWAY – DAY

Gwen pulls out some sweets from a shopping bag and gives them to her daughters.

Randolph descends the stairs. Gwen notices that he now has a pair of boxing gloves slung around his shoulders. She stands and embraces him.

GWEN

Please don't go.

RANDOLPH

Come on love, don't start that again.

GWEN

They've offered me a job at the Co-op.

RANDOLPH

That won't get us out of the shit.

GWEN
It'll pay the rent.

RANDOLPH
Stuff the rent, just a few
fights, and we'll have
the money to buy the
Guest House.

Randolph gently makes a move towards the door, but Gwen
tightens her embrace.

GWEN
You promised me you'd
never go back.

RANDOLPH
Gwen love, I've stood with the
best of them. I'm still only
30 years old.

Tears begin to well up in Gwen's eyes.

Behind her Annette climbs one of the stair balusters.

GWEN
What am I going to do if
you get hurt?

RANDOLPH
No-one's going to get hurt.

Randolph makes a more assertive move to release himself
from Gwen's embrace, but she won't let him go.

Behind Randolph, Annette pulls herself up and over the
hand rail and is about to fall to the floor below.

RANDOLPH
Come on love, I've made me
decision. Let us go.

Gwen sees Annette, releases her grip, and grabs her
daughter before she falls.

Behind her the front door clicks shut.

11. EXT. GELATIN FACTORY - DAY

A Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud glides to a halt behind a Jaguar XK120 parked outside a rundown Victorian-built gelatin factory, belching thick black smoke.

A small crowd of PHOTOGRAPHERS and REPORTERS are clustered under umbrellas around the entrance.

Jack Solomons, recognisable from the opening film, now a thickset 58-year-old, dressed in an immaculate tailor-made suit, emerges from the Rolls and switches on a gleaming smile for the cameras.

YOUNG REPORTER

Mr Solomons, have you come to persuade Randy to retire?

Solomons doesn't miss a beat.

SOLOMONS

(East London accent)

Don't tell me, you're one of the same hacks who predicted that Randy was biting off a bigger lump of sugar than anyone could hope to chew in '51?

REPORTER

With all due respect Sir, that was seven years ago. I was still at school.

There's a ripple of laughter.

SOLOMONS

Well then, let me give you a lesson in boxing. Randy Turpin doesn't have to prove to anyone that he's still got dynamite in his fists, or ring-brains, or a fighting heart bigger than all you lot put together. He's matured as a boxer, he's cagier, he's craftier. And what wouldn't we all give to see the Leamington Licka pull off once again that famous victory of July 10th 1951?

Solomons turns away from the gaggle of journalists and climbs a metal stairwell rising above the factory. A DOORMAN opens the door to...

12. INT. BOXING GYM - DAY

...a cramped room filled with weight-lifting equipment and punch bags.

Every inch of the walls are covered with boxing posters advertising fights featuring the Turpin brothers.

Inside a half-size boxing ring, Randolph spars with brother Jackie.

Their eldest sibling, 38-year-old Dick, stands at one of the corners.

Randolph notices the appearance of Solomons and momentarily drops his defence. Jackie catches Randy with a hard body shot. The punch hurts.

DICK

Licka, you big fanny,
keep your fuckin' elbows in.

Randolph's bookish-looking 55-year-old manager, George Middleton, also recognisable from the opening Standard-8 footage, extends his hand to Solomons. Middleton looks nervous and not a little intimidated by the promoter.

SOLOMONS

That's a nice ten-percental jam
you've got parked outside George.

GEORGE

Don't believe it. I got done
for that car. One of our lads
seen a local dealer wind the
clocks back.

Randolph attempts to focus on his brother, but he is seeing double. He swings a wild punch at Jackie and misses. Jackie catches him with another body shot.

DICK
I said keep your fuckin'
elbows in.

Randolph loses his temper with Dick, he strides to the corner.

RANDOLPH
Why don't you keep your
fuckin' gob shut?

DICK
(resigned)
Sure bab, but don't blame me
if you get bashed to bits.

Randolph wearily climbs down from the ring.

RANDOLPH
Watcha Jack, what have you
got for me?

SOLOMONS
(with a big smile)
How about a short-cut to
a world title shot?

Surprised, Randolph flashes a look at Middleton who looks equally surprised.

MIDDLETON
Who have you got in mind?

SOLOMONS
(to Randolph)
All you need to do is give
Yolande Pompey a pasting.

Middleton shakes his head.

MIDDLETON
That's too risky.

SOLOMONS
Rubbish, he's way past his
prime.

MIDDLETON

Even past his prime it's too dangerous Jack.

Randolph touches his manager's arm.

RANDOLPH

George, I need this.

MIDDLETON

The board won't agree to it.

SOLOMONS

All the board are worried about is his fitness. So how about I pay for a thorough medical with a top quack in Harley Street. If he gives us the thumbs down I'll call off the fight. Can't get any fairer than that, hey George?

RANDOLPH

George?

MIDDLETON

Let's see what the medics say.

Solomons shakes Middleton's hand and gives him a firm slap between the shoulder blades.

SOLOMONS

Music to my ears from my very favourite manager. I'll 'ave that arranged in a jiffy. Now, about that car, if you can cough up a pony I'll send some boys up to Warwick to do him a spot of mischief if you like.

MIDDLETON

What?

SOLOMONS

(impatient)

The jammy Jag with the bent clocks. Do you want someone to duff up the dealer or not?

For a moment Middleton looks tempted.

MIDDLETON

No, no it's fine, I'll deal
with it.

SOLOMONS

Well, if there's nothing else,
I've got to get back to a
promotion in dear old Haringay.

Before Middleton can say another word Solomons is striding
towards the door.

SOLOMONS

Don't bother showing me out.

Middleton comes to life as if he's just been poked and
scurries after the promoter.

MIDDLETON

Sorry Jack.

As the two men disappear outside, Randy turns to Dick and
Jackie.

RANDOLPH

Yolande bloody Pompey.

JACKIE

You can do it bab.

Randolph looks at Dick, who refuses to meet his brother's
eye.

DICK

See what the doc says.

13. INT. HARLEY STREET EXAMINATION ROOM, LONDON — DAY

A DOCTOR, mid-fifties, examines Randolph. His hands quiver
with mild DTs.

He shines a light into Randolph's left ear.

DOCTOR
(Private School/
Oxbridge educated)
When did you perforate your
eardrum?

RANDOLPH
When I was a tiddler. Swimming
accident. I was showing off like.

DOCTOR
Have you got any hearing in
this ear?

RANDOLPH
A bit. It doesn't affect me
boxing though.

DOCTOR
Can you cover your right
eye for me.

Randolph puts his hand over his right eye.

The doctor sticks out three fingers in the peripheral
vision of Randolph's left eye.

DOCTOR
Tell me when you can see
my hand.

The doctor begins to move his hand towards Randolph's
direct line of sight. But Randolph doesn't react until the
doctor's hand is almost directly in front of Randolph's
face.

RANDOLPH
Now.

DOCTOR
How many fingers am I
holding up?

Randolph squints.

RANDOLPH
Two?

DOCTOR

Good, that's fine. Now, can
you cover your left eye for me.

Randolph repeats the process. The doctor sticks out two
fingers in the peripheral orbit of Randolph's right eye.

DOCTOR

As before, tell me when you
can see my hand.

The doctor begins to move his hand. This time Randolph
reacts immediately.

RANDOLPH

Now.

DOCTOR

And how many fingers am I
holding up?

RANDOLPH

Two, I can see that.

The doctor sounds relieved that he has found something that
is functioning properly.

DOCTOR

Good, excellent. Now open
both eyes.

The doctor holds his right forefinger a metre from
Randolph's face.

DOCTOR

Now tell me when you begin
to see a double image.

Randolph can already see a clear double image, but he says
nothing.

The doctor moves his finger until it almost touches
Randolph's nose. Randolph says nothing. He looks down.

RANDOLPH

Are we finished yet?

DOCTOR
Yes, fine, I think that
should do it.

The doctor sinks into a leather chair behind a large mahogany desk.

RANDOLPH
So what's the verdict?

DOCTOR
Aside from a little wear and tear,
you're in excellent physical
condition.

Randolph's face creases into a smile. He shakes the doctor's hand.

RANDOLPH
That's what I needed to hear.

Randolph pulls on a jacket and goes to leave. The doctor looks troubled. Randolph reaches for the door.

DOCTOR
Mr Turpin?

RANDOLPH
Yeah, what's up?

For a moment the doctor is tongue-tied. He swallows.

DOCTOR
The best of British.

Randolph smiles again.

RANDOLPH
Ta doc.

Randolph leaves the surgery.

The doctor, opens a drawer and retrieves a hip flask. He takes a big pull from the flask, corks it and replaces it in the drawer. He rings a bell, picks up a fountain pen and signs and dates a pre-prepared certificate. There's a knock at the door.

DOCTOR

Yes.

A young smartly-dressed female RECEPTIONIST walks into the room.

DOCTOR

Hello Kathleen.

The doctor hands her the certificate.

DOCTOR

Can you send this to a
Mr Jack Solomons – his address
is in the file.

The receptionist looks at the single piece of paper and turns it over.

RECEPTIONIST

And the invoice?

The doctor waves her away.

DOCTOR

There is no invoice.

RECEPTIONIST

(puzzled)
Right.

DOCTOR

That'll be all, thank you.

As the receptionist leaves the doctor walks over to a record player.

He switches on the turntable and drops the needle onto spinning vinyl.

From the cyclic scratches emerges the notes of Bach's Prelude No. 1.

The doctor closes his eyes as if to shut out a living nightmare.

14. INT. JACK SOLOMON'S OFFICE, LONDON — DAY

Behind closed doors, Solomons, enthroned behind a gargantuan desk piled high with paperwork and film canisters, slams down a phone. He turns to his mean-looking lackey with greased back hair, SAM BURNS.

SOLOMONS

Aunty won't show the fight.

SAM BURNS

Face it Jack, Randy hasn't got the draw he used to.

SOLOMONS

So how the hell are we going to make this worth our while without the tv rights?

BURNS

Forget Harringay, find a big stadium in the midlands. Close to Licka's home town. At least then you'll guarantee bums on seats.

Solomons nods.

SOLOMONS

Birmingham it is then.

15. EXT. ALEXANDER STADIUM, BIRMINGHAM — NIGHT

SUB-TITLE. *9 September 1958, Randolph Turpin vs Yolande Pompey, Alexander Stadium, Birmingham.*

Jack Solomons sits at ringside, trademark carnation in his button hole, and a large cigar clenched in a fixed smile. Gwen sits by his side, full of trepidation.

[The bell rings]

DICK leans over Randolph's ear.

DICK

Take him out bab.

Randolph is up on his feet. He focuses on his opponent. His vision is clear. He puts together an impressive combination of punches, forcing a sluggish-looking POMPEY onto the ropes.

RADIO COMMENTATOR

Turpin catches him high up on the side of the head with a very good right hand punch there, and another crisp left and right, the former champ showing he really means business here.

A YOUNG WOMAN strides around the ring parading a card with a large figure two to a chorus of wolf whistles.

[The bell rings for round 2]

Randolph piles on the pressure. Pompey fights back, and clips Randolph's head with a sharp left hook.

Randolph replies with a steam-hammer right and knocks Pompey clean through the ropes.

The crowd leap to their feet in anticipation as Pompey struggles to right himself.

But Pompey's left hook has hurt Randolph. His vision is blurred. He pulls up, disorientated.

DICK

(shouting)

What are you waiting for?
Nail him Licka.

Pompey grabs his opportunity, lunges forward off the ropes and lands a straight right to Randolph's head.

Randolph blacks out and falls face first to the canvas.

A distressed Gwen is immediately on her feet.

GWEN

Randolph?

16. EXT. RIVER — DAY

Randolph feels as if he is slipping beneath the surface of the dark river of his childhood. He tries to call out. No-one hears. A vision of his father appears.

LIONEL

Don't you worry son. There is nothing to fear.

17. EXT. RING — NIGHT

Back in the ring the REFEREE conducts the count, his right arm beating downwards towards the stricken figure of Randolph.

REFEREE

...three, four, five...

DICK

Take your time bab.

Randolph repeatedly tries to get to his feet, but folds head first into the canvas.

REFEREE

...six, seven, eight...

COMMENTATOR

We are witnessing a gruesome exit waltz for this once great champion.

Randolph again attempts to get to his feet, again he folds head first to the canvas.

Gwen lifts her hands to her face.

GWEN

Stop, please stop.

REFEREE

...nine, ten, out.

The referee waves both of his arms above the struggling Randolph.

The incredulous Italian camp burst into spontaneous celebration.

Gwen drops her hands, with an open look of relief that it is all over.

Solomons gently touches her arm.

SOLOMONS

That's it Gwen, I'll make
sure he packs it in now.

As Randolph's seconds climb into the ring to help their boxer, Dick turns and walks the other way. Jackie stops him.

JACKIE

Where are you going?

DICK

He's finished. Now he'll find
out who is real friends are.

JACKIE

You're a right bastard
you are.

Dick pushes past his brother and heads for the exit along with crowds of booing supporters.

Jackie climbs into the ring and helps his brother onto a stool.

Gwen begins making her way to the ring.

A banana skin lands in Jack Solomons's lap. With barely a flinch, he turns to Sam Burns.

SOLOMONS

I think that's our cue to
exit the miserable Midlands,
don't you?

The two men stride towards the gates.

Randolph's seconds, including Jackie, help the defeated boxer out of the ring. A tearful Gwen embraces her husband tight.

RANDOLPH
Don't cry love, I'm alright.

GWEN
I love you so much.

RANDOLPH
I'll see you in a minute.

Randolph is ushered towards the dressing room. He is smiling, delirious. He grabs Jackie's arm.

RANDOLPH
Listen our kid, I died up
there in the ring.

A group of disgruntled fans intercept the Turpin team with a chorus of boos. Randolph replies with a grin.

FAN
You're a bloody waste of
money you are.

JACKIE
(furious)
British title, European title,
Empire title, and the World's
title. What more do you want,
his bleedin' head?

The fans can't answer that, so they throw their ticket stubs at Randolph instead.

Jackie makes as if he's going to sort them out and they quickly flee.

Randolph tugs at his brother's arm again.

RANDOLPH
It was a fantastic feelin'.
I saw dad.

JACKIE
Shhhh bab, shhhh.

18. INT. DRESSING ROOM — DAY

Dressing room. An elderly DOCTOR, with thinning hair and a moustache, examines Randolph's eyes.

RANDOLPH

He's waiting for us on the other side.

JACKIE

Who?

RANDOLPH

Our old man. He says there's nothing to fear.

DOCTOR

If you value your eyesight, don't ever get back in that ring again, understand?

MIDDLETON

He understands.

A bull of a Birmingham HARD MAN, bursts into the dressing room and makes for Randolph. He is immediately stopped by Randolph's seconds.

HARD MAN

Why'd you throw the fight you black bastard? You've cost me a fuckin' fortune.

Jackie and the other seconds struggle to manhandle the thug out and barricade the door.

RANDOLPH

Where's Dick?

JACKIE

He's buggered off home.

RANDOLPH

And Solomons?

The question is greeted with silence. Middleton looks down, fighting back the tears.

RANDOLPH

Come on you lot, stop mooching
around like there's no tomorrow,
it was only a bloody boxing match.

19. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

At home Gwen and Randolph embrace each other long and
tight in a knot of mutual comfort.

RANDOLPH

I'm sorry.

GWEN

Shhhh. We're going to
be alright.

RANDOLPH

I'll sort sommat out, I
promise.

GWEN

We're going to be alright.

20. INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Morning. The rain bucket has overflowed onto the floor.
Gwyneth and Annette jump in and out of the growing puddle
with glee.

Randolph, dressed in a smart suit, empties a chest full of
papers.

He removes a letter. It is clearly marked INLAND REVENUE.
He buries it back in the chest.

He then locates some rudimentary hand-written accounts,
and begins to write a long list of names and numbers.

[Sound of the doorbell]

Randolph tucks the piece of paper into his jacket pocket.

He pulls open a drawer in a small chest, retrieves his
passport, and heads downstairs.

21. INT. PORCH — DAY

Gwen opens the door to reveal MOSH MANCINI, mid-thirties, broken nose, dressed in a pinstripe suit. He looks like an Italian gangster.

GWEN
Alright Mosh.

MOSH
Watchya gorgeous.

GWEN
Who's the fancy suit for?

MOSH
You of course. Give us a
peck while he's not looking.

RANDOLPH
Hey, hands off my Gwen.

MOSH
You ain't getting jealous
of your missus are you?

GWEN
Stop it Mosh.

Randolph raises his fists.

RANDOLPH
Shape up then.

Mosh raises his fists in reply.

MOSH
(laughing)
You think I'm knocking
your missus off.

Quick as a flash Randolph darts a hand through Mosh's defences and gives him a sharp slap on the face.

RANDOLPH
Bloody 'ell Licka.

GWEN

Cut it out you two, you'll
scare the kids.

Randolph grabs a coat and gives Gwen a big hug and kiss.

GWEN

Where are you going?

RANDOLPH

Just nippin' out love, I
shan't be late.

GWEN

What are you two fellas up to?

MOSH

Going out for a cup of tea.

GWEN

In you Sunday best?

RANDOLPH

Give over Gwen.

GWEN

Keep him out of trouble Mosh.

MOSH

For you sweetheart...

Randolph gives Mosh a shove outside.

RANDOLPH

Shut your bloody cake hole.

22. EXT. STREET - DAY

Randolph strides up the front pathway of a 1950s terraced house. Mosh hangs back.

Randolph raps the door loudly with his knuckles. After a moment Dick answers. He looks at Randolph as if to say "What did I tell you", but keeps his mouth shut.

RANDOLPH

I need the Minx.

DICK

I need it to pick up the kids.

RANDOLPH

It's not your motor.

DICK

No? Whose is it then?

RANDOLPH

I lent it to you as my
trainer. Now I've left
the game, I want it back.

DICK

If you had bothered listening
to me you'd still be in the
game, and you wouldn't need
it back.

RANDOLPH

Dick, give me the keys to
the bloody car.

Dick gives Randolph a long hard stare, then retreats into
his house.

Randolph turns and winks at Mosh.

Dick returns with the keys and hurls them over Randolph's
shoulder.

The keys land in a puddle.

Dick slams the door in Randolph's face. For a moment
Randolph remains standing in the same place, staring at
the paint work. He butts the door hard with his head,
turns, and retrieves the keys from the puddle.

23. EXT. 1930s ESTATE - DAY

Randolph drives the Austin Minx along a street of smart
1930s detached houses.

He turns into a driveway and stops the car in front of
Middleton's Jaguar XK120.

Mosh stays in the car as Randolph strides up to the front entrance and rings the bell.

Middleton opens the door and smiles warmly at Randy.

MIDDLETON
Alright Licka, come in.

24. INT. STUDY - DAY

Middleton ushers Randolph into a meticulously ordered study, the walls of which are decked with black and white photographs of the Turpin brothers in action, and studio photographs of himself with the three siblings.

MIDDLETON
Sit down.

Randolph sits down on a wingback chair, as a warm-faced middle-aged woman appears, MRS MIDDLETON.

She bends down to give Randolph a kiss.

MRS MIDDLETON
Hello love, don't you worry,
George is going to sort you
out. Can I get you a cup of tea?

RANDOLPH
No ta, I'm not staying long.

MIDDLETON
Oh come on Randy, at least
stay for one cup.

RANDOLPH
Alright, you twisted me arm.

Mrs Middleton closes the study door behind her.

Middleton sits behind an oak writing desk. He opens a drawer and produces a large cheque book.

GEORGE
First things first. Here's
the purse for the Pompey fight.

Middleton signs the cheque with a flourish.

GEORGE

And I've decided, in the
circumstances, to waive my
commission, and all expenses.

Middleton gets up, walks over to where Randolph is sitting
and hands him the cheque.

Randolph takes the piece of paper, looks at it, and slips
it into the inside pocket of his jacket.

RANDOLPH

Ta.

George sits down opposite Randolph. He looks
uncomfortable. His smiles are a little forced.

GEORGE

Now, I've spoken to the boys
at the yard, and they could do
with an extra hand, breaking
cars and that.

RANDOLPH

What are you talking about?

GEORGE

To help you get back on your feet...

Randolph looks searchingly at George.

RANDOLPH

I don't need your charity George,
I've come for the money you've
kept on deposit for me.

The smile fades from George's face.

GEORGE

What?

RANDOLPH

The money you kept on deposit,
after the Robinson fight.

Middleton nervously adjusts his glasses.

GEORGE

The Robinson fight? What are you talking about?

RANDOLPH

(raising his voice)

For when I left the game, remember?

Mrs Middleton enters with a tray of best china and cake. She places the tray on a coffee table. She clocks the dour expression on George's face.

MRS MIDDLETON

I'll leave you to help yourselves then.

Mrs Middleton again closes the door behind her.

Middleton pours milk into the two cups.

MIDDLETON

I honestly don't know what you're talking about, Licka. You took over the management of your finances back then, remember.

Middleton taps his head.

MIDDLETON

You're memory's playing tricks with you.

Middleton pours the tea and pushes a cup towards Randolph. He transfers a slice of cake to a small plate and offers it to the former boxer.

MIDDLETON

Here, have some cake.

Randolph doesn't take the plate, leaving Middleton suspending it in mid air.

RANDOLPH

(slowly)

Stop muckin' about George.
After the Robinson fight,
we agreed that you would keep
10 per cent of the purse for
safekeeping. Money for when
I retired from the ring. I
need that money, now.

George replaces the plate on the coffee table.

MIDDLETON

Randolph...

RANDOLPH

Oh, *Randolph* now is it?

MIDDLETON

Licka, you've been paid
everything that's due to you.
(he gestures to the cheque)
And more. You should be one of
the richest sportsmen in
Britain. If you've chosen to
fritter all that money away
that's up to you. Don't come
crying to me now that you're
feeling the pinch. I'm
offering to help you out.

Randolph is up on his feet. He walks over to Middleton's desk and begins pulling out the drawers, sifting through the contents.

RANDOLPH

I made investments just like
you told me to George. Loans
here, loans there, loans bloody
everywhere, and what 'ave I got
to show for it? Nothing.

MIDDLETON

What are you doing Licka?

RANDOLPH

Looking for that bloody key,
what does it look like?

Middleton, looking distressed, is now on his feet.

MIDDLETON

What key?

RANDOLPH

The key to the deposit box
in London. Why are you doing
this to me George?

MIDDLETON

(raising his voice)

There is no key and no
deposit box. Now please, for
the last time stop this nonsense.

Randolph's eyes fall on a small safe.

RANDOLPH

Open the safe.

Middleton walks over to a phone and picks up the receiver.

George

If you don't stop I'm calling
the police.

Randolph grabs the hand holding the receiver.

RANDOLPH

I've got a family to look
after. I'm broke, I've got
debts. They're trying to
throw us out the house George.

MIDDLETON

I swear on my mother's grave,
that I've never held money
for you, in a deposit box or
anywhere else. Never.

Randolph looks at Middleton with complete incredulity.

Randolph releases his grip on the receiver. Middleton
replaces the phone.

MIDDLETON

Now, are we quite finished?

Randolph looks deep into Middleton's eyes. He nods his head in a knowing way and leaves without a word.

25. INT. AUSTIN MINX — DAY

Randolph gets back in the car. He's in a daze.

MOSH

How did it go?

RANDOLPH

He doesn't remember.

MOSH

Gerrout?

Randolph unfolds the sheet of paper with the handwritten list of names and repeatedly crosses out the first: GEORGE MIDDLETON.

MOSH

Do you want me to speak to him?

RANDOLPH

No point, he's threatening to call the coppers.

MOSH

But it's your money.

RANDOLPH

I can't prove it Mosh. He's a cunnin' git that George.

Randolph looks at the list again.

RANDOLPH

I can't go back to Gwen empty handed.

MOSH

So whose next on your hit list?

26. EXT. EDWARDIAN AVENUE — DAY

Randolph knocks on the door of a large double-fronted Edwardian house with a "For Sale" sign nailed to the gatepost. There is no answer.

He walks up to a bay window and peers inside. The room is empty of furniture.

27. EXT. FACTORY — DAY

Randolph and Mosh rattle the shutters, and knock on the doors of a small factory. But the place is deserted.

28. EXT. PIG FARM — DAY

An overweight FARMER, naked but for a pair of Y-fronts, scarpers across the field of a pig farm, when he sees Randolph coming.

RANDOLPH

Come 'ere you fat bastard.

The image of the fleeing figure, pursued by his excited animals, momentarily dissolves Randolph's frustration, and he and Mosh are left in fits of laughter.

29. EXT. PUB, BIRMINGHAM — DAY

The Minx is parked in a car park outside a pub. The only other vehicle is a gleaming two-tone Ford Zephyr convertible.

Randolph and Mosh push their way through the pub door.

30. INT. PUB — DAY

A camp PUBLICAN is admiring a Standard-8 cine camera. He takes one look at Randolph and attempts to make for the back door. But Randolph catches him, clenching the front of his shirt in his fist.

PUBLICAN

I was just going to take
a slash.

Randolph looks across the bar to where the men's toilets are clearly marked.

RANDOLPH
The bog's over there.

The publican manages a feeble smile.

PUBLICAN
Funny that.
(hopeful)
Can I get you some grub
or summat?

RANDOLPH
No Jon, what you can get me
is me money.

PUBLICAN
Look mate, I'll be straight
with you, alright.

RANDOLPH
A dead cert you says to me.

PUBLICAN
Business is dead.

RANDOLPH
Can't fail you says to me.

PUBLICAN
I mean look around you.

RANDOLPH
(angry)
Doesn't stop you buying a
fancy motor though does it?

PUBLICAN
I'm just trying to keep me
gloves up Licka, 'til things
pick up, then I can begin
paying you back.

Randolph's frustration boils over. He fells the publican
with a single punch.

Blood begins pissing from the publican's nose.

PUBLICAN

Jesus.

RANDOLPH

I swear to God I'm going
to kill you.

Mosh grabs Randolph and struggles to restrain him.

MOSH

Come on Licka, don't get
into trouble, think of
Gwen and the kids.

PUBLICAN

Take what's in the till,
if you want.

Randolph strides over to the till and opens it.

The drawer has a little loose change in the trays.

Randolph cleans it out, and walks back to the publican who
cowers.

RANDOLPH

And the keys to the motor.

The publican hesitates, glances at Mosh.

MOSH

I'd hand them over if I
were you.

The publican reaches into his pocket and hands over the
keys to the Zephyr. Randolph pockets them.

RANDOLPH

I'll have that and all.

Randolph grabs the cine camera.

RANDOLPH

(to Mosh)
Let's go.

Randolph and Mosh walk over to the door. As it closes behind them the publican is up on his feet. He races up a stairwell.

31. EXT. PUB CAR PARK – DAY

Outside, Randolph gives the till money to Mosh.

MOSH
What you doin'?

RANDOLPH
For helpin' out.

MOSH
Don't be daft.

Mosh tries to give Randolph the money back. But Randolph pushes Mosh's hands away. It turns into a little game, with Mosh trying to place the change in Randolph's jacket pockets.

RANDOLPH
Take it.

32. INT. PUB BEDROOM – DAY

The publican, nose still bleeding reaches under a single bed and pulls out a single-barrel shotgun.

He drags a chair across the room, climbs onto the seat, grabs a box of cartridges from the top of a wardrobe, pushes a round into the gun, and cocks the trigger.

33. EXT. PUB CAR PARK – DAY

Randolph hands Mosh the keys to the Minx.

RANDOLPH
Here, give the Minx back to
Dick will you.

MOSH
It's done.

34. INT. PUB BEDROOM — DAY

The publican slides open a sash window. Below, Randolph climbs into the fancy Ford Zephyr.

The publican aims the gun, but he can't bring himself to pull the trigger. He watches Randolph and Mosh drive away through tears of anger.

35. INT. BANK — DAY

Randolph stands at a till. He hands over the cheque for the Pompey fight to a prim CASHIER.

RANDOLPH

Cash this love, and I need
me belt from the vaults.

CASHIER

Have you got any identification?

Randolph shapes up.

RANDOLPH

It's me, the Leamington Licker.

The cashier doesn't look impressed.

RANDOLPH

Don't worry love, I'm only
kidding with you. Here.

RANDOLPH hands over his passport. The cashier counts out a wad of notes and hands them over to Randolph.

A BANK MANAGER hands over a long black case. Randolph signs for the case and leaves the bank.

36. EXT. LEAMINGTON STREET — DAY

Randolph slings the black case into the boot of the Zephyr. But he hesitates before closing the lid. He bends down and opens the case to reveal a gleaming 9-carat-gold Lonsdale Championship belt.

[The sound of a big excited crowd]

SUPPORTER
Go on Randolph.

37. INT. HARRINGAY ARENA, LONDON — NIGHT

FLASHBACK:

SUB-TITLE. *17 October 1950, Randolph Turpin vs Albert Finch, Harringay Arena, London.*

In a brutal display of strength 22-year-old Randolph throws a barrage of punches at the tough-looking Croydon fighter, ALBERT FINCH.

Finch turns his body sideways in an attempt to weather the storm, but two crashing left hooks knock him out cold.

Finch doesn't move as the REFEREE counts him out.

Randolph raises his hands in victory as Jack Solomons personally buckles the British title belt around his protégé's waist.

Randolph laps the ring, fiercely taking in the hundreds of cheering, adoring faces, as Solomons meets the press.

SOLOMONS
You are looking at the next
middleweight world's champion.

38. INT. JEWELLERS — DAY

PRESENT DAY: The Lonsdale belt lies on the counter. The PROPRIETOR of the shop, a small, grey, dried-out looking man, looks at the belt, and then at Randolph.

PROPRIETOR
That's my final offer. And
that includes the display
case of course.

RANDOLPH slams the case shut, pokes it under his arm and heads for the exit.

PROPRIETOR
The offer stands until
5 o'clock today.

Randolph turns briefly as he opens the door.

RANDOLPH
You're offer can stand
until the end of the bloody
century for all I care.

39. EXT. RANDOLPH'S HOUSE — EVENING

Randolph stops the Zephyr outside his home to find Gwen barring the door to their landlord, and a burly gang of DEBT COLLECTORS looking eager to prove themselves against the former champ.

Randolph looks at the scene through weary eyes. He gets out of the car and walks straight up to the landlord.

He pulls out the wad of bank notes and begins pressing them into the landlord's palm.

RANDOLPH
May, June, July, August,
September.

The landlord is momentarily tongue-tied.

LANDLORD
Right then, I'll send someone
round to fix the roof.
(to his men)
Okay boys.

The landlord and his crew retreat.

40. INT. KITCHEN — DAY

The belt, Zephyr car key, cine camera and remaining cash from Randolph's last fight sit on the kitchen table.

RANDOLPH
If we auction it, who knows
how much it'll make.

GWEN
You shouldn't give in to
the bastards. Anyway it
won't buy us the guest house,
so what's the point?

RANDOLPH
It'll give us a deposit if
nothing else.

GWEN
And who will give us a
mortgage?

Gwyneth appears and gives her dad a cuddle.

GWYNETH
Mum says I'm going to
school.

Randolph looks at Gwen.

GWEN
Term starts next week. I
couldn't wait any longer.

Randolph picks up the cine camera. He looks through the
viewfinder at Gwyneth and presses the trigger.

The camera begins to record Gwyneth's affectionate play.

RANDOLPH
I've been offered a job.

41. EXT. MIDDLETON'S BREAKERS YARD - DAY

News footage of Randolph slicing through the roof of a car
with an arc torch.

PRESENTER
Former world boxing champion
Randy Turpin appears to be
taking his new job at a local
scrap merchant in his stride.
Breaking cars sure beats
breaking faces hey Randy?

Randolph smiles gamely for the camera.

PRESENTER
Turpin, who retired from the
ring in October after a
surprise two-round knock-out...

FADE TO:

42. EXT. RUSSELL STREET, LEAMINGTON — DAY

Randolph, dressed in overalls and wearing heavy boots, walks along a narrow semi-commercial street of workshops and garages crammed into blackened Victorian terraces.

He stops outside a dilapidated transport café. A "For Sale" sign is nailed to the brickwork.

Randolph cups his hands around his eyes and peers through the window.

Through the dirt he can make out a grimy bain-marie and a motley collection of tables and chairs.

He steps back from the building, makes a note of the number on the sign, and looks at his watch.

43. INT. PHONE BOX — DAY

Randolph dials the number and waits.

RANDOLPH
Hello, I'm calling about
the café for sale in
Russell Street.

44. INT. BREAKERS YARD OFFICE — DAY

Without knocking Randolph walks into a smaller, meticulously ordered version of Middleton's study at his house. Middleton is on the phone but Randolph stands in front of him and waits.

MIDDLETON
I'll call you later love,
bye.

Middleton replaces the handset, clearly irritated by Randolph's manner.

RANDOLPH
Alright George, I need
the rest of me wages.

MIDDLETON

What do you mean "the rest"?

RANDOLPH

I'm buying a café.

MIDDLETON

Where?

RANDOLPH

Russell Street.

MIDDLETON

You know the council are knocking half of Russell Street down to build a car park, don't you?

RANDOLPH

I'm leaving you George.

Middleton puts his hands up. He clearly doesn't have the stomach for another argument.

MIDDLETON

Licka I'm not arguing with you, it's up to you.

45. EXT. RUSSELL STREET — DAY

The Zephyr draws to a halt opposite the café. Randolph jumps out and walks around to the passenger side. Gwen opens the passenger door.

RANDOLPH

Now shut your eyes.

GWEN

They are shut.

Gwen shuts her eyes.

Gwyneth and Annette clamber out behind her, excited about their parents' strange behaviour.

Randolph manoeuvres Gwen until she faces the café.

RANDOLPH

Now open.

Gwen opens her eyes. She clocks the café. Then she looks to her left and right as if she's missed something.

RANDOLPH

What do you think?

GWEN

What am I supposed to
be looking at?

Randolph indicates the café with his outstretched hands as if pointing out the obvious.

RANDOLPH

The bloody café.

GWYNETH

It's dirty.

ANNETTE

Poo.

Gwen crosses the road. She looks through the window.

GWYNETH

Can I have a look?

Gwen lifts her eldest up to the window.

GWEN

Randolph, we're broke.

RANDOLPH

The lease is dirt cheap.

ANNETTE

Poo.

RANDOLPH

Look, we can do the place up,
make money on the business,
and live rent free.

Gwen is clearly not convinced. She looks up and down the street.

RANDOLPH
It's our ticket back to
Wales, can't you see?

Gwen slips her arm through his.

GWEN
I don't know what to say.

RANDOLPH
What have we got to lose?

GWEN
Nothing I s'pose.

46. EXT. CAFÉ — DAY

A freshly painted sign reads GWEN'S CAFE.

47. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

The stainless steel has been polished bright. Steam rises from the bain-marie.

New table cloths give a look of continuity to the worn tables.

The two Turpin daughters sit at one of the tables pretending to be customers.

GWYNETH
Can I have a cup of tea?

ANNETTE
Poo.

Randolph nails a sign to a beam above the counter. It reads THAT WHICH SELDOM COMES BACK TO HIM WHO WAITS IS THE MONEY HE LENDS TO FRIENDS.

Randolph dons an apron.

Gwen unlocks the front door. Outside there's a group of people waiting, including the usual local reporters and photographers.

Gwen twists the sign on the door to read "open".

People begin flooding in.

REPORTER

I want to see this.

The first punter, a LOCAL BUILDER, arrives at the counter. He looks at the bain-maire, the neatly stacked plates and mugs, and then at Randolph, sceptically.

RANDOLPH

Well come on then.

BURLY MAN

I'll have a full house
please Licka.

RANDOLPH

Comin' up.

A flashgun explodes.

CUT TO:

A series of photographs show Randolph, looking a little awkward and embarrassed by the attention, cooking fry-ups, bacon sandwiches and pouring mugs of tea. Gwen is also photographed, serving the food and clearing the tables.

CUT TO:

The café is now full. A couple of gormless teenagers are glued to the counter, staring open-mouthed at Randolph cooking. Randolph leans over in their direction, out of ear-shot from the rest of the cafe.

RANDOLPH

If you're not going to buy
anything, piss off home.

The two teenagers shut their mouths, back off, turn and head for the door.

48. INT. CAFÉ — EVENING

Later, the café is empty. Randolph locks the front door, and twists the sign closed.

Gwen is cashing up.

RANDOLPH

So?

Gwen continues counting, but breaks into a smile.

RANDOLPH

(in a tone of voice to
say "I told you so")
Hey, hey?

GWEN

Not bad.

Randolph walks up to Gwen and looks at the money.

RANDOLPH

Not bad?

GWEN

For a first day.

Randolph attempts to cuddle Gwen.

GWEN

Leave off will you,
I'm counting.

RANDOLPH

Come 'ere.

49. INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Randolph and Gwen make passionate love.

50. INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Randolph and Gwen are asleep in a close embrace.

[the sound of women shouting and screaming]

51. EXT. GWRYCH CASTLE, WALES — DAY

FLASHBACK:

A poster reads:

COME AND MEET WORLD CHAMPION RANDY TURPIN

Randolph, 23 years old, is mobbed by people seeking his autograph, many of them young women. Two strikingly pretty woman have their photograph taken with him.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Cheese.

One of the women smiles, but the other takes the opportunity to kiss Randolph as the shutter clicks. More women queue up to give Randolph a kiss. He's loving it.

A young Gwen steps forward. She is dressed in the work clothes of a farm hand and stands out by the fact she looks very plain in contrast to the painted girls that swoon around the champion boxer.

Gwen hands over a publicity photograph of Randolph, fists raised in a classic boxing pose.

GWEN

(indifferent)

It's for my kid sister.

Randolph signs the card and hands it to Gwen.

RANDOLPH

Are you coming to the show?

Gwen slips the postcard into a bag.

GWEN

No, I don't like boxing.
Thanks anyway.

Without another word Gwen turns and walks away. Randolph's attention is caught by her indifference.

RANDOLPH

Hey, wait.

Gwen fails to respond and disappears into the crowd.

52. INT. BACK KITCHEN, CAFÉ — DAY

PRESENT DAY:

Randolph pre-prepares a mountain of food. Gwen, now heavily pregnant, clocks the growing pile with alarm.

GWEN

What's all this?

RANDOLPH

What?

GWEN

Randolph, it's a Monday.

RANDOLPH

It's just a few bacon
butties, love.

GWEN

We're only just breaking
even, we can't afford this
kind of wastage.

At that moment the café door opens.

RANDOLPH

You better tell them
food's off the menu then.

GWEN

Ha, ha, very funny.

53. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

Gwen walks through to the café as two men enter, GEORGE KIDD, a diminutive bundle of swaggering energy, who looks every inch a fighter, and JOE D'ORAZIO, 40s, slick looking, and wearing a suit, handkerchief stuffed in his top pocket. There's a look of the promoter about D'Orazio and Gwen is immediately suspicious.

GWEN

Can I help you?

D'ORAZIO
A couple of teas please
darlin'.

GWEN
Anything to eat?

D'ORAZIO
Just the tea.

Gwen begins preparing a brew.

D'ORAZIO
Is your husband in?

Randolph peers through a hatch to check out the two men.

GWEN
Who wants to know?

D'ORAZIO
Forgive me. My name's,
Joe D'Orazio.
(gestures to Kidd)
And this is George Kidd.

Kidd nods in Gwen's direction.

KIDD
Mornin'

GWEN
And what do you do for
a living Mr D'Orazio?

D'Orazio hesitates in the face of Gwen's latent hostility.

D'ORAZIO
I'm a business man.

Gwen puts two mugs of tea on the counter.

GWEN
And what kind of business
would that be?

Randolph walks through from the back kitchen before Gwen
probes any further.

RANDOLPH
Alright fellers, what can
I do you for?

D'Orazio offers his hand.

D'ORAZIO
Joe D'Orazio, Matsport
promotions. Very pleased
and honoured to meet you
Mr Turpin.

GWEN
In case you haven't heard
Randy's quit the ring.

D'ORAZIO
(to Randolph)
Is there somewhere we can
talk in private?

Randolph winks at Gwen.

RANDOLPH
(to Gwen)
Don't worry love, they're
wrestlers.

Randolph offers his hand to Kidd.

KIDD
We met at Harringay.

RANDOLPH
Yeah, alright Kidd.

Randolph points out Kidd to Gwen.

RANDOLPH
World Wrestling champ.

Gwen curls her lip, clearly not impressed or interested.

RANDOLPH
You'll be alright for
a minute won't you love?

GWEN

A minute.

RANDOLPH

(to Kidd)

Come on up.

KIDD

(to Gwen)

Cheers.

GWEN

Don't thank me.

54. INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Randolph sits down opposite D'Orazio in a tiny living room. The walls are covered with triumphant images from Randolph's boxing days. Kidd studies the photographs closely.

KIDD

Is that Van Dam?

RANDOLPH

45 second K.O. That's when
I knew I would beat Robinson.

KIDD

I bet you miss the ring
don't you?

Randolph shrugs.

RANDOLPH

Happy days mate, when you're
young and fit, and you're
going to live for ever.

D'ORAZIO

You're still looking pretty
fit to me.

RANDOLPH

It's history Mr D'Orazio.

D'ORAZIO

Don't have to be.

RANDOLPH

You're not a boxing promoter.

D'ORAZIO

Look, I'll cut straight to the chase, we've come 'ere with a proposition to make.

KIDD

Matsport needs a star attraction.

RANDOLPH

They've got you haven't they?

D'ORAZIO

A *star* attraction.

D'Orazio and Kidd both look at Randolph who puts his hands up in a conciliatory way.

RANDOLPH

No offence fellas, but if I climbs into the ring a stooge I'll lose the few boxing friends I has left.

Kidd's face falls.

KIDD

You calling me a stooge?

RANDOLPH

Kidd, I respect what you do, but I know how the wrestling game works, I'm not a fool.

Kidd walks up to Randolph.

KIDD

Put me down then.

Randolph looks to D'Orazio for a reaction.

D'ORAZIO

Go on.

RANDOLPH
This is stupid.

Kidd pushes Randolph.

KIDD
Put me down!

Randolph gets to his feet. He towers above Kidd.

RANDOLPH
You asked for it.

Randolph tries to grapple Kidd to the floor. Kidd knocks Randy off balance, turns him, slams his face into the carpet, and immobilizes him in an arm lock.

55. INT. CAFE - DAY

The ceiling of the café below shudders, sending a fine cloud of plaster into the air. Gwen looks up with dismay, grabs a carving knife, and marches upstairs.

56. INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kidd still has Randolph pinned to the floor.

D'ORAZIO
Don't get me wrong Randy, we
we don't want to you to go in
the ring as a wrestler, we
want you to go in the ring
as a boxer. Boxer-versus-
wrestler fights are all the
rage in America. There's
good money in it.

RANDOLPH
How much?

D'Orazio writes a figure on a business card and presses it into Randolph's hand. Randolph eyes the card.

D'ORAZIO
That's per fight.

Randolph is clearly tempted.

RANDOLPH
Per fight?

Gwen bursts into the room brandishing the carving knife.

GWEN
Get off my husband.

Kidd immediately releases Randolph, and retreats like a frightened boy.

RANDOLPH
It's alright love, we
was just messing about.

He looks at Kidd, hands raised in capitulation, and burst out laughing. D'Orazio is also smiling until Gwen turns the knife on him. Now D'Orazio raises his hands.

D'ORAZIO
Woah, steady on.

GWEN
Randolph's fight days are
over, on doctor's orders.

D'Orazio's eyes are bulging towards the lethal looking knife.

D'ORAZIO
We were just offering
Randolph the opportunity to
show of his boxing skills
in some exhibition bouts,
that's all. It's all friendly.
No-one's forcing
anyone to do anything.

Gwen turns to Randolph.

GWEN
And we've got a café to run.

KIDD
We were just on our way
out anyway, weren't we Joe?

The two men begin edging their way out of the room.

D'ORAZIO

It was a pleasure meeting
you Mrs Turpin.

D'Orazio and Kidd back out of the room and leave.

Randolph is still laughing at the situation.

RANDOLPH

Gwen love.

GWEN

(upset)
It's not funny Randolph.

RANDOLPH

Come 'ere.

Randolph gives Gwen a cuddle.

GWEN

Why do you put yourself
in danger? You got a
death wish or something?

RANDOLPH

Wrestling's all pretend,
it's a fiddle.

GWEN

I don't want to know.

Randolph gives her the business card. Gwen looks at it.

RANDOLPH

Turn it over.

Gwen turns the card over.

RANDOLPH

Per fight that is.

Gwen tears the card in two and breaks from Randolph's
embrace.

GWEN

Who's going to run the cafe
when the baby is born?

RANDOLPH

We'll hire someone. I'll
ask Beat.

GWEN

And who's going to look
after my invalid husband?

She storms out of the room.

RANDOLPH

It's just a show Gwen.

But his words fall on deaf ears.

57. INT. PUB — EVENING

Randolph sits around a circular pub table with brother Jackie, Mosh and another thirtysomething ex-boxer, PETE PRICE, whose flattened face betrays his own passion for the game.

JACKIE

Don't even think about it
bab, it's an humiliation.

RANDOLPH

Joe Louis wrestled after he
left the game didn't he?

PETE PRICE

That's 'cos Jo Louis were
flat broke.

An awkward hush follows. Pete looks at Mosh and Jackie,
then at Randolph. The penny drops.

PETE

Awww, Lick, I honestly
didn't have any idea.

RANDOLPH

Forget it Pete, who wants
another beer?

58. INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Gwen and Randolph sit on either side of their double bed.

RANDOLPH

You said yourself that the
café's not making a profit.

GWEN

We'll manage.

RANDOLPH

It's easy money Gwen.

Gwen snaps.

GWEN

For ten years I've lived
with this sickness, this fear
that one day you wouldn't
come back.

RANDOLPH

I know love, I know.

GWEN

No you don't, if you felt
what I felt you wouldn't even
be thinking about getting
back into the ring.

RANDOLPH

You're not listening to me,
it's an exhibition. No-one's
going to be throwing punches
at me. I'm more likely to get
hurt crossing the bloody road.

GWEN

I don't care, you've got to
choose between me or the
ring. And I mean it.

Randolph gets under the bed clothes.

RANDOLPH

Come on love, let's just
sleep on it?

GWEN

No. As long as you're even
thinking about going back
in that ring, you're not
sleeping in my bed.

Randolph reaches over.

RANDOLPH

Gwen.

Gwen pushes his arm away.

GWEN

I mean it.

Randolph has had enough, and gets up.

RANDOLPH

'ave it your way then, see
if I care.

He grabs his pillow and walks out of the bedroom and slams
the door. Gwen flinches.

59. INT. CORRIDOR — NIGHT

Randolph opens the door to an airing cupboard and grabs
some blankets.

60. INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

The sound of the back door slamming. GWEN walks up to the
bedroom window, and opens the curtain a gap. Below,
Randolph retreats to a small brick outhouse.

Gwen watches her husband as he disappears into the shed. A
light appears in a tiny window and Gwen dissolves into
tears.

61. INT. OUTHOUSE — MORNING

Gwyneth and Annette sneak up on their dad. Randolph is
asleep. One of his feet protrudes from the blanket.

GWYNETH
(whispering)
Go on.

Annette tickles the base of Randolph's exposed foot. He flinches. The girls dissolve into giggles. Annette tickles his foot again. Randolph wakes up with a start to howls of laughter.

CUT TO:

Gwyneth and Annette snuggle up to Randolph in his shed.

GWYNETH
Did you really live in
a castle?

RANDOLPH
Yes, a big stone castle with
turrets.

GWYNETH
Whereabouts?

RANDOLPH
In Wales, where you were
born love.

GWYNETH
Is that very far away?

RANDOLPH
Not far at all. One day I'll
take you there.

GWYNETH
Does a dragon live in the
castle?

Randolph smiles.

RANDOLPH
Yes he does.

GWYNETH
(disbelieving)
No.

RANDOLPH
A very thin dragon called
Leslie.

GWYNETH
(giggling)
Dragons aren't called Leslie.

RANDOLPH
This one is, and he's a
very crafty dragon.

GWYNETH
What does "crafty" mean?

RANDOLPH
It means that when you
weren't looking, he would
come and take your money.

Gwyneth makes a sharp intake of breath and bites her
bottom lip.

GWYNETH
Bad dragon.

A sudden thump at the door interrupts their conversation.
Gwen appears clutching her swollen belly through a wet
nightie. She is clearly in distress.

GWEN
Randy quick.

Randolph leaps out of bed.

RANDOLPH
Bloody 'ell.

62. INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Randolph walks along a hospital corridor with his
daughters holding each of his hands. He turns into a ward
where Gwen sits in a bed cradling a tiny bundle.

GWEN
Come and meet baby
Charmaine.

Randolph lifts Gwyneth and Annette, one in each arm, to get a better look.

ANNETTE

Lickle baby.

GWEN

She's your little sister.

RANDOLPH

Give her a kiss.

Randolph lowers Annette who gently kisses the baby's forehead.

RANDOLPH

How are you feeling?

GWEN

Fine.

RANDOLPH

Beat's agreed to look after the café.

GWEN

How much you paying her?

RANDOLPH

She's me mam.

GWEN

You've got to pay her something Randolph.

RANDOLPH

I'll talk to her.

GWEN

So when's your first fight?

Randolph looks momentarily caught out.

RANDOLPH

They've offered me a show next week, in London.

GWEN

I guess that's that then
isn't it?

RANDOLPH

I can't work in a café
for the rest of me life
Gwen.

GWEN

Well if anything goes
wrong don't expect me to
pick up the pieces.

RANDOLPH

Nothing's going to go wrong,
is it girls?

ANNETTE

Poo!

63. EXT. POPLAR BATHS, LONDON - NIGHT

The brick-built Art Deco façade of Poplar Baths.

A large poster advertises a wrestling match. Top of the
bill is:

Champion Boxer RANDOLPH TURPIN vs wrestler DR DEATH

The sound of a large excited crowd can be heard.

64. INT. POPLAR BATHS - NIGHT

Inside a ring a masked man traps Randolph in an arm lock
and thumps his face into the canvas to raucous applause
from a crowd baying for blood.

Randolph is clearly hurt by the impact.

Jackie, Mosh and Pete Price are in ringside seats. Jackie
shakes his head at what he perceives as a public
humiliation.

JACKIE

I'm not watching any more
of this rubbish, it's making
me feel bloody sick.

Together with a saddened Mosh, and disgusted-looking Pete Price, they leave the arena.

As Randolph gets to his feet, he sees his brother and friends leaving. The crowd begin to chant.

CROWD

Box, box, box.

On cue Randolph turns to his opponent and throws a combination of hard punches. Dr Death drops to the floor, screaming and holding his ribs.

The knockout is greeted by a huge cheer from the crowd.

With mixed feelings Randolph raises his fists in victory.

D'Orazio and Kidd survey the crowd. D'Orazio looks well pleased. He turns to Kidd. They shake hands.

Randolph climbs down from the ring and is surrounded by autograph hunters, mostly women. A reporter pushes through.

REPORTER

Excuse me Mr Turpin, how
do you respond to accusations
that wrestling marks your
downfall?

RANDOLPH

Fancy talk doesn't buy
nappies. Wrestling does.

65. INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

D'Orazio pushes a wad of cash into Randolph's hand. Kidd rubs Randolph's head.

KIDD

Well done Randy.

D'ORAZIO

You did good tonight son.
Real good.

Randolph flicks through the money.

RANDOLPH
I think I could get used
to this.

D'Orazio grabs Randolph's hand and shakes it hard.

D'ORAZIO
I knew it. What did I
tell you?

D'Orazio glances at Kidd. They exchange satisfied grins.

66. INT. HARRODS, LONDON - DAY

Randolph stands at a perfume counter dealing with a
supercilious ASSISTANT.

RANDOLPH
Is that the most expensive?

ASSISTANT
It's one of our pricier
brands, yes.

RANDOLPH
I'll 'ave a bottle of that
then, ta.

67. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Randolph's white, hard-as-nails mum, BEAT, ash-flaking fag
hanging from her mouth, is washing dishes.

Baby Charmaine, lying in a pram, begins to cry.

Gwen dumps a pile of plates and picks Charmaine up.

GWEN
I'm going to feed her,
will you be alright Beat?

BEAT
Don't worry about me
pet, you take your time.

Gwen heads upstairs.

68. INT. HARRODS - DAY

Randolph stands at a jewellery counter and chooses a gold choker with a heart-shaped pendant.

RANDOLPH

Wrap it like you're wrapping
it for the Queen.

69. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Beat has the till open and is trying to give a spotty YOUTH, and his MATE, their change, but it is clear that her sight is seriously impaired and she is struggling. The youth looks at his mate.

YOUTH

'Ere love, let me give you
a hand.

Without prompting the youth puts his hand in the till, and surreptitiously removes some notes. But Beat is onto him and gives his hand a thwack with a wooden spoon.

BEAT

Sod off you cheeky little
bleeder.

The youth flinches away as if he's been stung.

YOUTH

Ouch, fuckin' 'ell.

His mate is loving it.

MATE

That'll teach you.

YOUTH

I was only trying to 'elp.

Beat closes the till. But she is unaware of the youth pocketing the notes, a grin creasing his face.

70. INT. HARRODS - DAY

Another ASSISTANT demonstrates a top-end talking blond-haired doll, with a record player embedded in her pink plastic back, complete with tiny vinyl discs.

DOLL

Hello, my name's Barbara.
Will you be my friend?

RANDOLPH

I'll have three.

71. EXT. CAFE - DAY

Gwen is cashing up. Beat is mopping the floor. Gwen is clearly confused and unhappy at the takings.

GWEN

Beat?

At that moment Randolph appears, laden down with presents.

RANDOLPH

Alright mum?
(to Gwen)
Alright darling.

Randolph offloads the parcels onto the nearest table.

GWEN

What's all that?

72. INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gwyneth and Annette tear open the boxes to reveal identical Barbara dolls. Randolph shows them how to operate the speaking mechanism.

DOLLS

Hello, my name is Barbara,
will you be my friend?

Annette stares at her doll open-mouthed.

Randolph gives Gwen the wrapped necklace.

GWEN

Fancy paper.

She opens the present. Randolph watches her expression.

GWEN

It's beautiful.

Randolph reaches over.

RANDOLPH

Here.

Randolph clips the pendant around Gwen's neck. She gets up and looks at herself in the mirror.

GWEN

How much did all this cost?

RANDOLPH

It doesn't matter.

GWEN

How much, Randolph?

Randolph reaches into his jacket and pulls out a contract. He gives it to Gwen.

RANDOLPH

I've been booked up solid
until the end of the year.
Cash.

DOLLS

My name's Barbara. Will
you be my friend?

ANNETTE

Sod off you cheeky little
bleeder.

Randolph pulls some vinyl singles from another bag, and slaps one onto a turntable.

[MUSIC – Nat King Cole]

He wraps his hands around Gwen's waist.

RANDOLPH
We'll be in Wales by
Christmas.

73. MONTAGE

[MUSIC continues]

Footage of Randolph flooring different opponents in a blaze of flashgun light.

A newspaper headline reads:

LEAMINGTON LARRUPER LICKS DR DEATH

Randolph is pictured surrounded by adoring female fans.

Pete Price installs a safe in the café. Bundles of bank notes are deposited.

Fan mail begins arriving in piles.

Randolph and Gwen look at estate agent details of various properties in Wales.

A record player is installed in the dashboard of Randolph's Zephyr.

Extravagant cakes and presents are given to Gwyneth, Annette and Charmaine to celebrate their eighth, sixth and first birthdays respectively.

74. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

Dick calls by the café. He looks tired. Gwen is serving.

GWEN
Oh, hello stranger.

DICK
Alright Gwen, is our kid in?

GWEN
Upstairs.

75. INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

Randolph is combing Gwyneth's wiry hair.

Annette is cutting the hair of her Barbara doll. Charmaine looks at the destruction and waves her arms with delight.

Gwyneth screams with pain.

RANDOLPH
Stop whining.

GWYNETH
It hurts.

RANDOLPH
It's not that bad.

GWYNETH
It is.

RANDOLPH
(to Annette)
Annette love, it won't
grow again you know.

ANNETTE
Why?

RANDOLPH
'Cos it's not real.

ANNETTE
Who's that man?

Randolph looks up. Dick is standing in the doorway.

DICK
Alright our kid?

RANDOLPH
I thought you were
bloody dead.

DICK
I been busy.

RANDOLPH

What with?

DICK

You know, this and that.
They've grown 'aven't they?
(to Gwyneth)
Hello love.

RANDOLPH

Say hello to your
uncle Dick.

Annette looks down and says nothing.

GWYNETH

Hello uncle Dick.

RANDOLPH

Annette.

Annette shakes her head rigorously in the negative.

DICK

Saw your new motor outside.
Thought I'd say hello.

ANNETTE

(to her doll)
I thought you were bloody
dead.

Randolph runs the comb through Gwyneth's hair again.

GWYNETH

Dad, it hurts.

Dick stands awkwardly for a moment. Randolph doesn't offer his brother a seat. Dick sits down anyway.

DICK

I heard you were back
in the ring.

RANDOLPH

What if I am?

DICK

I got nothing against
wrestling, bab, anything
to earn a crust, hey?

RANDOLPH

Want a beer?

DICK

Sure.

RANDOLPH

Gwyneth love, get your
uncle Dick a beer.

Gwyneth skips over to a fridge, takes out a bottle of
beer, and hands it to Dick with an opener.

DICK

Ta.

Dick opens the bottle.

DICK

Cheers.

He takes a swig.

DICK

Wrestling's bloody everywhere
now, theatres, cinemas,
clubs. Before long it'll
be bigger than boxing.

RANDOLPH

Never.

DICK

Must be good to be in the
money again though. Cash
and all.

RANDOLPH

What do you want Dick?

Dick thinks for a moment, choosing his words carefully.

DICK

You know I've always looked
out for you don't you bab?

RANDOLPH

If you've come 'ere for
money you can shove off.

DICK

After all I've bloody
done for you.

RANDOLPH

I knew it. Save your sob
story and shove off, now.

Dick explodes.

DICK

Who the hell do think you are
dragging our poor mum out to
work in this shit hole for a
few bob a week?

ANNETTE

I thought you were bloody dead.

RANDOLPH

Kids, go and play in
your room.

GWYNETH

Why?

RANDOLPH

(snapping)

Now!

The girls grab their things, Gwyneth picks up Charmaine,
and they leave the room. Randolph stands up. Dick puts
down his beer and stands to face his brother.

RANDOLPH

This isn't about mum is it?

DICK

I sweated blood and fuckin' tears for you, and what have I got to show for it?

RANDOLPH

I supported you and your family out of me own pocket for eight fuckin' years.

DICK

I stepped out of the ring so you could get a shot at the title.

RANDOLPH

We got the title, remember?

DICK

You got the title Licka, you did. And then you blew your fortune on phoney friends and left your own flesh and blood high and dry.

Randolph takes a step towards his brother. Dick instinctively clenches his fists.

RANDOLPH

Remember when we promised our mam that we would never fight each other in the ring?

DICK

What of it?

RANDOLPH

Folks as used to bet that you would win, that you were the scientific boxer.

DICK

Maybe they were right.

RANDOLPH

Well I was once offered a lot of money for a match between us.

DICK
I would have boxed you.

RANDOLPH
I turned it down.

DICK
Why?

Randolph steps towards Dick again, face to face.

RANDOLPH
(menacing)
For our mam's sake. 'Cos I
didn't want to cave your
fuckin' face in. Now get out
and stay away from my family.

For a moment Dick stands his ground. After a moment he
gives in and heads for the door. He stops in the doorway
and turns to say something.

Randolph turns around.

RANDOLPH
Are you still 'ere?

DICK
Don't think you've heard the
last of this.

RANDOLPH
Get out.

Dick leaves.

76. INT. RING — NIGHT

Randolph is in the ring with Dr Death. Dr Death hurls
himself from the top of the ropes, grabs Randolph's
shoulders, and brings him crashing to the floor. Randolph
knocks his head. He begins to see double and is unable to
continue to a chorus of boos.

77. INT. DRESSING ROOM — NIGHT

Randolph is throwing up. Kidd appears with a wet flannel and gives it to Randolph. D'Orazio walks in looking disgruntled.

D'ORAZIO
What happened?

KIDD
I think he should see
a doctor.

RANDOLPH
(between retches)
No, I'll be alright. Must
be something I ate.

D'Orazio looks at Kidd, then at Randolph.

D'ORAZIO
This is all we need.

He leaves the dressing room.

78. INT. CAFE — DAY

Gwyneth and Annette are gorging themselves on chocolate Easter eggs.

Randolph tackles a mountain of fan mail. The cheeky love letters bring a brief smile to his face. Among the hearts and kisses there's an official looking letter marked Private and Confidential.

Randolph tears open the envelope and retrieves the letter. The letterhead is clearly visible: INLAND REVENUE. There's a list of figures and dates stretching back through the 1950s.

Randolph doubles up as if he's just received a crushing body blow.

Gwen appears and clocks Randolph's face.

GWEN

You alright love, you
look like you've seen
a ghost.

Randolph attempts to hide the letter.

The room begins to swim around him.

He gets up, cups his hands over his mouth and is sick. He
rushes out of the room.

Gwyneth bursts into tears, which triggers off Annette.

A shocked Gwen follows her husband, but he ushers her away
and locks the door.

79. INT. BATHROOM — DAY

Randolph retches into the toilet.

He turns on the cold tap and splashes his face in the
basin. He swivels back round and slumps down onto the
toilet seat. He stares at the bathroom door in panic.

80. INT. CAFE — DAY

Gwen comforts her daughters, picks up the discarded
letter, and reads it.

The door of the café opens, and the first customers of the
day, a LORRY DRIVER and his MATE walk in.

GWEN

We're closed.

She ushers the two bemused men out, locks the door,
displays the "closed" sign and closes the shutters.

81. INT. BEDROOM — DAY

Gwen shuts Gwyneth and Annette in their bedroom with their
eggs.

She picks up Charmaine and walks back to the bathroom.

82. INT. CORRIDOR — DAY

Gwen stands outside the bathroom.

GWEN

Randolph?

The bathroom door opens. Randolph clocks the Inland Revenue letter in Gwen's hand.

RANDOLPH

Honest to God, they must
have got it wrong love.

Tears are welling in Gwen's eyes. She brings her hand up to her mouth in panic.

GWEN

What are we going to do?

83. INT. ATTIC ROOM — DAY

A small box room with a single bed and children's toys.

Randolph opens a chest and takes out his scribbled accounts, together with a jumbled pile of bank statements.

84. INT — CAFE — DAY

Randolph puts the paperwork on a table and begins cross-checking the amounts. Time passes around him. Night falls.

Gwen joins him. Randolph points to the Inland Revenue letter.

RANDOLPH

See, look, that's what they
claimed I was paid for the
the second Robinson fight.

He grabs a bank book.

RANDOLPH

And there's the payment that
went into my account. April
18th 1952. Half the amount.

Randolph returns to the Inland Revenue letter.

RANDOLPH
And look at this, where's
the Olson fight?

Randolph stands up.

RANDOLPH
It's that bloody Middleton.

85. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randolph picks up the phone and dials a number.

86. EXT. MIDDLETON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A phone can be heard ringing. A light is switched on in an upstairs room.

87. INT. MIDDLETON'S STUDY - NIGHT

Middleton, in a dressing gown, switches on a table lamp, looks at the phone, hesitates, then answers it.

MIDDLETON
Have you any idea what time
it is?

88. INT. SCRAPYARD OFFICE - MORNING

Randolph hands the Inland Revenue letter to a weary looking Middleton, who hands it to his exuberant accountant, MAX MITCHELL. Max, wearing a blue suit and brightly coloured braces, clocks the amounts.

Randolph hands his bank statements to Middleton. Middleton adjusts his glasses and hands the statements to Max.

Max puts the Inland Revenue tax claim and the statements on the table, side by side.

RANDOLPH
I gave all the tax forms to
you George. I was paying you
to do the tax.

MIDDLETON

(in a voice which says
"I've told you this
a hundred times)

All fees, minus deductions
were paid in full up until
the date you took over the
management of your own
finances, against my advice.

RANDOLPH

All fees minus deductions?
I didn't receive half of
what they claim.

MIDDLETON

That's just rubbish. I did
everything in your best
interests Licka. You've
brought this on yourself.

Randolph snatches the Inland Revenue letter and points out
an item to Middleton

Middleton reluctantly looks at the entry by Randolph's
finger.

RANDOLPH

Show me the cheque stub that
proves you paid me the money
for the Olson fight.

MIDDLETON

(protesting)

Licka, you're talking about a
payment made 10 years ago.

Randolph thrusts the bank statements in front of
Middleton's face.

RANDOLPH

I never received it and those
statements prove it. So
either Solomons or you
pocketed it.

Middleton is clearly getting upset.

MAX

Randolph, the tax man isn't interested in how the pie was divided, he just wants his cut.

RANDOLPH

I don't owe anyone nothing.

MAX

Be that as it may, you *will* be summoned to a financial examination, you're going to need all the help you can get to avoid being made bankrupt, and that means burying your differences with George.

Randolph looks at Middleton with hatred in his eyes.

RANDOLPH

It's all your bloody fault, this.

George raises his hands as if to say "I give up".

MAX

Randy I need a list of your assets.

RANDOLPH

I can count those on one hand. A car and me belt. The café's in Gwen's name.

MAX

How much is the belt worth?

Randolph shrugs.

RANDOLPH

It's 9-carot gold.

MAX

Right, you need to gift that belt to your wife immediately. If a receiving order is served, all your assets

(MORE)

MAX (Cont'd)
will be seized to pay off this bill.
And the belt will be the first thing
they'll go for.

89. INT. SHIRE HALL — WARWICK

An oak-panelled court room. Randolph, wearing a hearing aid, sits with Gwen and Max Mitchell. Jack Solomons is in the dock looking seriously pissed off.

REGISTRAR
From the evidence submitted,
there does appear to be some
marked discrepancy between the
figures that appear on these
contracts, and the fees that
were actually paid into Mr
Turpin's bank account.

SOLOMONS
Mr Proud, I've nothing to hide.
My books are open to your inspection,
from which you will see that
Turpin was paid all the money
due to him and not a penny less.

DISSOLVE TO:

Randolph is in the dock.

RANDOLPH
I thought I was doing the
right thing in giving these
papers to my manager. I was
paying these people to do the
taxes for me so why should
all this come back to me?

DISSOLVE TO:

MAX MITCHELL
I have submitted records
which demonstrate beyond doubt
the actual income that my
client received, and not the
fanciful figures that appeared
in publications like *The Ring
Encyclopaedia*.

DISSOLVE TO:

REGISTRAR

I'm going to adjourn this examination for a period of three months to enable Mr Turpin to provide further evidence supporting his claims.

90. EXT. SHIRE HALL — DAY

There's a scrum outside the court as Jack Solomons leaves. He switches on his famed smile.

REPORTER

Why the discrepancies Mr Solomons?

SOLOMONS

I'd like to take this opportunity to announce an international heavyweight match between our very own Henry Cooper and up-and-coming American star Cassius Clay at Wembley stadium on the 18th of June. Thank you.

With that he is ushered into a waiting Rolls.

91. INT. SHIRE HALL CORRIDOR — DAY

Randolph sits with Gwen on a bench, avoiding the press pack. SAM LEITCH, a portly man, dressed in a pin-stripe suit, approaches Randolph with outstretched hand.

LEITCH

Sam Leitch from the Sunday Mirror.

GWEN

Leave him alone can't you?

LEITCH

I'm not here to probe. We would like to offer you a substantial sum of money for your story.

Randolph looks up.

RANDOLPH

How much?

92. INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

A reel-to-reel tape recorder is in motion. Randolph positions himself in front of a microphone.

LEITCH

Why don't we start with
the Robinson fight?

Leitch exhales a lungful of cigarette smoke. The smoke winds its way up into a fine pall high in the room.

RANDOLPH

It was just another fight,
like. I knew I'd win as
soon as I seen him..

[The sound of a crowd and exploding flashguns]

93. INT. JACK SOLOMONS'S GYM — INT

FLASHBACK:

SUB-TITLE: *Jack Solomons's Gym, London: 1951.*

Beneath a smoke pall, there's a crush of reporters as SUGAR RAY ROBINSON, with a lacquered quiff, and the poise of a Hollywood star, arrives for the weigh in.

Randolph, 23 years old, looking confident, calm and brutally strong, climbs onto the scales.

OFFICIAL

11 stone, five and a
quarter pounds.

BBC REPORTER

Mr Robinson, just one quick
question if I may, how many
rounds do you think the fight
will go?

ROBINSON

(Detroit accent)

Well, I don't usually make predictions, but this time I'll make an exception. I predict that the fight won't go over 15 rounds.

Laughter ripples around the room.

BBC REPORTER

Mr Solomons, how do you respond to accusations that you are sacrificing young British boxer Randy Turpin for a quick dollar?

SOLOMONS

Rubbish. If anyone is making easy money it's your bosses at the BBC. I've moved heaven and earth to bring this fight to Great Britain, it's my parade they're broadcasting around the world, so you can tell Aunty that the money for the film rights should go to me.

94. INT. RING — NIGHT

FLASHBACK CONTINUES:

SUB-TITLE: *Randolph Turpin v Sugar Ray Robinson. Earl's Court, London. July 10, 1951.*

Sugar Ray Robinson and Randolph Turpin face each other across a raised ring. The referee, EUGENE HENDERSON, calls the boxers together.

95. INT. EARL'S COURT — NIGHT

FLASHBACK CONTINUES:

At ringside BBC commentator RAYMOND GLENDENNING, wearing a handlebar moustache, brings a microphone to his lips.

GLENDENNING

Turpin, slightly chocolate coloured, 33-1 underdog from Leamington Spa, prepares to face a man who has been described as the greatest boxer living today.

96. INT. RING - NIGHT

FLASHBACK CONTINUES:

REFEREE

Seconds out.

The bell rings and, as predicted, Robinson confidently lands the first stinging punch, a trademark left hook.

Turpin replies with a crisp right and immediately piles on the pressure. Robinson is suddenly forced to hold on defensively to his young challenger.

GLENDENNING

Turpin survives the first round.

Busty girls parade around the ring with numbered cards as the rounds progress.

Randolph's left hand begins to give Sugar Ray problems.

Round 5. Robinson unleashes a flurry of punches to the body.

Randolph's corner look on with alarm.

The crowd hold their breath, but Turpin survives.

Round 7. Randolph hits Ray with a crushing right. Ray has to hang on again, this time for dear life. Randolph works from the inside. A clash of heads. A deep cut opens across Robinson's left eyebrow spewing blood. Randolph furiously steps up the pace. The crowd go wild.

Randolph stands for another round.

GLENDENNING

This is the first ninth
round of Turpin's career.
And I must say he looks
the fitter of the two now.

Round 14. Ray Robinson puts up a desperate fight, but
Randolph catches him with a steam hammer right.

Round 15. Jackie, a ball of nerves, passes the water
bottle to his kid brother.

Dick shouts in his Randolph's ear.

DICK

Watch for the killer
punch bab, keep your
distance.

[The bell rings]

There's hatred in Sugar Ray's punches now, but Randolph
keeps him at arm's length with a series of powerful left
jabs.

[The sound of the final bell]

Glendenning is shouting, trying to make himself heard
above the roar of the crowd.

GLENDENNING

Who has won? Mr Henderson is
following the boys across to
the corner. Everybody's running
across the ring. Photographers
are there..."

Henderson reaches the Turpin corner, grasps Randolph's
hand, and raises it above his head.

GLENDENNING

(voice tinged with
disbelief)

Turpin has won, Turpin has
won. Turpin, Randolph Turpin,
23-year-old from Leamington Spa
is the new Middleweight Champion
of the World.

The deafening cheering turns into a spontaneous chorus.

CROWD

For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
And so say all of us.

Dick and Jackie embrace their younger brother. Randolph turns to Dick, his eyes welling up with tears. A moment of great respect, love and recognition passes between them.

A flashgun explodes and the moment is caught on camera: Middleton hugging his boxer close, brothers Dick and Jackie joining in the embrace, and Randolph planting a big smacker on Jack Solomons's forehead.

97. INT. CORNER SHOP - DAY

FLASHBACK CONTINUES:

Randolph walks through a meticulously kept grocery shop. He picks up an apple and takes a bite. Through a gap in the shelving he can see Middleton sitting inside a small annex, working his way through a list of figures entered neatly into a large double-entry accounts book.

Randolph lobbs the apple up into the air. It lands in the middle of Middleton's desk. Middleton jumps with a start. Randolph bursts into fits of giggles.

MIDDLETON

Very funny.

Randolph shows his face.

RANDOLPH

I need another cheque signed
George.

MIDDLETON

Where did the last one go?

Randolph shrugs, and places a cheque in front of Middleton. Middleton looks aghast.

MIDDLETON

Why so much?

Randolph begins counting on his fingers.

RANDOLPH

I'm going to buy a house
for meself, me mam, me brothers
and me sisters, cars for meself,
and me brothers, new suits
for meself, me brothers,
me sparring partners...

MIDDLETON

Licka, sit down a minute.

Randolph remains standing.

RANDOLPH

Why?

MIDDLETON

You're already paying your
brothers more than enough
to look after themselves.

RANDOLPH

They've looked out for
me all their lives. Without
them I wouldn't have won
a world's title, so now
it's my turn to look
after them.

MIDDLETON

Licka listen. Boxer's careers
are short. I know your still
young, but you need to think
about investing in the future.

RANDOLPH

I'm not a kid anymore George,
all my life I've had folks
tell me what to do, and when
to do it. Now it's my turn to
make decisions, including
managing me own money.

Middleton gently closes his accounts book.

MIDDLETON

What would you do if you
got hurt?

RANDOLPH

I've just beat Sugar Ray
Robinson, who's going to
hurt me?

MIDDLETON

Look, why don't I hold 10 per
cent for you. Money for
when you finally decide
to quit the ring. You'll
thank me for it.

RANDOLPH

Do what ever you want George,
just sign the fuckin' cheque.

Middleton takes a pen and scribbles his signature. He
hands the cheque to Randolph.

RANDOLPH

You know what your problem
is George? You worry too
much. You've gone pale
sitting in 'ere. You
want to get out and 'ave
some fun.

98. INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

PRESENT.

The reels of the tape recorder continue to turn.

RANDOLPH

On paper I earned more
than any other British
boxer dead or alive.
But half of that didn't
end up in my pocket.

(MORE)

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)

True, I bought houses,
a half share in a hotel
which lost money, loaned
cash to phoney friends.
A lot of money. But the
figures still don't add
up. I'm now 34 years old,
and I've been fleeced right
down the fuckin' line.

LEITCH

So what are you doing to keep
the wolves from the door?

Randolph cups his left hand over the microphone.

RANDOLPH

(lowering his voice)

I earn some cash
wrestling like,
but don't put that in
the paper, as I'll have
the tax man after that too.

Leitch smiles.

Randolph takes his hand off the microphone.

RANDOLPH

You can print this though,
it's Gwen that's kept me
out the gutter. Without
her I'd be a bum.

Leitch reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out an
envelope. He hands it to Randolph.

LEITCH

Well I hope this helps
a little.

Randolph glances inside the envelope. It is full of cash.

LEITCH

Count it if you like.

Randolph pockets the envelope without bothering to count the money.

RANDOLPH
No, I trust you.

99. INT. JACK SOLOMONS'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam Burns walks into Jack Solomons's office with a copy of the *Sunday Mirror*.

BURNS.
Have you seen this?

He hands the open paper to Solomons. A headline screams:

RANDOLPH TURPIN WRITES WITH HATE IN MY HEART

100. INT. MIDDLETON'S STUDY - DAY

George Middleton quietly closes his copy of the *Sunday Mirror* and picks up the phone.

101. EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

Max Mitchell reads the article. He shakes his head.

MAX
Bloody idiot.

102. INT. PUB - DAY

Dick Turpin and his MATES read the same article.

DICK
(mimicking)
"I am broke. I am bitter.
And I've been bled to
bankruptcy."

He looks up at his mates.

DICK
Can you imagine my bloody
kid brother saying that?

103. INT. PUB — DAY

The PUBLICAN Randolph beat up sits in his empty Birmingham pub anxiously pondering the article.

104. INT. JACK SOLOMONS'S OFFICE — DAY

Jack Solomons closes the *Sunday Mirror* and looks up at Burns.

BURNS

Someone needs to silence
that prick before he
does any more damage.

105. INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

Randolph screws and tears the paper up and hurls it into a bin. The children shy away from him.

Charmaine bursts into tears.

TURPIN

They even printed me
wrestling earnings.

He storms out of the room.

GWEN

(to Charmaine)
Shhhh love, it's alright.

106. INT. KITCHEN — DAY

Randolph walks back and forth in a daze. There's a loud knocking at the back door.

RANDOLPH

Who is it?

There is no answer. Randolph walks over and wrenches the door open to reveal Jackie.

JACKIE

Alright, bab.

RANDOLPH
What does it bloody
look like?

JACKIE
Sorry I asked.

RANDOLPH
What do you want?

Jackie shrugs.

JACKIE
Since you ask, I'll have
a cup of tea.

Randolph walks over to the café's main kettle and switches it on. He slumps down on a chair.

JACKIE
If you need anything...

RANDOLPH
I want those bastards as took
my money to pay me back.

As the kettle heats up Randolph becomes more agitated.

RANDOLPH
Honest to God Jackie I feel
like killing someone.

Jackie keeps his distance.

The kettle begins steaming. Randolph pours water into a pot, swills it around, slops some tea into a mug and puts it on the counter.

Jackie takes the mug.

JACKIE
Ta.

He goes to take a sip but Randolph gives him a filthy look.

JACKIE
What?

Randolph jabs his finger to a sign above the counter which reads: DO NOT ASK FOR CREDIT AS REFUSAL OFTEN OFFENDS.

JACKIE
Very funny.

RANDOLPH
I'm not joking.

Jackie takes a long hard look at his brother. Randolph stands his ground.

Jackie puts the mug down without taking a sip of tea, shakes his head and leaves the cafe without a word.

107. INT. LONDON THEATRE — DAY

Randolph sits on a stool in the corner of a ring. He won't get up. The crowd begin booing.

The REFEREE can't get Randolph to fight. He holds his hands up to D'Orazio as if to say "what do I do?"

The impatient crowd begin a slow handclap. Randolph throws in the towel and leaves the ring to a barrage of boos and insults.

108. EXT. THEATRE — NIGHT

Randolph wearily emerges from a side exit into the night to find a gaggle of people waiting for an autograph.

He refuses to sign a single programme as he pushes through the disgruntled crowd.

109. EXT. STREET — NIGHT

In a deserted side street Randolph climbs into his Ford.

He starts the engine and attempts to drive away but one of the car's tyres is flat.

Randolph gets out to inspect the wheel. He bends down and touches the tyre. A long clean cut is clearly visible in the wall of the tyre.

RANDOLPH

Fuck.

Randolph flinches as if sensing danger. But it is too late. An iron bar connects with his head with a loud crack. Blood begins to flow.

Despite the blow Randolph manages to get to his feet to find four men, all armed with clubs, surrounding him.

Randolph lashes out and catches one of them, but blows begin raining down on him. He sinks to the floor, hands protecting his head in submission.

ASSAILANT

(Cockney accent)

Stop bleating about money
or you're dead meat.
Understand?

Randolph doesn't answer. A boot makes sharp contact with his head.

ASSAILANT

I asked you a fuckin' question.

RANDOLPH

Who sent you?

Another boot makes contact with Randolph's skull. He moans.

The men leave Randolph concussed and bleeding in the gutter.

110. EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Randolph comes round to see D'Orazio, Kidd and his men gathered around him.

KIDD

Easy does it Randy.

111. INT - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A MEDIC dresses Randolph's wounds, and stitches a deep cut in his head. D'Orazio offers the boxer a glass of brandy. Randolph gestures for him to take it away.

D'ORAZIO
Come on son, it'll do
you good.

Randolph takes the glass, sips the brandy. Blood swirls
into the amber liquid. Randolph downs the rest in one.

D'ORAZIO
Who did this?

RANDOLPH
Dunno.

D'ORAZIO refills the glass.

D'ORAZIO
Do you want me to call
the old bill?

Randolph shakes his head wearily.

RANDOLPH
No coppers.

He takes another gulp of brandy.

112. INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Randolph creeps into his bedroom. He begins to undress.

A bedside lamp is switched on by Gwen.

She clocks Randolph's injuries.

GWEN
Jesus, Randolph!

RANDOLPH
(slurring)
It's nothing love.

GWEN
What the hell have you
done?

RANDOLPH
Shhh, it's nothing.

GWEN
Don't give me nothing,
what happened?

Gwen inspects Randolph's wounds.

RANDOLPH
Bloody wrestling fans,
forgot it was a fiddle.

Randolph manages a smile, but Gwen looks at the state of her husband with a look of complete dismay.

RANDOLPH
Switch the light off love.
I'll be right as rain in
the morning. I just need
to get some kip.

GWEN
I knew something like
this would happen.

Randolph gently touches Gwen's arm.

RANDOLPH
Please love, I'm alright.
Go back to sleep.

Gwen switches off the light. Randolph slides into bed beside her. Gwen curls her arm around him.

GWEN
You been drinking?

RANDOLPH
Doctor's orders.

Randolph slips into an exhausted sleep, leaving Gwen awake and fretting.

113. DREAM SEQUENCE

River: Adult Randolph is drowning in the river of his boyhood. His powerful arms rip at a swarm of reeds ensnaring his legs but he is stuck fast. Desperately he looks up at the sunlight piercing the surface of the water

above him. He tries to call out. Water thumps into his open jaw, choking him. No-one hears.

Randolph is losing consciousness. Through the gloom his glazed eyes catch sight of a figure.

[MUSIC – Arvo Pärt: *Für Alina*]

The ghostly image of Randolph's dad beckons his son.

RANDOLPH

Dad...

Randolph reaches out. Lionel answers with a warm smile.

LIONEL

Don't you worry son. There is nothing to fear.

Randolph returns the smile. He no longer looks distressed. He reaches out with both arms to hug his dad. Lionel gently strokes his son's cheek.

As he does so, Randolph's legs slip from the reeds and he floats gently to the surface. Below him the image of Lionel leaches away into the murkiness.

Randolph surfaces to a round of applause. But the clapping falls on deaf ears, one of them oozing blood.

Randolph chokes up water and drags in a lung full of air.

As he comes round, Randolph sees a group of children clapping and cheering.

Randolph stares at them with a look of bewilderment.

114. INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

Randolph wakes up in a cold sweat. Fearfully he wraps his arm around Gwen for comfort.

115. INT. CAFÉ – DAY

Randolph scans the street outside as Pete Price fixes new, heavy duty, locks to the doors, and steel strips to secure the door jams.

Annette watches him working with fascination. But Gwyneth is fretting. She chews at her nails.

Gwen hands Pete a cup of tea.

PETE

Thanks pet.

ANNETTE

Why is the man putting
locks on the doors?

GWEN

To keep our things safe.

ANNETTE

Why do we need to keep
our things safe?

GWEN

Because some bad people
might want to take your
toys without asking.

Gwyneth walks up to Randolph.

GWYNETH

When are we going to
Wales?

Randolph is still slurring his speech. It is now a permanent impediment.

RANDOLPH

Soon love, soon.

GWYNETH

Cross you heart and hope
to die?

Randolph crosses his chest with his right forefinger.

RANDOLPH

Cross my heart and hope
to die.

GWYNETH

I don't believe you.

Gwyneth turns away from her dad and heads for the stairs.

RANDOLPH
Come on Gwynny.

But Gwyneth doesn't respond to her dad, and disappears upstairs.

116. INT. LIVING ROOM – DAY

Randolph picks up the phone and dials a number.

RANDOLPH
It's Licka.
(beat)
I need you to come to
the hearing George.
(beat)
So as you can tell them
I don't owe that money.
(beat)
Have you found that
cheque stub yet?

There's a click on the other end of the line. Randolph slams the receiver down.

117. INT. SHIRE HALL, WARWICK – DAY

Randolph stands in the dock. Gwen sits nervously waiting judgement. Max Mitchell is at her side. Reporters scribble shorthand into notebooks.

REGISTRAR
So, Mr Turpin, how do you intend
to pay the income tax on your
wrestling earnings?

RANDOLPH
I shall just have to start
cutting myself right down,
and me family, and start
putting some away.

REGISTRAR

Which leads me to one final matter. A fee for a certain newspaper article. What precisely happened to that money?

RANDOLPH

I owed money to friends. I felt morally obliged to pay them back.

REGISTRAR

I feel bound to say that I feel a certain sympathy for the man who prefers his friends to the Inland Revenue, but you leave me no choice but to begin bankruptcy proceedings against you.

RANDOLPH

(distressed)

I still say it's a debt I do not owe. I did ask me manager to come here and say I did not owe it.

118. INT. SHIRE HALL CORRIDOR — DAY

Randolph catches a glimpse of a pack of reporters waiting outside.

He retreats from the entrance and puts his hands to his face in despair.

GWEN

Come on love.

MAX

I'm sorry, I wish there was more I could do.

RANDOLPH

How much do I owe you?

MAX

Nothing, George has it covered.

RANDOLPH

What?

Max chooses his words carefully.

MAX

He thought it was the
least he could do.

RANDOLPH

Well you can tell George I
don't want his bloody
charity, I want the money
he owes me.

Randolph grabs Gwen's hand and heads for the exit.

119. EXT. SHIRE HALL — DAY

Randolph plunges into the melee outside. Without a word he
aggressively pushes his way through the crowd, gets into
his car, and drives away.

120. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

The blinds are drawn. The sign turned to closed. Randolph
and Gwen huddle around a table. Randolph looks tormented.

RANDOLPH

If I could just get the money
for the Olson fight, it
would pay off the whole debt.

GWEN

George isn't going to cough
that kind of money up all
these years later. He's
never going to admit to it.

RANDOLPH

There must be something I
can do.

GWEN

We've still got the café,
and each other, and the kids.

Randolph gets up.

GWEN
Where you going?

RANDOLPH
Out.

121. EXT. SOLICITORS — DAY

A solicitor's office tucked into a Victorian terrace.

122. INT. SOLICITORS — DAY

Randolph sits opposite an overweight, dishevelled looking solicitor, who wears half-moon reading specs, and is sweating profusely.

SOLICITOR
(smiling)
Let me get this right.
You want to pursue
Jack Solomons for...

The solicitor looks down at his notes.

SOLICITOR
Mr Turpin, even if you had
hard evidence that he had
withheld such a payment,
which you don't, how would
you propose taking on such
a formidable opponent?

RANDOLPH
All I know is he owes me
that money.

SOLICITOR
Mr Turpin, I'm sorry, the
fact is you're bankrupt.
From what you've said,
George Middleton would be a
better bet. But unless he has
substantial assets of which
you are unaware it would
be a lost cause.

RANDOLPH
He's got money in a safe
deposit box in London.

SOLICITOR
Can you prove that?

Randolph cannot answer. He shrugs and looks down.

The solicitor shakes his head.

SOLICITOR
I'm sorry Mr Turpin, I wish
I could help.

Randolph gets to his feet.

RANDOLPH
How much do I owe you?

SOLICITOR
Don't worry about that.

The solicitor also gets up and makes his way around his
desk.

SOLICITOR
Mr Turpin. Can I ask, have
you made a will?

RANDOLPH
I'm not planning to die
just yet.

SOLICITOR
But if anything were to
happen, an accident...
for your children's sake,
you don't want to be left
intestate and bankrupt.

The solicitor holds out his hand.

SOLICITOR
Just a thought.

123. EXT. B ROAD — DAY

Randolph drives at speed through the lush Warwickshire countryside.

He parks the car in the gateway to a field of corn.

124. EXT. FIELD — DAY

Randolph wades through the corn in a panic.

He breaths short quick breaths as if he is about to dissolve into tears.

He lies down on his back and stares up at the clear sky. He looks into the infinite blue until it saturates his senses. He begins to calm down. His breathing eases.

CUT TO:

Randolph walks back towards his car.

125. EXT. LANE — DAY

Randolph drives along a tree-lined lane. Ahead he can see a figure standing beside a vehicle, bonnet raised. It is Middleton standing by his broken down Jaguar.

Randolph draws up alongside his former manager.

MIDDLETON
Go on then, laugh.

RANDOLPH
Hop in.

Middleton looks at Randolph for a moment, unsure, then walks around to the passenger side and climbs in.

Randolph accelerates hard.

He continues to accelerate. The engine screams. The trees fly by at frightening speed.

RANDOLPH
Have you found that
cheque stub yet?

MIDDLETON
Drop me here, I'll walk.

RANDOLPH
Yes or no.

MIDDLETON
How's Gwen keeping?

RANDOLPH
Do you believe in life
after death George?

Middleton glances at Randolph, then back at the road,
tense.

MIDDLETON
No. Once you're dead
you're dead.

Randolph smiles.

RANDOLPH
You're wrong George.

There's a lorry ahead. Randolph is gaining on it at speed.

MIDDLETON
Licka, just drop me off,
please.

The lorry begins to turn around a steep blind bend.
Randolph traces the shape of a cross over his chest and
begins to overtake.

MIDDLETON
(alarmed)
Licka!

Middleton instinctively brakes hard with both feet.

RANDOLPH
There's nothing to fear.

MIDDLETON
For Christ's sake.

Randolph drives the Zephyr straight into the path of an oncoming van, and floors the accelerator.

The van skids to a halt as Randolph swerves the Zephyr back onto the left side of the road, narrowly missing both van and lorry, horns blaring.

Randolph turns to Middleton, who has turned ash white.

RANDOLPH

See George, death doesn't
scare me, and that's why
I'm going to chase you for
that money into your grave
if I have to.

Randolph brings the car to a sudden halt.

RANDOLPH

Now get out.

Middleton scrabbles for the door handle, and almost falls out of the car.

MIDDLETON

You're bloody insane you
are. Bloody insane.

126. INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

Gwen appears in the doorway with a chocolate cake, decorated with two burning candles. Randolph, Gwyneth, Annette and Charmaine are waiting in anticipation.

TURPIN family

Happy birthday to you,
happy birthday to you,
happy birthday dear Charmaine,
happy birthday to you.

Charmaine blows out the two candles.

CUT TO:

[MUSIC: Shirley Bassey — *The Party's Over*]

Gwen slow dances with Randolph. The girls are dancing separately in a ring.

GWEN
I'm two month's late.

RANDOLPH
Are you sure?

GWEN
Course I'm bloody sure.

RANDOLPH
(optimistic)
Maybe it'll be a boy.

GWEN
I'm going to get rid
of it.

Randolph pulls back.

RANDOLPH
Don't say that.

GWEN
What choice have we got?

RANDOLPH
We'll manage.

Gwen looks intensely into Randolph's eyes.

[The phone rings]

Gwyneth breaks away from her dance and answers.

GWYNETH
Hello...hello...hello.

Gwyneth hands the receiver to her mum.

GWEN
Who is it?

GWYNETH
They won't say.

GWEN

Hello?

Gwen listens, there is no answer.

GWEN

Who is this?

Randolph walks over and grabs the receiver.

RANDOLPH

Hello.

CALLER'S VOICE

You're a dead man.

The caller hangs up. Randolph replaces the handset. His whole family is now looking at him.

RANDOLPH

I'm going to look after
you all.

127. EXT. CAFÉ YARD - DAY

A ferocious looking Alsatian dog, all teeth and frothing saliva, pulls at a leash. On the other end of the lead is Randolph.

He struggles to tether the snarling animal outside the back door of the café.

Gwen appears with a look of incredulity. Gwyneth, Annette and Charmaine keep close to their mum as they look at the dog.

GWEN

What's that?

RANDOLPH

What does it look like?

GWEN

We can't afford to keep
a bloody dog.

GWYNETH and ANNETTE

Oh please mum.

RANDOLPH
It's for when I'm away
wrestling.

GWEN
You've already had this
place done up like Fort
Knox, what's going on
Randolph?

RANDOLPH
Nothing's going on.

128. EXT. COVENTRY CINEMA - NIGHT

A wrestling poster. Randolph appears near the bottom of
the bill.

129. INT. RING - NIGHT

Randolph no longer wears gloves. He looks just like any
other regular wrestler.

130. INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

D'Orazio hands Randolph some money. It is clearly nothing
like the amount he was being paid for his earlier fights.

D'ORAZIO
I might have something
next month. I'll let you know.

Randolph retrieves a bottle of brandy from his locker and
takes a gulp.

131. EXT. COVENTRY STREET - NIGHT

Randolph is followed down a back street by five THUGS. He
turns, and stands his ground, knocking the first man out
with a single punch.

The other four struggle to restrain him and the barrel of
a pistol is pressed into his face.

RANDOLPH
Come on then, stop
pissing about.

Randolph continues to struggle. They grapple him to the ground.

GUNMAN

(Cockney accent)

Someone's offered a monkey
to see you, your wife
and your kids dead.
He just has to say the
word and it'll be done
sure as night follows day.
Nuffing you can do about it.

Randolph stops struggling.

RANDOLPH

Touch my family I'll kill
you all.

The GUNMAN taps Randolph's left cheek with his fingers.

GUNMAN

Don't shoot the messenger mate.
And don't bovver going
into hiding neither. A former
world champ, and a nigger at
that don't stand a chance
of disappearing.

Randolph's attackers begin melting into the night.

132. INT. CAFÉ — NIGHT

Randolph sits down at one of the tables and writes a letter.

RANDOLPH V.O.

Today I feel so depressed and
low in spirits, that I must
write down what is worrying me,
and why. I know that Mr J Solomons
and G Middleton have been in
touch with a certain body, in
London, who do away with folks,
who they don't wish to talk.

(MORE)

Randolph (CONT'D)
So should they do away with me,
I would like the government,
and whoever deals with this
letter, to know, that Mr Middleton
has money in a bank deposit in
London, Piccadilly, which belongs
to me, which I would like paid
to my wife, and children...

V.O. FADES OUT:

Randolph seals the letter with wax.

He deposits the letter in the safe and locks it.

133. INT. HOSPITAL — DAY

Randolph walks along a hospital corridor. Charmaine sits
astride his shoulders and Gwyneth and Annette hold each of
his hands.

Randolph looks at everyone with suspicion. He turns into a
ward where Gwen sits cradling a tiny bundle.

GWEN
Come and meet baby Carmen.

Randolph lowers Charmaine to get a better look.

CHARMAINE
Baby.

GWEN
She's your little sister.

RANDOLPH
Give her a kiss.

Randolph lowers Charmaine who gently kisses the baby's
forehead.

134. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

Beat clears the plates away at breakfast as Randolph pulls
socks onto Charmaine's tiny feet.

GWYNETH

Dad, have you seen my
pink exercise book?

RANDOLPH

It's in the living room.

(shouting)

Annette, come on, you're
going to be late for school.

Randolph picks Charmaine up and hands her to Beat.

RANDOLPH

See you in a bit.

135. INT. CAR — DAY

Randolph repeatedly looks in the rear view mirror to check
if anyone is following him.

He drops Gwyneth and Annette off at school.

136. EXT. SCHOOL — DAY

Randolph walks with his daughters until they are safely
through the school gates before returning to his car.

137. INT. HOSPITAL — DAY

Randolph walks up to Gwen who is sitting in a chair
feeding baby Carmen. He kisses Gwen and Carmen.

RANDOLPH

You ready?

Gwen nods. She looks exhausted.

138. INT. CAFÉ — DAY

The back door of the café opens, as Randolph and Gwen
return with their new baby.

The kitchen has been left by Beat in a state of chaos.

Gwen clocks the mess and suddenly breaks down. Randolph
catches his wife as she sinks to the floor, sobbing.

RANDOLPH
What is it love?

GWEN
(choking sobs)
Everything.

RANDOLPH
Everything's going to be
okay.

GWEN
Everything is definitely
not going to be okay.

Carmen begins to wail. Gwen dissolves into even more
tears.

Randolph picks up Carmen.

RANDOLPH
(to Beat)
Put the kettle on mum.

Charmaine puts her arms around Gwen and cuddles her. Gwen
reciprocates the embrace.

GWEN
It's okay pet, mummy's
just being silly.

RANDOLPH
(to Gwen)
Gwen love, come up stairs
and get some rest. I'll
clear this lot up.
(to Beat)
Take care of the baby
a minute.

Randolph hands baby Carmen to Beat. Gwen struggles to her
feet. Randolph puts his arm around her.

RANDOLPH
Come on love.

139. INT. BEDROOM — DAY

Gwen curls up into bed. Randolph kisses her forehead, and strokes her hair.

RANDOLPH
I'll look after Carmen.

140. INT — LIVING ROOM — EVENING

It's late and quiet. Randolph sits in a chair feeding Carmen with a bottle. She falls asleep in his lap.

[The telephone begins to ring]

Randolph reaches across and picks up the receiver.

RANDOLPH
(quietly)
Hello.

There is no answer. Randolph can hear breathing on the other end of the line. A look of despair fills his face.

RANDOLPH
Leave us alone.

Randolph replaces the receiver. The phone begins ringing again. Carmen wakes up and begins to cry.

Randolph picks up the receiver and places it by the side of the phone. He carries Carmen out of the room.

141. INT. BEDROOM — MORNING

Gwen looks up at Randolph.

RANDOLPH
I've told Beat to go home,
leave the place locked up.

GWEN
Not now, not like this.

RANDOLPH
We need to get out of here.

Gwen clocks the fear in Randolph's eyes.

GWEN

What about the kids and
school?

RANDOLPH

It's just for a few days.
Come on love, please,
we need a break, all of us.

142. EXT. STREET — MORNING

Gwen gets into the front passenger seat of the Zephyr with
baby Carmen.

The other daughters, brimming with excitement pile into
the back. Randolph climbs into the driver's seat, starts
the engine and pulls away.

143. EXT. GWRYCH CASTLE, WALES — DAY

Randolph drives through a huge stone gateway and along a
long sweeping driveway to reveal the impressive
nineteenth-century turreted medieval fantasy, Gwrych
castle.

He watches the faces of his daughters with delight as they
realise his story of castles and dragons appears to be
true after all.

Randolph parks the car in front of a towering arched
doorway, and gets out just as LESLIE SALTS, recognizable
from the Standard 8 film in the opening, emerges from a
side entrance, trademark cigarette holder clenched in his
teeth, wearing plus fours, a golden retriever at his side.
Salts looks at Randolph warily.

SALTS

To what do I owe this
pleasure?

RANDOLPH

Watcha Leslie.

SALTS

Count Salts, if you don't
mind.

Charmaine walks towards Salts.

CHARMAINE

Are you a dragon?

Salts blows out a plume of cigarette smoke and humours her with a roar.

RANDOLPH

Leslie mate, sorry to
spring this on you...

SALTS

Count Salts, please.

CHARMAINE

You don't look like a
dragon.

Randolph is clearly not sure whether Salts is joking, but plays along with the title.

RANDOLPH

Count Salts, can you put
us up for a few days.

SALTS

Randy, I'm sorry, but
I'm fully booked.

Randolph looks up at the castle. There is no sign of life.

RANDOLPH

Come on, for old time's
sake like.

SALTS

If only I had known you
were coming...

RANDOLPH

(lowering his
voice)
Please, Leslie...
(he winces)
Count I mean,
I'm in a bit of trouble.

SALTS
I've got a conference on,
it's impossible.

RANDOLPH
I'll pay you.

SALTS
What with?

RANDOLPH
(whisper)
Don't do this to me,
please, not in front
of the kids.

Salts glances at Randolph's daughters, their faces filled with anticipation, and at Gwen cuddling the new-born baby Carmen.

SALTS
Two nights.

RANDOLPH
I owe you.

SALTS
For old time's sake.

144. MONTAGE

Standard-8 footage of the Turpin daughters playing in the castle, pretending to princesses.

They parade down a vast hallway lined with photographs of famous boxers, including world champion Randolph Turpin shaking hands with a younger, beaming Leslie Salts.

Randolph looks through the window of an estate agent. He clocks a B&B for sale, nestled by a river.

He nips inside and emerges with the details.

The Turpin family hit the beach. For a brief moment they look like they haven't got a care in the world, with Randolph repeatedly reducing his daughters to fits of hysterical giggles.

145. INT. CAFÉ LIVING ROOM – DAY

The film footage of the holiday comes to an end. Randolph sits alone by his Standard-8 projector.

He finishes a glass of brandy and pours another.

TURPIN FAMILY V.O.

Happy birthday to you,

146. INT. LIVING ROOM – DAY

Randolph appears in the doorway with a cake covered in pink icing. Two candles burn in the centre.

Gwen, Gwyneth, Annette and Charmaine are waiting in anticipation.

TURPIN family

Happy birthday to you,

happy birthday dear Carmen,

happy birthday to you.

They all clap as Gwen helps Carmen blows out the candles.

147. EXT. LEAMINGTON SIDE STREET – DAY

Randolph walks along a narrow street carrying Carmen on his shoulders.

Carmen points to passers-by and repeatedly shouts...

CARMEN

Gone!

A motorbike drives along the street towards them. Carmen points her finger.

CARMEN

Gone!

The pillion passenger lifts his hand towards Randolph and Carmen.

Randolph grabs Carmen from his shoulders as an explosion rings out. It could be a backfire, it could be a gun shot.

Randolph shields Carmen with his body and sprints for his life.

The motorbike roars off.

148. EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Randolph ducks into an alley. He frantically checks Carmen over for injuries, and cries tears of relief when he realises that she is unhurt.

149. EXT. CAFE - DAY

Mosh Mancini walks up to the café. It is closed. The shutters are drawn. He walks round to the back but is confronted by the Alsatian beast.

MOSH
(yelling)
Licka.

An upstairs window opens and Randolph sticks his head out.

RANDOLPH
Where 'ave you been?

150. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Randolph unbolts the back door, calms down the dog, and lets Mosh in. Randolph is clearly in a state of acute anxiety.

MOSH
What's up mate, it's
like a bloody siege
in here.

RANDOLPH
I need you to put word
out that I want to
sell me belt.

MOSH
You sure mate?

RANDOLPH
I'm sure.

MOSH

I know some promoters
who might be interested.

RANDOLPH

How soon can you do it?

MOSH

Soon as you like, but I
can't make any promises.

RANDOLPH

I know.

151. INT. SOLICITORS - DAY

The solicitor hands Randolph a completed will. Randolph
signs it.

RANDOLPH

I once gave me wife a belt
A title belt like. It's
worth a bit of money.
If anything happened to
me she'd be free to sell
it wouldn't she?

SOLICITOR

Well, as long as the
official receiver was
happy it was gifted, you
obviously wouldn't be
profiting from it if you
were dead, so Mrs Turpin
would indeed be free to
sell it if she wished.

152. EXT. LEAMINGTON BACK STREET - NIGHT

Randolph pays cash for a .22 revolver and a box of rounds.

153. INT. ATTIC ROOM - DAY

Randolph loads the revolver. He looks through the attic
window and aims the pistol at passers by.

He wraps the gun in a cloth and puts it, and the remaining
rounds, on top of a wardrobe.

Randolph sits on a single bed. He picks up the remains of a Barbara doll, bald, one eye gauged out, and with an arm missing. He presses the talk button. Nothing happens. He shakes the doll.

Doll
Will you be my friend?

154. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

The café is now in a state of neglect.

The sound of a stone being thrown at the back door. The Alsatian barks as if his life depended upon it. Another rock hits the door.

Randolph approaches the door with his pistol at the ready. He opens the door and is relieved to find Mosh on the other side of the yard, well out of reach of the dog.

Randolph grabs the dog and beckons Mosh inside.

RANDOLPH
Watcha Mosh.

MOSH
I've found a buyer. He's
offering top dollar.

RANDOLPH
How much?

Mosh hands Randolph a piece of folded paper.

MOSH
Here.

Randolph opens the sheet.

MOSH
Buy a bloody house with
that.

155. INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Carmen is playing with the broken Barbara doll.

Randolph retrieves the estate agent details for the B&B. He holds the note from Mosh by the side of the details, then folds the note inside the property description and puts the bundle in the safe next to the sealed letter.

156. INT. CAFE - MORNING

The post drops through the letterbox of the café.

Gwen, clutching a dressing gown tightly around her front, wearily pulls an official-looking envelope from the pile.

She opens it, sits down and lets out a long resigned laugh.

Randolph appears.

GWEN

It's finally come.

RANDOLPH

What?

GWEN

Compulsory purchase order
for this dump.

She hands the letter to Randolph

GWEN

That won't buy us a shed.

157. EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

A sunny day. The sound of summer bird song.

Nina Simone singing *Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out* rattles through a cheap tinny radio.

Randolph combs the wild thick black hair of Gwyneth and Annette, who are dressed in school uniform. He curls his powerful tattooed arms around his two eldest daughters.

RANDOLPH

Gwynnie love, you're a
big girl now, so promise
to look after your mum
when I'm away won't you.

Gwyneth gives her dad a kiss on the cheek.

There's a knock on the front door of the café. Randolph answers the door to Mosh.

MOSH
Watcha Licka.

RANDOLPH
You ready kids?
(to Mosh)
Thanks for giving them
a lift Mosh, I owe you.

Gwyneth and Annette, beaming smiles, turn and wave to their parents.

Randolph watches his daughters leave with sad, exhausted eyes.

He sits down at a table and begins writing a note.

RANDOLPH V.O.
First darling, try,
please try to forgive me.

Randolph looks up from the table at Gwen.

RANDOLPH
Do you remember where
the key is to the safe?

GWEN
You hoping to find something?

Randolph returns to the note.

RANDOLPH V.O.
Follow these instructions and
everything will be okay ...there's
a letter in the safe which
explains it all, take it to the
solicitors..."

Randolph pushes the note into his pocket, gets to his feet and heads upstairs.

RANDOLPH V.O.

Sell my belt, and use the money
to help you out whichever
way is best..."

Carmen decides to follow her dad upstairs.

RANDOLPH V.O.

Middleton has cash of mine in
a deposit case in London. That's
for you and the kids aswell. And
I'll also see that bastard
publican pays you the money
he owes you..."

Nina Simone sings a final refrain.

158. EXT. BACK YARD — DAY

Gwen wanders out into the yard where the dog is barking.

RANDOLPH V.O.

When you've got all this place
settled, and got the money,
move back to Wales.

159. INT. ATTIC ROOM — DAY

Randolph retrieves the .22 revolver and the box of rounds
from the top of the wardrobe.

He pushes a round into each of the six chambers.

RANDOLPH V.O.

Well bye bye my darling Gwen.
Remember, I'll always be on
your left hand side, when you
need me. God bless and always
keep you all safe.

For a moment Randolph stares directly ahead with still,
sad eyes. Then, with his left hand Randolph places the
barrel of the gun against his left temple, and pulls the
trigger.

The sound of a sharp crack.

160. INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Carmen jumps. She follows the sound and opens the door of the attic room.

161. INT. ATTIC ROOM - DAY

Randolph is still alive. He lifts his bleeding head, delirious and confused. Carmen reaches out for her daddy, just as Randolph had done as a drowning boy.

Randolph answers with a warm smile. He strokes his daughter's cheek.

RANDOLPH

There is nothing to fear.

Carmen smiles. She points at her daddy.

CARMEN

Daddy, gone!

RANDOLPH

Do you want to come with daddy?

CARMEN

Yes.

162. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

A crash of baking trays. Gwen walks back into the cafe and looks at the trays, puzzled. The cafe is very quiet.

A gust of wind lifts a menu and drops it to the floor.

Gwen walks over to the entrance and pushes the door shut.

GWEN

Randolph?

There is no answer.

163. INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Gwen climbs the stairs and looks in on Charmaine who is playing with toy bricks in her room.

Gwen carries on up to the top attic room. She clocks a note pinned to the door. Turns into the doorway.

164. INT. ATTIC ROOM - DAY

Randolph is slumped in a sitting position by the side of a single bed on which Carmen is crying and bleeding.

GWEN
(shouting)
What have you done?

Randolph does not answer.

Gwen grabs Carmen and runs.

165. EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

GWEN bursts out of the front door of the cafe clutching Carmen to her breast. She trips and falls, shouts for help but we hear nothing.

166. INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Gwen sits by herself in a deep state of shock.

SURGEON
Mrs Turpin?

Gwen looks up to see a broad-shouldered SURGEON looking at her.

SURGEON
Your daughter's a very
lucky little girl.

Gwen is up on her feet.

GWEN
Where is she?

167. INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT — DAY

Gwen bends over the side of a cot where Carmen lies, head and chest bandaged. Drainage tubes and drips taped to her little body.

GWEN
(whisper)
It's okay my baby.

Gwen gently strokes Carmen's left hand.

A NURSE approaches.

NURSE
Mrs Turpin?

Gwen turns to the nurse as if in a trance.

NURSE
The police would like to
speak with you, when
you've got a moment.

168. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — DAY

Gwen faces two grim-faced DETECTIVES.

GWEN
He's dead isn't he?

DETECTIVE
I'm sorry there's nothing
the doctor could do for him.

The detective hands Gwen a note.

DETECTIVE
We found this pinned
to the door.

Gwen opens the neatly folded letter.

DETECTIVE
Is that your husband's
handwriting?

Shocked and bewildered, Gwen scans the note, folds into tears, and nods in agreement.

169. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Mosh opens the safe and retrieves the sealed letter written by Randolph. He hands the envelope to Gwen, who passes it to Randolph's solicitor.

Mosh then takes out the estate agent details and the note detailing the offer for the belt. He hands the paperwork to Gwen.

170. EXT. CORONER'S COURT, WARWICK - DAY

A CORONER leaves court and is pounced on by reporters.

MALE REPORTER

How can a man shoot
himself in the head, and
then in the heart?

CORONER

The jury have made their
decision.

MALE REPORTER

Can you explain why a
second letter allegedly
naming people who made
death threats against
Turpin was not read out
in court?

CORONER

I have no further comments.

Another reporter persists.

FEMALE REPORTER

Sir, would you comment on
rumours that Randolph
Turpin was murdered by an
assassin, who also attempted
to murder his daughter.

The coroner is ushered into a waiting car.

171. EXT. LEAMINGTON STREET - DAY

It is pouring with rain as Randolph's coffin, followed by a long cortege, is driven along an almost deserted street.

172. INT. CHURCH - DAY

In a packed church, Jack Solomons stands at the pulpit.

SOLOMONS

The date, 10 July 1951, will forever be etched in the annals of sporting history. They said Randy didn't stand a chance. 33-1 outsider.

George Middleton, dressed in a sombre grey suit and black tie nods in appreciation of Solomon's eulogy.

SOLOMONS

The boy from the backstreets of Leamington Spa. But the Leamington Licker did us proud. To stand 15 rounds toe-to-toe with greatest pound-for-pound boxer that has ever lived, and win. That will be Randy's legacy. He was the greatest middleweight boxer that Britain has ever produced, and a worthy world champion, God love him.

Gwen listens to the speech with coiled up rage. She crushes the order of service in her fist. Gwyneth and Annette clutch her tight.

SOLOMONS

Randolph Adolphus Turpin, the Leamington Licker, inside the ring you were a world beater, outside the ring you were a true gentleman. Rest in peace Randolph.

Solomons takes his seat and receives a congratulatory pat on the back from Sam Burns.

Gwen steps up to the pulpit in deathly silence. She turns to the throng. Her voice wavers.

GWEN

I'd like to read a letter
released by Randolph's
solicitor, and written by
my husband two year's ago.

Gwen opens the letter with shaking hands.

GWEN

Today I feel so depressed
and low in spirits, that I
must write down, what is
worrying me, and why.

Gwen takes a deep breath.

GWEN

I know that Mr J Solomons
and G Middleton have been
in touch with a certain body,
in London, who do away with
folks, who they don't wish
to talk.

Middleton flashes a glance across at Solomons, who drops his gaze to the floor.

GWEN

I have told both parties
concerned, meaning Solomons
and Middleton, that death
doesn't frighten me, anymore,
so they have included my
wife and three children in
their threats.

Solomons is now up on his feet. He tries to remain composed, but is forced to beat a humiliating retreat down the central aisle towards the main door of the church. Randolph's words follow him.

GWEN & RANDOLPH V.O.

So should they do away with
me, I would like the government,
and whoever deals with this
letter, to know, that
Mr Middleton has money in
a bank deposit in London,
Piccadilly, which belongs
to me, which I would like
paid to my wife and children.

Middleton takes his cue and scuttles towards the exit.

VOICES

(whispering)

Shame, shame.

GWEN & RANDOLPH V.O.

I'm not of unbalanced mind,
or anything like that, on
the contrary, I'm perfectly
sane, but know that these
people are closing in on me,
and have already made three
attempts on my life.

The main door of the church opens and closes as the
accused make their escape.

RANDOLPH V.O.

I've told them death doesn't
worry me, as I've already
left this letter naming
those who have asked for my
life. But they will also have
foolproof alibis for their
whereabouts when it happens
to me.

173. EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Randolph's body is lowered into a grave. His brothers
support their mother Beat.

Gwen, keeping her distance from Randolph's siblings,
clutches her children close.

RANDOLPH V.O.

All I ask, is, that the money in deposit, plus half of the sum, which I was sent bankrupt for, please, by the Grace of God, see that this money is paid to my wife and children, as by June, I should have another baby to my family making four. Signed this 4th day of March 1964, on Oath of God Almighty, Randolph Adolphus Turpin.

174. INT. PROMOTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Mosh Mancini hands over Randolph's Lonsdale belt to a PROMOTER, who hands him a cheque in exchange.

175. EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

Gwen and her four daughters, pile into the Ford Zephyr.

176. INT. CAR - DAY

A plaster on Carmen's head is the only sign that she has been injured.

CHARMAINE

Where are we going?

GWEN

We're going home.

She puts the car into gear and pulls away from the café.

177. EXT. WALES - DAY

Home movie footage of Randolph, Gwen and their daughters, on holiday in Wales.

Freeze frame on Randolph smiling.

RAYMOND GLENDENNING V.O.

(actual BBC commentary)

And Turpin scores the last
punch of the round. Who has
won? Mr Henderson is following
the boys across to the corner. Everybody's
running across the
ring. Photographers are there...
Turpin has won, Turpin has won.
Turpin, Randolph Turpin, 23-year-old
from Leamington Spa is the new Middleweight
Champion of the World.

CROWD

For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
And so say all of us.

THE END

PART II

A Contextual Text¹

Literature Review

A review of film-studies literature on the subject of the biopic reveals a surprising paucity of material (Bingham, 2010; Brown, 2013; Custen, 1992), despite the fact that the last two decades have seen over 30 biopics nominated in the Academy Award Best Film category (Awards Databases, 2015). Indeed, in contemporary cinema the biopic has become a vehicle for prestige projects, and in many ways has become synonymous with award worthiness (Brown, 2013). This amounts to a significant lack of alignment between academia, which has had a tendency to dismiss the importance of biopics, and the major award-winning filmmakers who enthusiastically continue to produce them (Bingham, 2010).

Such is the lack of scholarly material on the subject of the biopic that, as recently as 2010, Dennis Bingham felt the need to make the case for film biography being a genre at all before he could present any arguments in his book *Whose Lives are They Anyway?* (Bingham, 2010). Indeed, much of the existing literature labours over a taxonomic assessment of the form.

Custen's enquiry focuses entirely on the Hollywood biopic of the studio era, with an analysis that links studio production of films about "great (white) men" to American (patriarchal) founding myths (Custen, 1992), while Bingham's work broadens the scope into a genre study that includes post-studio era and non-US biopics in an attempt to present an evolutionary classification of the genre (Bingham, 2010). The most recent addition to the film studies literature on the subject of biopics, *The Biopic in Contemporary Film Culture*, a collection of essays from 14 contributors, broadens the taxonomic scope of enquiry further to include World Cinema, and promises a re-evaluation of the biopic that "highlights the relationship between films and their cultural and institutional contexts and production" (Brown et al., 2014, pp.19-20).

¹ An earlier, abridged, version of this contextual text, *From fact to fiction: authoring a modern biopic*, was presented at the Screenwriting Research Network Annual Conference, 'Between Artistic Freedom and Norms', Leeds, United Kingdom, 8-10 September 2016.

In the introduction to this collection, Belén Vidal poses the question, “Is it possible to capture the essence of a life?” (Brown et al., 2014, p. 1). It is an interesting question, particularly from a screenwriting perspective. Indeed, implicit in this question is the intentional role of the author. However, there is a tendency for the contributors to this volume, like those of other film studies texts exploring the biopic, to answer this question with little or no reference to the screenwriter, such is the continuing effect of auteurist presumptions about directorial control and authorship within the field of film studies (Cook, 2007; Sellors, 2010).

This bias towards auteur theory raises some important questions concerning the screenwriter's role in the creation of the biopic: Is it possible to meaningfully consider Belén Vidal's question without reference to the fact that the transformative process of condensing an entire life into a 90-minute *fiction* film, is first undertaken by the screenwriter? Is it possible to meaningfully consider this question, without reference to how the screenwriter navigates the tensions between fact and fiction, between the historical other and the reflexive I? Is it possible to meaningfully consider this question, without referencing the weight of responsibility I feel as a screenwriter to tell a true story? And without reference to the nature of this truth that is located at the intersection between the reflexive screenwriter and the biographical subject?

Research into the biopic as a screenwriter has led me, therefore, to first consider the thorny issue of film authorship. It is beyond the scope of this practice-based research to engage in a protracted discussion about auteur theory, or post-structuralist notions of whether there is an author at all, so I am aligning myself with the position of Paul Sellors, who argues in his book *Film Authorship: Auteurs and Other Myths*, that locating authorship is about identifying who is responsible for the construction of meaning in a film. And, in the face of strong evidence that film authorship is a collaborative process, this reliance upon the director auteur model is simply “sloppy” scholarship (Sellors, 2010).

Sellors draws on Paisley Livingston's general definition of authorship to construct the following definition of film authorship as a collective intentional action of expression:

Filmic author = the agent (or agents) who intentionally token(s) a filmic utterance to communicate a meaning. 'To token' refers to any relevant action, an intended function of which is to compose a filmic utterance; a filmic utterance is the material film constituting an expression conveying a meaning; and communicate implies the possibility of an audience capable of understanding such an expression (Sellors, 2010, p. 110).

Once we accept that the screenwriter plays a central collaborative role in the construction of meaning in a film, and that this *intentional* authorial role is a fact of production, then we can begin to frame a practice-based enquiry into the nature of the intersection between screenwriter and biographical subject. I will argue that gaining an understanding of this intersection is crucial to tackling a range of important questions from the kind posed by Belén Vidal, to the ethics of representation, the relationship between fact and fiction, and historical fidelity. Indeed, the very definition of the biopic form is incomplete without such an understanding.

The issue of authorship in film studies also raises the crucial question of whether a practice-based screenwriting research enquiry can be framed within the wider field of film studies at all. A review of the existing literature suggests not. And it is not the question of authorship that is the main issue. Scholars working in the field of film studies are simply asking different questions from those who are engaged in film practice, a discourse described by historian Robert Rosenstone as "complete with its own vocabulary, agenda, goals, and boundaries" (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 9). So while Custen's enquiry into the biopic deals "extensively with the mores and practices of Hollywood", it fails to satisfy "anyone interested in the problems of shaping biography, of just how one can render a life - either in words on the page, or in images on the screen (or in any other way)" (Rosenstone, 2012, p. 102).

This points to a significant methodological divide between film studies and *filmmaking*, a methodological divide that emerges as a central theme in this practice-based enquiry.

In response to the methodological limitations of the existing film studies enquiries into the biopic, including the tendency for the literature to take an auteurist position, I

have therefore widened the scope of my literature review to encompass some relatives of the biopic - the literary biography, the biographical novel, historical fiction and the documentary - in order to broaden the scholarly contextualisation of my practice-based research.

I choose these forms not simply because there is an evident shared activity in constructing biographical narratives, but because there exists significant scholarly literature in these fields that considers the *process* of constructing biographical narratives and, crucially, gives voice to the authors who create them.

Literature Review: beyond film studies

Around the time I began developing the story of Randolph Turpin, I was working as a film consultant with British novelist Jonathan Coe, who was researching his literary biography of fellow author BS Johnson, *Like A Fiery Elephant* (2004). Like Coe, I was going through the process of methodical sleuthing to bring clarity to the historical record. Like Coe, I was interviewing all the people I could, who had known my biographical subject in person, in the hope I would somehow be able to grasp, second-hand, the interiority of a man I would never meet. And like Coe, I was experiencing a common phenomenon: that there were as many contradictory descriptions of the biographical subject, as there were people I interviewed.

Coe describes the knowledge he eventually gained of his biographical subject from such contradictory and fragmented data thus:

BS Johnson is a man I now know better than most of my closest friends, but who somehow still remains, for all his novelistic candour, a perfect stranger to me (Coe, 2004, p. 8).

In the same way, while I have amassed a considerable amount of (historical) data about Randolph Turpin, I feel no nearer to really grasping what Belén Vidal refers to as 'the essence' of my biographical subject. Faced with such contradictory and fragmented data, how can I construct with any kind of validity, the interior emotional embodied life of my protagonist?

In 1927 Virginia Woolf suggested that a reflexive positioning of the writer in relation to the subject, together with the use of the techniques of fiction, was the way to vivify the biographical subject in literary biography. In her essay *The New Biography*, Woolf identified biographer Harold Nicolson as pointing the way forward for the development of the form. A key characteristic of Nicolson's work was the locating of himself in the narrative, so that, "each of the supposed subjects holds up in his or her small bright diminishing mirror a different reflection of Harold Nicolson" (Woolf, 1927).

Further, Nicolson created fictional characters in order to invent scenarios that revealed the character in his subjects. Woolf referred to this melding of fact and fiction as "a perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow" (Woolf, 1927).

Purists of literary biography however, would argue that using techniques of fiction to reveal character is where the fiction form of the biopic and the factual form of literary biography begin to part company; that placing dialogue into the mouth of a biographical subject, or representing dreams, fantasies and psychological traumas, should all be left to fiction (Edel, 1957; Lee 2009, p. 138).

Unlike literary biography, narrative fiction *is* the form in which the writer of the biopic works. So, while the use of the imagination, and techniques of fiction, risk damaging the integrity of the literary biography, they are central to the construction of the biopic. And yet it is telling that literary biographers repeatedly reach for techniques of fiction when trying to breath life into their historical characters.

For Carolyn Heilbrun it is the 'dialogues' that separate the literary biography from the biographical novel. Using the example of Pat Barker's *Regeneration* (1991) which depicts Craiglockhart, rest home for army officers suffering from post-traumatic stress during the First World War, Heilbrun argues that the moment Barker makes up conversations of which there is no record, "she gives us fiction as biography, but not biography as fiction" (Heilbrun, 1993, pp. 297-298). But in bringing clarity to the differentiation between literary biography and biographical fiction, Heilbrun also challenges the binary oppositional definition of fact and fiction advocated by purists of literary biography, and that predominates in media ethics (Black et al., 2011).

Let us rather recall that what is useful about the word "fiction" is that it is imaginative; that it is invention. For who can write a biography without inventing a life? A biographer, like a writer of fiction, imposes a pattern upon events, invents a protagonist, and discovers the pattern of her or his life" (Heilbrun, 1993, p. 297).

The same tensions between a fidelity-to-fact approach to narrative construction, and the truth claims made by the writers of narrative fiction, can be seen in another cousin of the biopic, the documentary film. In his comprehensive work on documentary, Bill Nichols tackles the question of fidelity to an 'objective truth' by arguing that all filmic representations are essentially constructs, and so the truth, as revealed by these constructs, is not simply about what exists in the world but, in the meaning and interpretation that is being assigned to what exists in the world (Nichols, 1991, p. 116).

This argument can be applied to the constructed representation of the historical subject in the biopic, where the writer assigns meaning and interpretation to that which existed in the world, and the material traces of the subject that still exist in the world.

Rosenstone takes a similar position in acknowledging that a fiction film is not a window onto the past, but a construction of the past. Rosenstone argues that these constructed images have a metaphorical relation to the real world, so can still be considered to be communicating an historical truth (Rosenstone, 1995, p.71).

Further, when it comes to vivifying the biographical subject, Nichols observes that "narrative fiction can answer more fully to the question of what it feels like to occupy a given body, to present a certain character..." (Nichols, 1991, p. 247).

This is precisely the argument novelist Hilary Mantel makes in defending the validity of using narrative fiction to engage with history in the form of the historical (and biographical) novel. Mantel states that her chief concern as a writer of fiction is to evoke the interior drama of her characters (Mantel, 2017, L5).

Indeed, it is the way that narrative fiction can incarnate character that led me to choose the biopic form over the documentary film, when embarking on the construction of a biographical representation of Randolph Turpin.

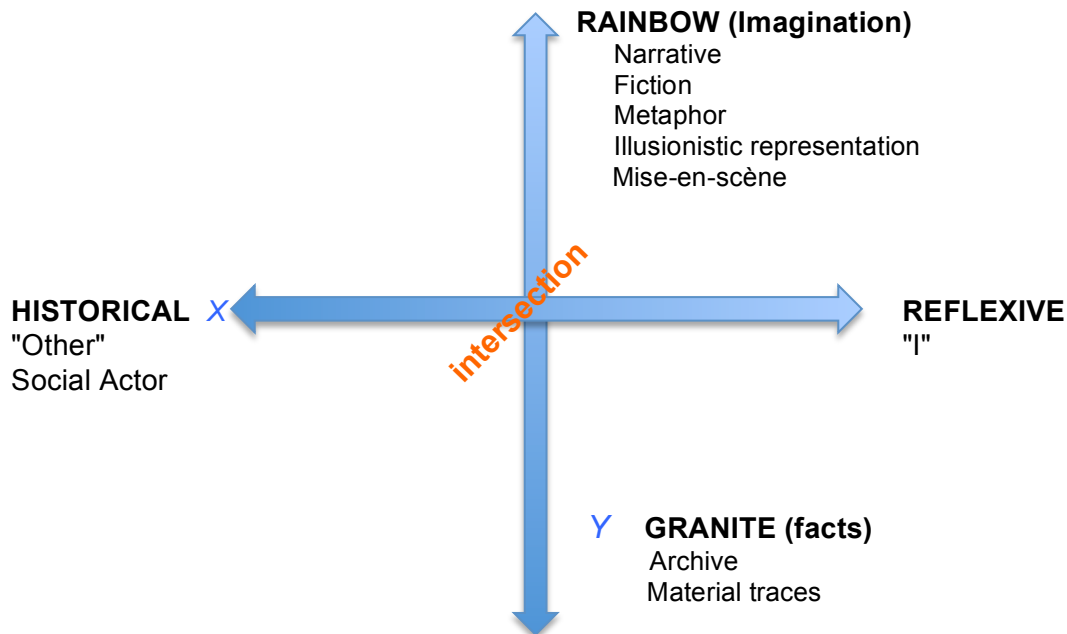
Literature Review: Summary

One of the central themes arising from research into literary biography, the biographical novel, historical fiction and the documentary, is the tension between fact and fiction in the re-presentation of biographical subjects (Coe, 2004; Edel, 1957; Heilbrun, 1993; Lee, 2009; Lackey & Lane, 2018; Mantel, 2017; Nichols, 1991; Woolf, 1927).

The choice to work within a fictional frame, while giving the writer powerful representational tools to vivify a character, does create a strong tension between the positioning of the reflexive writer and historical referent, and between narrative fiction and historical fidelity, and the truth claims therein.

I have therefore found it useful, for the purpose of my practice-based enquiry, to picture these tensions between fact and fiction as an axiographic space (see Figure 1), a merging of Bill Nichol's diagram of the relationships that exist between the domains of history and narrative in documentary, with the granite-and-rainbow domains articulated by Virginia Woolf in her analysis of literary biography. And at the centre of this axiographic space is the crucial intersection between the screenwriter and historical biographical subject, the focus of my enquiry.

Figure 1: Biopic axiographic space (after Virginia Woolf and Bill Nichols)



Methodology

This exegetical text offers a context for those scholars of film studies, and other non-filmmaking disciplines, who are wondering why I've included a feature-length screenplay as Part I of my thesis, rather than submitting it as a separate practice output. For filmmakers working in the academy, this exegesis offers a (propositional) articulation of our creative practice as *filmmakers* - in other words, filmmaking as methodology - as a contribution to the current lively discussion concerning the suitability of screen production as a mode of enquiry (Batty et al., 2018).

I have already alluded to the significant methodological divide between film studies and *filmmaking* practice, of which screenwriting is a part. Indeed, to conduct this practice-based enquiry, I have had to bypass film studies all together, and look outside the field to engage in a discourse appropriate to my creative practice as a *filmmaker* writing a narrative fiction biopic.

But the issue of methodology is significantly more problematic than film studies scholars simply asking different questions than filmmakers in relation to a genre, such as the biopic. As Richard Raskin recently argued, there is a pervasive

assumption among scholars of film studies, that filmmaking lacks academic rigour. Such an assumption betrays a major misconception of practice, one that reduces the rigorous reflexive process of *making* cinematic stories to the mere application of mechanical skills (Raskin, 2018).

This misconception manifests itself in attempts to press film practice into a film studies framework, in the hope of achieving some sort of balance between theory and practice (Raskin, 2018). These attempts, spanning undergraduate programmes to higher research, usually result in the bolting of an exegetic thesis onto a practice output, or even subordinating the practice output to an aside (Berry, 2018, p. 104; Jones, 2018, p. 243).

Therefore, the positioning of my screenplay as Part I of my thesis is a small gesture towards arguing the case for filmmaking as a rigorous creative practice. As the question of appropriate creative practice methodologies emerges as a central discourse in this thesis, so this introductory discussion of methodology will focus on my creative practice as a filmmaker, rather than the methods and strategies I have employed in writing this exegesis.

In pursuit of knowledge

The journey towards articulating my creative practice as a filmmaker begins at the side of Randolph Turpin's grave, where I knew my greatest research challenge as a screenwriter was coming to *know* a man I could never meet.

If Randolph had been alive he would have been my key interviewee and, like Martin Scorsese's relationship with Turpin's contemporary, 'Raging Bull' Jake LaMotta, I would have had the opportunity of getting to *know* Randolph, of conducting a life-story interview through which I could come to know, through an inter-subjective process, Randolph's 'identity as life story' (McAdams, 2018, p. 361).

But Randolph Turpin is dead, and for a man who gained such fame in the 1940s and 50s, he left remarkably few personal traces of his existence: some letters, guarded interviews in news clips (he was clearly camera shy), and a suicide note. These traces are in marked contrast to the substantial archive left by another of Randolph's

contemporaries, Sugar Ray Robinson, the man Randolph beat for the world middleweight title in 1951. Robinson, along with Muhammad Ali, has been recognised as one of the most articulate sports stars of his time (Featherstone, 2009, p.120).

So how could I fill the gap between events as depicted on the public record, and the interiority of Randolph Turpin, the man?

A starting point for a methodological approach to answering this question stems from my time as a postgraduate filmmaking apprentice at the UK's National Film and Television School (NFTS). I use the word apprentice, rather than student, as it is key to understanding one of the key ethnographic pillars of the mid-20th-century US and European filmschool models.

My mentor at NFTS was the Scottish visionary, Colin Young. Colin had a background in philosophy and visual anthropology. He was chairman of the film school at UCLA in the 1960s, at a time of great innovation and flux, when Jean Luc-Godard and Jean Rouch were initiating the French New Wave, and documentary students were being exposed (and encouraged to learn from) Italian neo-realism. Colin explicitly encouraged a cross-disciplinary approach to filmmaking. Indeed, it was the bedrock of his pedagogical approach. The inclusion of contextual studies, such as Western Metaphysics, created a learning environment that produced the likes of Francis Ford Coppola and Paul Schrader in the US, and, later, as head of the National Film and Television School, Lynne Ramsay and Nick Broomfield in the UK.

Through *immersion* in their practice, apprentice filmmakers learned that films are deeply subjective constructs. The making of a moving image was an extending of the self towards the other. In the words of another of Colin's students in the 1960s, David MacDougall, "we reach out to others with our senses as a sort of probe ...and make sense of them through what we contain in ourselves. Our knowledge is transposed, or displaced, toward them, so that it appears to be *of* them" (MacDougall, 1998, p.29).

As apprentices, no matter what our specialisation, we were first given cameras and sent out to engage with the world as documentary makers under the guidance of filmmakers like Richard Leacock who, by the 1990s, was describing his camera as analogous to a musical instrument (Leacock, 1994). Those of us who were studying fiction then took this idea of the camera as anthropomorphic extension of ourselves, an interpretive instrument, back into the process of constructing fiction.

In this vein, Colin encouraged a convergence of ideas from different critical traditions, including ethnography, philosophy, and different forms of filmmaking. MacDougall remembers being encouraged to read Merleau-Ponty at UCLA (MacDougall, 2001), and in his book *Transcultural Cinema*, cites a key idea from Merleau-Ponty's 1968 work *The Visible and The Invisible*: "Thus since the seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 139).

Building on Jean Rouch's model of ethno-fiction, where "as an ethnographer and filmmaker, there is almost no boundary between documentary film and films of fiction" (Rouch et al 1989, p.299), Colin's students then looked to techniques of narrative fiction, in particular Italian neo-realism, in a bid to produce a construction of the social experience of others (MacDougall, 1998, p. 87).

This linking of a phenomenological positioning and fiction techniques to reveal the interiority of character, produced a new way for filmmakers to engage with the cinema subject. In MacDougall's words, "...the subject is part of the filmmaker, the filmmaker part of the subject" (MacDougall, 1998, p. 29).

This notion of a merging between filmmaker and subject was taken even further by ethnographer and filmmaker Barbara Myerhoff. While Myerhoff was completing her Oscar-winning *Number Our Days* (1978), a written text and film exploring gerontology in the Jewish community, one of her primary informants died before he could answer a key question. Myerhoff called her closest friend, Deena Metzger. "She was just lamenting that [her informant] was dead," remembers Deena. "And I said, 'Well, sit down at the typewriter, call his spirit and let him tell you. Just write it as he tells you.' And she did" (Myerhoff, 2007, p. 12).

By the 1980s Myerhoff had formalised this methodological approach, by proposing a third voice, an amalgam of the maker's voice and the voice of the subject (Stoller, 1992, p.194).

Myerhoff's "third voice", achieved through a process of total and extended immersion in the field, pushes the phenomenological perspective to the very point of embodying the interiority of the other. Myerhoff's creative response to the death of her primary informant as ethnographer, articulates a methodological approach that engages precisely with the problem of representation faced by the writer of the fiction biopic.

By 1991, the last cohort of Colin Young's students entered a learning environment, rooted in the ethnographic methodology of Jean Rouch, a learning environment that was encouraging screenwriters of fiction to write from their own experience, and connect this subjective (auto-biographical) story, and point of view, to a wider cultural and social context (Petrie, 2011; Young, 2012). In other words, writing narrative fiction was seen as a form of life writing, and the characters that screenwriters created were projections of themselves, or subjective projections of people they knew.

Dennis Bingham touches on this idea in relation to biopics, when he suggests that all of Oliver Stone's "Oedipal" narratives are attempts to work through the filmmaker's (difficult) relationship with his father (Bingham, 2010).

And a filmmaker like Sofia Coppola is perhaps, in Virginia Woolf's words, "pointing the way" for the development of the biopic in her film *Maria Antoinette* (2006), a movie which, in the spirit of Barbara Myerhoff's third voice, re-presents the 18th-century French queen as an amalgam of filmmaker and protagonist (Cook, 2013, pp. 221-227).

The last 15 years has seen a branch of ethnography take another turn from an interpretive biographical methodological approach to an interpretive auto-ethnographic position, and adopting much of the narrative lexicon familiar to the screenwriter. Auto-ethnographers structure their ethnographic enquiries around

auto-biographical (usually traumatic) emotional narrative turning points, termed by auto-ethnographers as epiphanies (Denzin, 2014 p. 28; Ellis, 2004, p. 33).

In this context, my "epiphany" was the emotional trauma of losing my wife to MS, and this drew me towards researching, as a storyteller, the worlds of biographical subjects such as Randolph Turpin, who had experienced psychological trauma.

Auto-ethnography, therefore, has a significant alignment with my practice as a filmmaker, so formed an appropriate starting point, when I began this practice-based enquiry, to begin articulating filmmaking as a creative practice.

As my research progressed, the need to find a clearer, discipline-specific, articulation of my creative practice as a filmmaker became apparent. Just as Hilary Mantel needed to reach a working definition of her process as a writer of narrative fiction in order to defend the (historical) validity of her enquiries into the Tudors (Mantel, 2017, L5), I needed to reach a clearer articulation of my creative practice, not only to generate a richer and more rigorous discourse into how filmmakers engage with biographical and historical subjects, but to reach a better understanding of how filmmaking practice, of which screenwriting is a part, can generate and disseminate new knowledge per se.

To this end, I have developed and articulated a working (propositional) definition of filmmaking methodology, where *mise-en-scène* is shown to operate as a core reflexive strategy (see Chapter 4).

Thesis Overview

Chapter 1

An enquiry into the nature of the intersection between screenwriter and historical biographical subject in the authorship of the biopic, raises a number of important ethical questions. Can the essence of a biographical subject, like Randolph Turpin, be revealed at this intersection, or will the process of writing a narrative fiction result

in the construction, and sale, of a lie, or something else entirely, with its own validity as narrative re-presentation?

In *Ethics in Screenwriting*, Steven Maras proposes to tackle such ethical questions through a cross-fertilisation of screenwriting practice with an applied media ethics (Maras, 2016). I argue that this is deeply problematic, not least because of the close link between applied media ethics and journalistic notions of impartiality and objective truth. This link is neatly summed up by a media ethics model developed by Frank Deaver, that conflates fiction with lying, and so leaves little room for the notion that fiction can convey 'truth' (Black et al., 2011; Deaver, 1990). Prescriptive ethics models, based on such a binary opposition between fact and fiction, work to undermine the validity of using fiction to engage with factual and historical subjects. As a result adherents to such models have a tendency to mistake literal rendition for verisimilitude (McKee, 1992, p.24; Rosenstone, 1995, p. 15).

I offer an alternative proposal, to cross-fertilise screenwriting practice with an 'ethics of authenticity'. In contrast to prescriptive models in media ethics, an 'ethics of authenticity' shifts the locus of ethical evaluation and decision-making to authorial performance (Eakin, 2009, p. 78; Parker, 2004, p. 53). In other words, by substituting the ethics of authenticity for media ethics in the process of writing a biopic, a significant shift is made away from a fidelity-to-fact relationship to the historical referent, and towards an *inter-subjective* relationship to the historical referent, governed by authorial performance. This situates the screenwriter as 'ethical subject' in, what Maras describes as, a "dynamic space of invention" (Maras 2016, pp. 14-15).

This ethical positioning opens up profound story-telling possibilities for the screenwriter working in the fiction form of the biopic. One such possibility is to construct a narrative that counters official truths, or even to re-invent the past in order to give agency to victims of injustice (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 129). Indeed, the use of narrative fiction to 'right' the wrongs of the past has been recently developed by auto-ethnographers as an explicit ethical code, called 'writing to right' (Denzin, 2015).

The chapter concludes with a demonstration of how I use a process of 'writing to right' in the final scenes of my Randolph Turpin biopic, *Puncher*, where I frame a real letter (fact) within a re-visioned scenario (fiction) so that Randolph's real-life tormentors can be fictionally held to account.

Chapter 2

I was drawn to Randolph Turpin through my experience of grieving. But standing at Randolph Turpin's graveside, the span of the temporal, spatial and psychosocial gap between me, situated in the present, and my historical subject, situated in the past, seems daunting.

Is it possible to bridge the gap between the self, living in the present, and the interiority of an historical referent, situated in the past, in order to gain access to what the subject was thinking and feeling?

To explore these questions I draw on a series of BBC Reith lectures delivered by writer Hilary Mantel in 2017. These texts reveal fascinating insights into how Mantel, as a writer of historical/biographical fiction, bridges the gap between herself and her historical subjects, and a significant tension between Mantel's methodological approach to vivifying her historical referents, and objections to her 'truth' claims in relation to these representations, voiced by historians.

Mantel's argument that imagination and empathy are a more effective way to get to the 'truth' of the past, amounts to a paradigmatic rejection of the methodological framework of the historian, and is met with the strongest objections (Clendinnen, 2006; Jenkins 1991/95; Mantel 2017, L1; Marr, 2015).

Mantel's identification of such a serious methodological gap, would suggest that any useful practice-based insights into the intersection between fiction writer and the biographical historical subject, can only be gained by re-framing the conversation away from historiography, and towards an alignment with a methodological approach that has the requisite scope to encompass imagination and empathy as valid methods of generating knowledge.

Chapter 3

The use of empathy as a bridge to the past is one of Hilary Mantel's key methods of researching and writing historical fiction (Mantel, 2017). I demonstrate how empathy, as method, forms a cornerstone of my own methodological approach to writing the biopic, and cite texts from fields including cultural studies, anthropology, film, journalism and English literature, to reflect on arguments for and against empathy as a reliable method of accessing the interiority of others. These texts raise the question of how best to re-frame the conversation in a way that encompasses accounts of screenwriting practice that include empathy as method.

In a series of recent interviews, English literature scholars Michael Lackey and Bethany Lane discussed the relationship between biographical fiction and the historical referent with three acclaimed contemporary writers - Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín (Lackey, 2018, pp. 120-149; Lane, 2018, 150-166).

It is of relevance to this discussion, that Lackey and Lane did not frame the interviews within the empirical framework of a historian, but suggested two reference points, within the field of biographical fiction, as articulated by Oscar Wilde and William Styron. Framing the conversation in this way allows the writers to offer a breadth and depth of insight into their practice unconstrained by empiricist notions of historical fidelity.

Chapter 4

Re-framing the conversation about the biopic in this way promises richer insights into how screenwriter and historical referent intersect, but these insights can only be accessed through a clearer articulation of filmmaking as a creative practice, of which screenwriting is a part. And so the conversation returns to the question of methodology.

To contextualise the discussion, I review recent texts that attempt to define appropriate methodologies within the field of 'screen production practice' (Batty et al., 2018), including a timely proposal to re-link ethnography and filmmaking (Berry, 2018, pp. 110-118), before offering my own propositional working definition of a

filmmaking practice methodology, that draws on Colin Young's vision of filmmakers as cultural producers (MacDougall, 2001; Petrie, 2011, p. 129).

This working definition is intended to open up a conversation of how filmmaking practice can generate and disseminate new knowledge in a range of forms and genres, including the biopic, and reinvigorate a constructive discourse between practice and theory in the fields of filmmaking and film studies.

Bringing clarity to a definition of the creative practice of filmmaking will also provide guidance to scholars, irrespective of discipline, who wish to engage with filmmaking as a rigorous methodological approach to conducting their own enquiries.

Chapter 1 - 'Writing to right'?

How does the screenwriter reconcile ethical tensions between fact and fiction in the authorship of a biopic?²

"I'm tired of hearing that ethics for screenwriters is an oxymoron. I know there are lots of screenwriters who are ethical and believe that ethics should be an essential ingredient of how we treat each other, how we work, and what we choose to write."

Beker, 2004, xvii–xviii

"No estates, no psychotherapy, no interviews, no history—I just make it up." Diane Middlebrook's answer when asked why she had picked Ovid as her next biographical subject.

Haven, 2007

"Often for the readers of my memoir, though, I've learned that what seems most truthful to them is what I least remember, or rather what I am least able to document: the dialogues."

Miller, 2004, p. 149

"The dead are no longer able to defend themselves so others have to do it for them."

McGovern, 2016, p. 90

EXT. CEMETERY — DAY

A WRITER (ME) stands looking at the gravestone of boxer RANDOLPH TURPIN.

ME

Hi, Randolph. I've come to ask
for your permission to turn your
story into a fiction film.

[no answer]

ME

I want to tell the story of you,
the champion boxer, of course.
But I also want to reconstruct the
final days. I know it's speculation, but
I think I know why you took your own
life. I feel I can tell your story *through*
my own story of grieving.

² An earlier, abridged, version of this chapter was presented at the Screenwriting Research Network Annual Conference, 'Screenwriting: Fact and Fiction, Truth and the Real', Otago University, New Zealand, 28-31 August 2017.

[no answer]

ME

Ethnographer Barbara Myerhoff's method was to imagine talking with the dead person. She called this a 'third voice'.

RANDOLPH

Sounds bloody daft to me.

ME

Randolph? Is that really you?

RANDOLPH

You tell me.

ME

I don't know. But maybe this third voice can reveal a truth. And perhaps set the record straight. But I'm not sure the historians will buy it.

RANDOLPH

What's this talk of setting the record straight?

ME

There's this man, Denzin. He uses an auto-ethnographic methodology to tell stories that right the wrongs of the past.

RANDOLPH

You talk a lot of jargon mate. So how are you gonna right this wrong?

ME

Using fiction, I can bring your enemies to account.

RANDOLPH

Gerrout, I like the sound of that.

ME

I've got your blessing then?

RANDOLPH

Sure mate. But remember, I didn't really say these words. Ta rah.

The above scene depicts an imagined conversation between two screen characters - my autobiographical self constructed as "other" (Lejeune, 1975) and the voice of (a dead) Randolph Turpin constructed as fictional protagonist, both presented in the conventional present-tense form and layout of a contemporary fiction screenplay.

The scene as scripted is based on an actual event that took place some years ago on the historical time line - a visit I made to Randolph Turpin's grave, located in a cemetery in the English town of Leamington Spa. Even though Randolph had been dead for some 50 years, I still felt the need to ask his permission to tell his story, stemming from what screenwriter Jimmy McGovern calls a sense of duty to the dead (McGovern, 2016, p. 90), and also for guidance to ensure I told his story with integrity. This is a description of the actual moment constructed from the vagaries of my memory:

A memory refracted:

I am standing in a cemetery. Randolph Turpin's grave.
Closest I will get to his mortal remains. I ask
permission. Permission to tell his story. I ask for his
help, his guidance. To get it right. To do the right
thing. To make things right. For him.

I wrote the scripted fictional re-presentation of this event, to be performed as a script reading at the Screenwriting Research Network's annual conference of 2017, held at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. My authorial intent, in writing this fiction in such a form, was to articulate, through screenwriting practice, some of the ideas I had been exploring in relation to the intersection between screenwriter and the historical biographical subject in the authorship of the mainstream biopic screenplay and, in doing so, to provide a context for a discussion on the ethical questions that arise from this process.

The scene also appeared, for a time, as a pre-credit sequence in the master screenplay on which this enquiry is based. Its purpose there, as part of a much larger biopic narrative, was to draw the audience's attention to the authorial process, to the story as narrative construction, and thereby bring clarity, or at least a reflective

perspective, to the nature of the (truth) claim that this moving image is "based on a true story".

Historian Robert Rosenstone identifies such a reflective strategy in *JFK*, a biopic of John F Kennedy, written by Zachary Sklar and Oliver Stone, and directed by Oliver Stone.

[Because *JFK*] chooses as its central strategy an investigation of the past, the film has a self-reflexive edge, one which suggests much about the difficulty of any historical undertaking and the near impossibility of arriving at definitive historical truths (Rosenstone, 1995, p.129).

In this way, Rosenstone argues, a revisioning of the past can be a "provocation to thought and intervention into history" (p. 129). I would go even further, and argue that the *only* authentic way to engage with the past, is to acknowledge that *all* re-presentations are a revisioning. But this raises some pressing ethical questions, particularly around the relationship between fact and fiction.

What responsibility does the ubiquitous marketing phrase, "based on a true story" place on the shoulders of the socially responsible screenwriter who is essentially writing a fiction about a person they can never meet? Will the tensions between fact and fiction, the divide between screenwriter and historical other, result in the construction, and sale of a lie, or will they result in something else entirely, with its own validity within the intersecting domains of the biopic?

An ethics of Screenwriting

To explore these questions, there is a need to articulate a definition of screenwriting ethics that is relevant to my specific enquiry. One that provides an effective framework within which I can reflect on my use of fiction to represent an historical figure I will never meet.

In contrast to the very sparse academic texts, and almost non-existent practice-based literature exploring the biopic, there is a comparatively large literature to review when pondering ethical questions like this in relation to film, and media practice generally.

One of the most recent additions, *Ethics in Screenwriting*, edited by Steven Maras, is an essential contribution, not only because it narrows the discussion down to the fledgling academic field of screenwriting practice, but because the content resists a distinction between practice and theory, and so is highly relevant to my practice-based enquiry into the ethical considerations of writing a biopic (Maras, 2016). It is therefore appropriate to discuss the arguments and discussions presented in this book in some detail.

I will argue that the proposal, by Maras and others, to explicitly link screenwriting practice with media ethics, is problematic, and results in a deeply flawed model of ethical evaluation, designed by screenwriter Felicity Packard, to meet very similar ethical demands that I am engaging with - that of writing a screenplay within a fictional frame about a recent historical subject.

In his own chapter contribution to the book's collection, Maras argues the need for a clear distinction to be made between a proposed ethics of screenwriting, and discussions concerning the morality of screenworks familiar to those researching censorship and regulation in the field of film studies. Maras observes that the narrow focus of the latter on morality, if applied to screenwriting practice, would limit discussion of ethics in screenwriting to a specific representational space. To move beyond engaging with 'morals', and the restrictive way of thinking this imposes on ethics, Maras draws on the work of Michel Foucault, to define ethics as "directed toward the problem of conducting oneself morally, viewed from the point of view of being an ethical subject rather than complying with a code" (Maras 2016, p. 7).

"While morality might relate to absolute standards of right and wrong, ethics grapples with the experience of being good which may or may not draw on moral absolutes" (Maras, 2016, pp. 14-15). Situating the screenwriter as 'ethical subject' opens up a space of reflection in which the screenwriter can make judgments about her practice,

and then make decisions based on those judgments. Maras describes this as a "dynamic space of invention" (p. 15).

Aware that practicing screenwriters will probably want to engage with a more practical articulation of ethics than that expressed by Foucault, Maras turns to the field of media ethics, with its emphasis on ethics as a discipline, to propose a cross-fertilization with screenwriting practice. Here he outlines two areas of media ethics that have "special significance" when considering screenwriting practice. Firstly, prescriptive ethics, as applied to screenwriting, would compel the writer to ask what is the *right* way to behave in a given situation. Second, ethical decision-making models would encourage the screenwriter to work through a step-by-step reflective process to gain insights into each aspect of the decision-making process within an ethical framework (pp. 16-18).

Maras cites Marilyn Beker as a pioneer of this trans-disciplinary approach, and acknowledges Beker as offering the fullest rendering of the concept of the 'virtuous screenwriter' to date. Beker's model of the 'virtuous screenwriter' is designed both as an ethical code for living life as a screenwriter, and as a tool for constructing and evaluating screen characters (Beker, 2004).

I take ethics to mean a code of behavior (as it applies to screenwriters, a way of presenting material and ideas) that is fair, just, honest, and integrity-based; that intentionally hurts no one; that works toward the common good without destroying individuals in the process; that is honorable, consistent, and thoughtful, and that is life-affirming and humanistic (Beker, 2004, p. 6).

I believe Maras's "dynamic space of invention", in which the screenwriter engages in a reflexive ethical engagement with process, offers an appropriate framework for my own screenwriting practice in the following ways: The notion of a "dynamic space of invention" aligns well with the axiographic biopic space of my enquiry. It is within this space that I construct screen characters and narratives (invention), at the (dynamic) intersections, between my being in the world as a reflexive writer, my relationship with the historical other, between fact and fiction. These dynamic intersections are also the locus of questions concerning the ethics of representation, the relationship

between fidelity, fact, truth and fiction, and my personal responsibility to the dead and to surviving relatives.

However, the attempt by Maras to formulate a practical articulation of the dynamic space of invention, by proposing a cross-fertilisation between screenwriting practice and media ethics, is problematic. Engaging screenwriting practice with an applied ethics that is inextricably tied to journalistic notions of impartiality and objective notions of truth, works against the very dynamic space of invention that Maras describes, particularly when applied to genres that navigate the deeply subjective space between fact and fiction, such as biopics and historical dramas. Nowhere is this problem more evident than in a flawed model of 'ethical evaluation' designed by screenwriter Felicity Packard, that draws together Beker's concept of the 'virtuous screenwriter', and the two areas of media ethics cited by Maras as relevant to screenwriting practice.

Felicity Packard's Model of Ethical Evaluation

Packard developed her model of ethical evaluation when writing the TV mini-series *ANZAC Girls* (2014), a story drawn from the diaries of nurses serving in Gallipoli and the Western Front during the First World War, and one which sought to address the under-representation of the role of women in moving-image depictions of the war. Packard and journalism scholar, Ben Stubbs, offer an 'ethical auto-analysis' of the application of this model in the screenwriting process.

To introduce the discussion, the authors articulate a series of competing demands, similar to those that I am now navigating, in the realisation of a story based on a historical subject of the recent past:

The desire to accurately represent the nurses' representations of themselves; sensitivity towards the nurses' families and their concerns about how their deceased relatives would be represented; awareness that in making a drama based on real events we would be making substantial truth claims which would

invite scrutiny; and, the need to create a work that met the episodic structural conventions and commercial expectations of a mainstream television drama (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p.107).

To help navigate the ethical tensions between fact and fiction when writing a historical drama for film or television, Packard and Stubbs's model is constructed of four interacting parts: 'truthful representation', 'subjective perspectives', 'the double story' and 'ethical dramatic construction' (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, pp. 104-107). The model is framed by post-modern theories of historiography. Indeed, the tool of evaluation is itself contextualised with reference to historians Hayden White, and the idea of history as narrative form (White, 1973); Keith Jenkins and the notion of history as refraction (Jenkins, 1991); and Robert Rosenstone's analysis of how the way in which film 'emotionalizes, personalizes and dramatizes', can actually broaden our idea of what qualifies as history (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 59).

The four-part model in summary:

1. 'truthful representation'

While "the acceptance of the 'truthful representation' by the reader is crucial to the recognition of a screenplay as a legitimate and ethical contribution" (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 104), the authors cite Robert Berkhofer in recognizing that any historical representation is shaped by a subjective or authored point of view, even though the representation may be based on documentary evidence. As it is the author who selects and orders the material, interprets the events therein, and constructs the (historical) narrative, the notion of 'truthful representation' must therefore be located in the (ethical) conduct of the author.

2. 'subjective perspectives'

Citing historian Hayden White and others, Packard and Stubbs build on the first component of the model, to observe that a view of history as narrative in nature, acknowledges the role of the author in constructing the work, and therefore renders historical representation as subjective, challenging earlier positivist claims of objectivity, and notions of a singular truth. The authors argue that if we accept that

there are "different notions of 'truth' we can observe the validity of a subjective perspective in history writing" (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 105).

3. 'the double story'

The double story, a term coined by Anthony Grafton in *The Footnote* (1997), refers to the use of notes in academic texts to give transparency to the research undertaken. Grafton argues that this Berkhoferian appeal to evidence in support of a given argument or representation is what distinguishes written history from more popular forms. In an effort to emulate this convention, *The Anzac Girls* contains a series of on-screen text cards. For example:

"This drama is based on the lives of real people. Certain characters, events and timelines have been created or changed for dramatic effect."

4. Ethical Dramatic Construction

To add clarity to the issue of authorial subjectivity in the construction of a historical representation, or possibly to suggest permissible boundaries, the Packard and Stubbs model's fourth and final component draws heavily on the notion of the "virtuous screenwriter" proposed by Marilyn Beker, 2004. This loops back to the first component 'truthful representation' in focusing again on the (ethical) conduct of the writer to "retain dignity and legitimacy to ensure the impact and reputation of the work so that the integrity of the adapted history may remain long after the writing process is completed" (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 107).

A Model of Ethical Evaluation in Action

Packard and Stubbs open their chapter by citing the invented characters, relationships and customs in *Braveheart* (1995) as a cautionary tale (p. 99). If this same judgement were applied to the genre of the biopic, which routinely invents (or merges) characters, relationships and events, very few, if any, biopics would pass the Packard and Stubbs ethical evaluation test.

It is perhaps not surprising then that, despite the acknowledgement of the subjective role of the author in the construction of a historical drama, Packard and Stubb's model, and particularly the application of it within their own practice, evidences a bias towards, or adherence to, a rather empirical view of historical fidelity, one which conflates historical fact with objective 'truth'.

It is not that they don't deviate from this position in the construction of the narrative for *ANZAC Girls* - afterall Packard is writing screen drama - but their evident reliance on fidelity to facts as a benchmark of truth-telling, and therefore ethical evaluation, prevents them from using the fictional form to its full potential as a conveyor of *meaning*, supported by a subjective and, yes, *truthful* authored *interpretation* of the historical facts.

In other words, their model of evaluation works against the very refractive process they cite, as it has a tendency to prioritise attempts at a literal representation of facts and events, over engaging in a deeply-subjective, and reflexive, dialogue between themselves as embodied individuals living within the modern schema of 21st-century Australia, and a group of early 20th-century Australian women whose lives they evoke in the form of a fictional dramatic (re)presentation. I contend that the reason their model works against the fictional form they are working with, is because it references a media ethics code of practice that values impartiality over (inter)subjective engagement, equates fiction with lying, and conflates fidelity to facts with truth telling.

So let's have a look at their analysis in some detail. Packard and Stubbs highlight what they consider to be the two most significant instances in which the choice was made to engage in invention (fiction), or what Packard and Stubbs call "ethical dramatic construction", over attempting to represent events as documented in the archives. The first tackles the decision to build a scene on the basis of a fragment of (dramatic) hearsay found in a diary entry and, in doing so, to change a character's name to protect the reputation of the character's historical referent. The second explores the decision to invent a disagreement between a couple, in order to communicate a larger 'truth' about how nursing as a profession was misunderstood and undervalued at the time of the First World War (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, pp. 107-120).

Taking the first example, the storytellers came across this diary entry:

1st March,

Claude was telling me of a nice clean boy of ours who was put in a tent with a venereal case and has caught gonoreal [sic] conjunctivitis. His eyes are running with pus and he is almost sure to lose the sight of them both. The sad part of it was that the nurse (Miss Samsing) objected to nurse him for fear her own eyes become infected. I'm really longing to nurse that man and perhaps save his eyesight. This wretched woman made a fuss and would not go in the boy's tent—I could slay her (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 110).

I agree with the authors in stating that this kind of incident is very appealing to a screenwriter - filled as it is with emotion and dramatic conflict - so has all the key elements needed to construct an effective narrative scene. And I have no issue, on story grounds, with the decision to dramatise the scene, despite it being reported second hand. As Jimmy McGovern points out, even under the exacting ethical demands of telling a story in the form of a docu-drama like *Hillsborough*³, "The story comes first. Always" (McGovern, 2016, p. 93).

The decision by the authors to change the name of Miss Samsing, a secondary character, so as to protect the reputation of the historical referent, a decorated nurse, is solidly argued. Without additional references to Miss Samsing being involved in controversial incidents that form a picture of a flawed person, one that contradicts her impeccable public image, there are no strong grounds for pinning that aspect of her character to the historical referent, with the consequential risk of upset to surviving family (and friends) that this may cause.

But the problem arises when the authors reveal a key assumption, that changing the name is the point at which this character becomes 'fictional' (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 113).

³ *Hillsborough* is a docu-drama about 'the Hillsborough disaster', in which 96 people died, and 766 more were injured, on 15 April 1989, following a crush of football supporters inside an overcrowded and fenced-in 'pen', during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, UK.

If changing a name is what renders the character fictional, are Packard and Stubbs suggesting that all the other characters in *ANZAC Girls* are non-fiction? Post-modern historians, philosophers and screenwriting gurus alike would take issue with this notion. *ANZAC Girls* is presented as a historical drama series. The historical drama series is, in form, a moving-image narrative *fiction*. Even if Packard and Stubbs were working with a factual television form, such as a documentary history series, they would still be scripting an authored *interpretation* and *re-presentation* of the historical facts.

To quote one of Packard and Stubbs' key referents, historian Robert Rosenstone:

(a) Neither people nor nations live historical "stories;" narratives, that is, coherent stories with beginnings, middles, and endings, are constructed by historians as part of their attempts to make sense of the past. (b) The narratives that historians write are in fact "verbal fictions;" written history is a representation of the past, not the past itself. (c) The nature of the historical world in a narrative is in part governed by the genre or mode (shared with forms of fiction) in which the historian has decided to cast his story - ironic, tragic, heroic, or romantic. (d) Language is not transparent and cannot mirror the past as it really was; rather than reflecting it, language creates and structures history and imbues it with meaning (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 35).

Further more, the locus of Packard's storytelling is situated significantly further along the fictional spectrum than a documentary history series. Packard is writing an historical drama. Moving-image drama is a temporal art form that Robert McKee describes as a metaphor for life (McKee, 1998, p 108.), inverting the familiar life-is-a-story metaphor that underpins the Western biographical tradition (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 172). With specific reference to the historical drama, Bill Nichols notes that "although fiction films employ elements of realism in the service of their story, the overall relation of film to the world is metaphorical" (Nichols, 1991, pp. 115-116).

Within the time-based linear form of the moving-image narrative, 'metaphor for life' is constructed through a melding of structure and character (McKee, 1998, p. 21). Character, as Syd Field argues, "is the essential foundation" of the fiction story

(Field, 2003, p. 45). And this brings us to the crux of the problem: characters are not, and can never be, human beings. "A character is no more a human being than the Venus de Milo is a real woman" (McKee, 1998, p. 375). As philosopher Paul Ricoeur observes, the relationship of metaphor to the referent is by means of the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis* (Ricoeur, 1978, p. 146). Crucially, "*mimesis* does not mean duplication of reality; *mimesis* is *poiesis*, that is, fabrication, construction, creation (p. 146). In the creative process that is *mimesis*, characters are constructed, fabricated, re-presentations of people. And 'representation', as Kendall Walton argues in his comprehensive analysis of fiction, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, is interchangeable with 'fiction' (Walton, 1990, p. 3).

If story is viewed as a metaphor for life lived, then character, McKee argues, can be seen as a metaphor for human nature (McKee, 1998, p. 375). By viewing metaphor as, what Lackoff and Johnson call, 'a principal vehicle of understanding', the screenwriter can communicate insights, through the transformative process of re-presenting people as characters, into the 'truth' of human nature (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160). It is not the inventing of a name that makes a character fictional, *all* Packard's characters are fictional as they are all constructed re-presentations of their historical referents. Indeed, Packard's entire series is a fiction.

In other words, Packard and Stubbs shouldn't be regarding fiction as a last resort, when the facts are unable to speak for themselves, but as the 'principal vehicle of understanding' through which truths about their historical referents are revealed.

Indeed, it is this re-presentation as fictional character that conveys the author's (subjective) interpretation and understanding of their historical referent. And it is the fiction form itself, as the 'principal vehicle of understanding' that conveys the author's (subjective) interpretation of the historical 'facts'. As Kendall Walton argues, with respect to the historical novel,

It will not do to regard asserted sentences in a historical novel as, in general, interruptions in the fiction, interpolations of nonfiction woven into an otherwise fictional fabric. Tolstoy does not stop work on his fiction when he writes that Napoleon invaded Russia... He constructed a "fictional world" in

which Napoleon not only had various conversations, the details of which Tolstoy invented, but in which Napoleon also invaded Russia. It was *by means of* making it fictional (in my terms) that Napoleon invaded Russia that Tolstoy asserted that this event actually did occur (Walton, 1990, p.79) [emphasis in the original].

And the post-modern historians agree. This is Rosenstone's argument with respect to historical drama. "On the screen, history must be fictional in order to be true!" (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 70). He later fleshes out his argument thus:

The Hollywood historical film will always include images that are at once invented and yet may still be considered true; true in that they symbolize, condense, or summarize larger amounts of data; true in that they carry out the overall meaning of the past which can be verified, documented, or reasonably argued (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 128).

And fellow historian Hayden White argues that all narrative historical texts are allegorical in their relationship to the referent:

...the narrative figurates the body of events that serves as its primary referent and transforms these events into intimations of patterns of meaning that any literal representation of them as facts could never produce (White, 1987, p. 45).

Packard and Stubbs' apparent confusion over the relationship between fact and fiction ultimately results in an ethical evaluation that struggles to move beyond surface considerations of fidelity. There is no in-depth discussion of the inter-subjective process of their turning words in diaries written by early 20th-century women into contemporary fictional dramatic constructions of character. Nor how the diaries are themselves the product of the vagaries of memory, possible self-censorship (Mantel, 2017), and the historical referent's own subjective perception, interpretation and shaping of the events that they are recording in written words. The failure to grasp the form in which they are working is particularly evident in Packard's approach to writing dialogue, one of the most potent forms of fiction technique when constructing a character.

The Dialogues

Conversations between historical characters are rarely recorded, so dialogue is the most common locus of fiction in historical re-presentations. In researching and writing a biopic about boxer Randolph Turpin, I discovered that there are very few documented interviews with the historical subject, so the words I have put into the protagonist's mouth are almost entirely imagined. Invented dialogue, as discussed in the introduction, is considered the dividing line between literary biography and the biographical novel (Edel, 1957; Lee, 2009). Similarly, it is one of the key dividing lines between written history and the historical novel, so should be central to any discussion of ethical representation of historical subjects. Even the writers of autobiography and memoir struggle with the ethics of the spoken word. In the absence of a recording, memory can rarely be relied on to retrieve an accurate rendering of past conversations.

Joan Didion, when writing her memoir *The Year of Magical Thinking* after the sudden death of her husband, reflected on the fact that writing dialogue came "naturally as breathing when writing fictional characters" but when confronted with the idea of imagining words to put into the mouth of her dead husband stated that to do so "would seem obscene, a violation" (Didion, 2005, p.194).

Contrast this with memoirist Nancy K Miller, who noted that the least verifiable elements of her work were the scenes that she created through dialogue. And yet, she learned from the readers of her memoir, "that what seemed most truthful to them [her readers] was what she least remembered: the dialogues" (Miller, 2004, p.149).

Tellingly, Packard and Stubbs' ethical analysis only mentions dialogue in passing during the discussion of whether or not to invent a character's name. During this discussion, they reveal efforts to construct dialogue direct from the nurses' diary entries, apparently in the belief that this fidelity to the source document again takes (ethical) priority over imagination and invention.

There are two problems here. First, with respect to fidelity, it is unlikely that the diary entries, being written reports, accurately convey the way in which the authors of the

diaries actually spoke. Second, with respect to fiction, dialogue is a function of character. And as we have established, character operates on a metaphorical level within the fiction drama. Dialogue, as a function of character, is governed by narrative rules aimed at revealing interiority and constructing dramatic conflict (Field, 2003; McKee, 1998; Seger, 1994).

Attempts to place documented reportage into the mouths of characters works against the character function of dialogue, and therefore undermines the role of story and metaphor as a 'primary vehicle of understanding' (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160). The problem is illustrated by Jimmy McGovern, who was compelled, as a legal requirement, to put the words of a court transcript into the mouth of one of his characters when writing the script for *Hillsborough*. "I argued that no one, not even a robot, would say something like that at that time" (McGovern, 2016, p.84). Rosenstone cites another case - the PBS series *Adams Chronicles* - an approach that mirrors that of Packard but, as Rosentone points out, undermines the effectiveness of the story:

In a strange effort at historical veracity, this series utilized as dialogue only words that had actually been written by the appropriate member of the Adams family ... Films that have been truest to the facts (never mind which facts or how they have been constituted) have tended to be visually and dramatically inert, better as aids to sleep than to the acquisition of historical consciousness (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 7).

So despite citing Rosenstone, who explicitly supports the practice of invention in conveying truths about our relationship with history, Packard and Stubbs fail to heed Rosenstone's warning that historical dramas that attempt to literally render the past lose the power of the medium (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 15).

Robert McKee is particularly critical of writers who mistake literal rendition for verisimilitude, arguing that such a writer...

...believes that more precise his observation of day-to-day facts, the more accurate his reportage of what actually happens, the more truth he tells. But

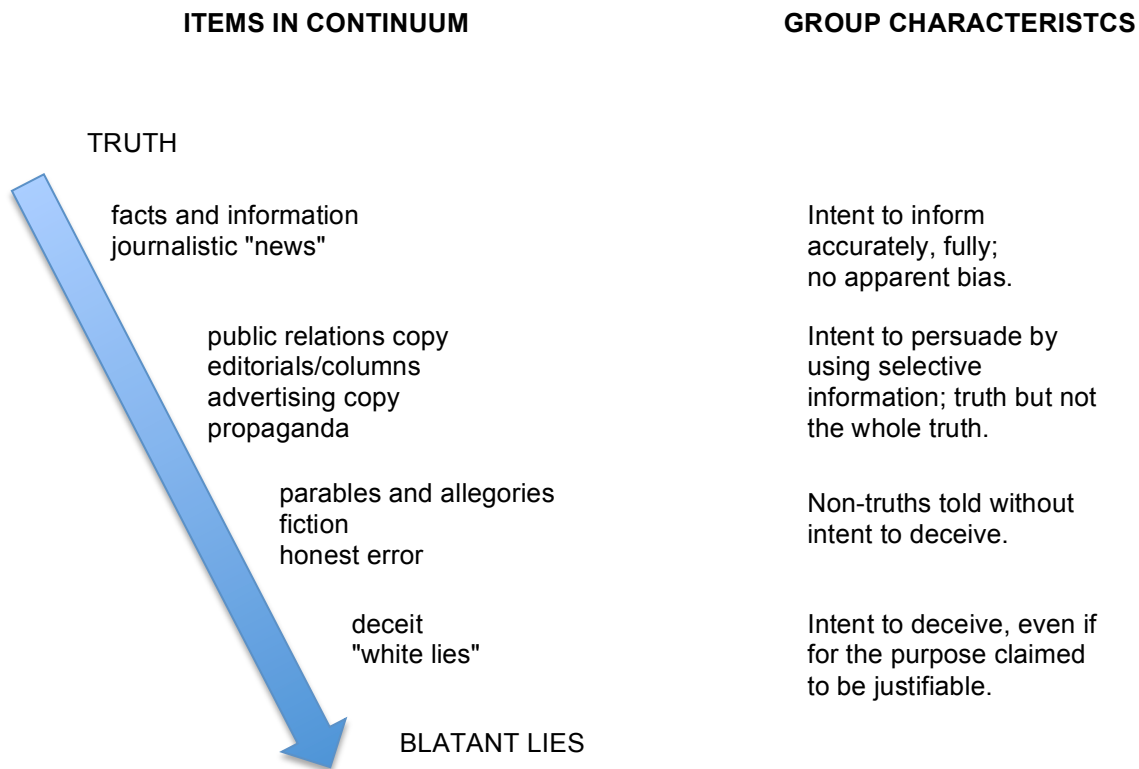
fact, no matter how minutely observed, is truth with a small "t". Big "T" Truth is located behind, beyond, inside, below the surface of things, holding reality together or tearing it apart, and cannot be directly observed. Because this writer sees only what is visible and factual, he is blind to the truth of life (McKee, 1992, p.24).

The Effect of Media Ethics on Screenwriting Practice

So why do Packard and Stubbs, despite framing their model and analysis within post-modern historiography, repeatedly prioritise attempts at a literal representation of facts, rather than using the fiction form within which they are working as the 'principal vehicle of understanding' through which they can communicate a subjective interpretation of those facts? I suspect it is because their 'ethical evaluation' in practice has actually been guided by a reading of Marilyn Beker's concept of the 'virtuous screenwriter', framed by the areas of media ethics cited by Maras as relevant to screenwriting practice - prescriptive ethics and ethical decision-making models. And this has resulted in shifting the balance implicit in the statement that "each screenwriter writing history needs to weigh the needs of story against the demands of historical facts..." (Packard & Stubbs, 2016, p. 121) towards a binary oppositional definition of fact and fiction that predominates in media ethics.

The close link between applied media ethics and journalistic notions of impartiality and objective truth is neatly summed up by a media ethics model developed by Frank Deaver (Figure 2) to place the 'semantic spaciousness' of the word 'truth' into a more comprehensive mass media context (Black et al, 2011; Deaver, 1990).

Figure 2, Frank Deaver's Truth Continuum



In Deaver's truth continuum, fiction, listed as an item in the continuum, sits just above deceit, "white lies" and blatant lies. These items are tied directly to the ethical conduct of the media producer in a separate column headed 'group characteristics'. In this column, fiction is defined as a "non-truth", generated by the media producer "without intent to deceive". There is no room for the notion that fiction can convey truth in this continuum. Indeed, within this diagrammatic it doesn't take a very big interpretive step to begin to conflate fiction with lies, and even if you resist that, this continuum, with the obvious metaphorical associations of a downward-pointing arrow, clearly encourages the writer to strive in the other, upwards, direction, towards the journalistic notion of 'news' as objective truth that tops this continuum.

Another media ethics model that reflects this binary oppositional definition of fact and fiction is the Sissela Bok justification model. This prescriptive model challenges the practice of lying by attaching a negative weight to every lie or deception, however justified in revealing a greater truth - for example using a hidden camera to uncover organisational or individual corruption. The Sissela Bok justification model is one of Marilyn Beker's key references informing the notion of the "virtuous screenwriter"

(Beker, 2004). And Beker's concept of the "virtuous screenwriter" is one of the key drivers of the fourth component of Packard and Stubb's evaluation model, 'Ethical Dramatic Construction'. This raises a crucial question. Are Packard and Stubbs, in citing Beker, who herself builds an ethical model that references a consequentialist objection to lying, in danger of conflating fiction with lying? If so, the fourth component of Packard and Stubbs' tool of ethical evaluation, sits in direct opposition to the rest of the model, which frames their screenwriting practice within the subjective narrativity of post-modern historiography. This leaves Steven Maras's suggestion, that media ethics models could form a useful cross-fertilization with screenwriting practice, looking extremely problematic. Not least because binary axiographic spaces, such as Deaver's truth continuum, and prescriptive models based on this binary opposition between fact and fiction, tend to work against the inclusion of fiction in the Foucauldian "dynamic space of invention" that Maras espouses.

The Ethics of Authenticity

So is there an alternative area of ethical enquiry that would offer a more productive cross-fertilization with screenwriting practice? I would suggest that an 'ethics of authenticity' is an obvious candidate, particularly if writing screen fiction is seen as a form of life writing (Petrie, 2011; Young 2012). The 'ethics of authenticity', as articulated by philosopher Charles Taylor, has signaled a paradigmatic shift in moral philosophy, and has been applied extensively to the field of life writing by scholars including Paul John Eakin and David Parker. In contrast to prescriptive models in media ethics, the 'ethics of authenticity' shifts the locus of ethical evaluation and decision-making to what Taylor calls the "moral voice within".

Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the

goals of self-fulfilment or self-realization in which it is usually couched. This is the background that gives moral force to the culture of authenticity... (Taylor, 1991, p. 29).

Taylor traces this notion to a post-romantic concept, rooted in Rousseau's "le sentiment de l'existence" (Rousseau, 1789, p.1047). Crucially, to find the "moral voice within" a writer must recognize that our "sentiment de l'existence", or sense of self, is what connects us to the wider world (Taylor, 1991, p. 91). This description of the direction or flow of connectivity between self and others maps to MacDougall's description of Colin Young's ethnographic model of the modern filmschool-trained screenwriter, who "reaches out to others with our senses as a sort of probe ...and makes sense of them through what we contain in ourselves ... the subject is part of the filmmaker, the filmmaker part of the subject" (MacDougall, 1998, p. 29).

The 'ethics of authenticity', as applied to the field of life writing, proposes that the way a life writer connects their sense of self with the wider world is through 'authorial performance', the integrity of which lies in being true to ourselves, rather than following an ethical code or model as prescribed by, for example, media ethics. So the demands of 'authorial performance' on an autobiographer to get the story straight is "not just to satisfy the biography police but to respond to a psychological imperative that gravitates to the performance of narrative as integral to the experience of identity" (Eakin, 2008, p. 78).

David Parker states that the fundamental ethical question of 'authorial performance' when life writing is "What is it right for the life writer to do?" (Parker, 2004, p53.). Substitute the word screenwriter for life writer and, within the context of Parker's broader formulation "What is it good to be?", an ethics of screenwriting is re-positioned as a reflexive, non-prescriptive authorial process of ethical praxis.

It is implicit in this notion [of authorial performance] that there is a sense in which I have a responsibility to and for myself. It is a responsibility not to yield utterly to demands from beyond myself to conform to some universal human template, but to attend to the claims of my own inner nature and to realize my own *particular* way of being human. What Taylor calls the ethics of

authenticity is in short an ethics of difference, and it is ever called into being against the perceived oppressiveness of universalizing moralities both ancient and modern, be they Stoic, Judeo-Christian, utilitarian, or Kantian. The dictum of Blake's *Hell* captures this perception with memorable force: "One Law for the lion & Ox is Oppression" (Parker, 2004, p. 65).

One of the main objections to the 'ethics of authenticity' and the notion of 'authorial performance', which will be familiar to auto-ethnographers, is the charge of narcissism. What possible relevance can a discourse about a sense of self have to do with *ethics*? Surely, ethics is the discourse "that deflects attention from such me-generation preoccupations to demands that we think about our obligations to *others*" (Parker, 2004, p. 63).

To answer this objection, Parker cites Charles Taylor's notion of 'epistemic gain'. "If it is a condition of being a functioning self that I speak from a moral orientation I take to be right, I simply *cannot* narrate the story by which I came to ultimate epistemic loss" (Parker, 2004, p. 58).

An example of epistemic gain that correlates with the challenge of narrative representation faced by the screenwriter of the biopic, can be found in the praxis of ethnographer Barbara Myerhoff. While Barbara Myerhoff's ethnographic practice pre-dates the articulation of an 'ethics of authenticity' or 'authorial performance', her methodology clearly articulates her "sentiment de l'existence" as a key driver in her reflexive positioning as a witness to the stories of holocaust survivors. This required a method of what I call "immersive inter-subjective listening", which will be familiar to screenwriters researching biographical characters, that allowed the informant to undergo a process of healing.

...a kind of fundamental healing takes place when a story is told and heard. The healing does not take place in the same way if the story is not heard, if there are no witnesses (Myerhoff, 2007, p. 19).

For Myerhoff, the epistemic gain in listening to, and telling life story was nothing less than the making of one's soul (Myerhoff, 2007, p. 19).

In the last years of her life, Myerhoff used what she referred to as a "third voice", an amalgam of the maker's voice and the voice of her (dead) subjects, to generate life stories (Stoller, 1992). As the subjects of this process had died, these dialogues could only be generated from her own "sentiment de l'existence", and an embodied knowledge of how her sense of self connected to the wider world and, indeed, her dead informants. This imaginative space of enquiry, through which Myerhoff was guided by an acutely felt sense of personal responsibility, as (sole) witness, to holocaust survivors - is precisely what Maras refers to as an ethical 'dynamic space of invention'. And Myerhoff's imaginative engagement with her dead informant as ethnographer, articulates a methodological approach that engages precisely with the problem of representation faced by the screenwriter writing biopics about historical characters.

There is also a striking correlation between the notion of epistemic gain, Myerhoff's soul-making, and the latest trans-disciplinary work between neuro-science, philosophy and psychology into the making of a person's identity. In short, the findings suggest that humans construct, through an act of imagination, their individual life stories - a kind of personal myth - through the inter-subjective process of interacting with others. It is through the making of this deeply subjective personal myth that we discover what is meaningful in life. These continually evolving life stories are what we know as an individual's identity. And this inter-subjective process of identity making can now be observed as physical morphogenetic changes in the brain's malleable neural cortex (Allan et al., 2011; Eakin, 2008; Liu et al., 2014; Marchetti et al., 2014; McAdams, 1995/97/2006/2018; Singer, 2006). An in-depth discussion of these findings in relation to the intersection between screenwriter and biopic subject can be found in the Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Conclusion: Inter-subjective Screenwriting Practice

To sum up the discussion so far, by substituting the ethics of authenticity for media ethics in the process of writing a biopic, a significant shift is made away from a fidelity-to-fact relationship to the historical referent, and towards an *inter-subjective* relationship to the historical referent, governed by authorial performance. This

situates the screenwriter as 'ethical subject' in, what Maras describes as, a "dynamic space of invention". As demonstrated in my critique of Packard and Stubbs's model of ethical evaluation, screenwriting practice when cross-fertilized with media ethics has a tendency to close down this dynamic space of invention. In contrast, screenwriting practice when cross-fertilized with an ethics of authenticity has the potential to open up the dynamic space of invention, in which authorial performance governs ethical creativity.

Further, the emphasis on inter-subjectivity in authorial performance has a profound impact on the kind of ethical questions writers are compelled to ask within a dynamic space of invention. For example, when Nancy K Miller was writing her memoir, she initially made the assumption that revealing family secrets was simply demonstrating a fidelity to facts. That is, within a media ethics consequentialist interpretation, she was telling the truth. It wasn't until she was challenged after a reading that she began to reflect on her ethical positioning, and began to listen to her moral voice within. "Did I think that by betraying my parents I was telling the truth? Was *betrayal* the truth? I had worked on this book for several years and never once asked myself that question" (Miller, 2004, p. 152).

Miller's subsequent application of the 'ethics of betrayal' to the reproduction of letters, has challenged my own decision, in the first draft of my screenplay, to reproduce, verbatim, the suicide letter Randolph Turpin penned in 1966. This letter was not intended for public consumption so, on reflection, I hesitate to use it. It feels like a betrayal. It feels like I am betraying him.

It is not my wish to do harm, but I am forced to acknowledge that I may well cause pain - or embarrassment to others - if I also believe, as I do, in my right to tell my story ... Sometimes I have the uncomfortable feeling that the truest ethical position is closely related to silence, to self-silencing (Miller 2004, p. 157).

Miller's sense of betrayal was deepened by the knowledge that her memory of events was deeply subjective, so the answer to the question of "what really happened?" can

only be 'textual'. "The writing may not be the truth; it may only look like it. To me" (Miller, 2004, p. 157).

Writing to Right

A fully-functioning dynamic space of invention, supported by an ethics of authenticity, opens up profound story-telling possibilities for the screenwriter working in the fiction form of the biopic. A potent example that I have engaged with is using narrative fiction to consider the ethical demand of righting the wrongs of the past. Crucially, it is the power of narrative fiction to re-vision and re-invent the past that gives the screenwriter the tools to construct a work that, rather than attempt to reveal the *truth* about the past, "questions the official truths about the past so provocatively that we are forced once again to look to history and consider how events mean to us today" (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 129).

This use of narrative fiction to right the wrongs of the past has been recently developed by auto-ethnographers as an ethical code, called 'writing to right' (Denzin, 2015). When applied to screenwriting practice, 'writing to right' goes far beyond attempting to describe what happened. It also goes beyond the interpretive practice of discovering, like the historian, "how and why and what these things meant and mean" (Jenkins, 1991, p.33). 'Writing to right' also pushes beyond Jimmy McGovern's notion of setting the record straight in the drama doc (McGovern, 2016, p. 90), which is about challenging official events of the past. Situated within a dynamic space of invention, 'writing to right' involves an inter-subjective fusion between fact and fiction, a re-writing of the past that brings justice to the historical subject and holds others to account - the kind of activity flatly ruled out by the Packard and Stubbs's model of ethical evaluation. 'Writing to right' happens through the process of narrative construction, of inventing a new version of the past, a new history. In other words, fiction. This latter idea aligns with both Bill Nichols and Rosenstone's notions of a constructed past in order to convey a truth in the domains of documentary and history (Nichols, 1991; Rosenstone, 1995).

A memory refracted.

I turn a page of the Warwickshire Coroner's file to reveal a letter. Randolph's distinctive writing. "Today I feel so depressed and low in spirits, that I must write down, what is worrying me, and why". A j'accuse letter written by Randolph two years before his death. Fearing death at the hands of his tormentors. "Signed this 4th day of March 1964, on Oath of God Almighty, Randolph Adolphus Turpin." This was the letter that Randolph's wife Gwen asked the coroner to read out in court in 1966. The coroner refused. What if I were to re-write history? Righting wrongs. I imagine the character of Gwen, reading out the letter at Randolph's funeral service. Writing to right.

To conclude this chapter, I will look at an example of how I have applied 'writing to right' in the construction of a narrative scene about boxer Randolph Turpin in the fiction genre form of the biopic.

Some 'Facts'

Ten years after beating Sugar Ray Robinson for the world middleweight title and, for a time, becoming the richest sportsperson in Britain, Randolph was made bankrupt. There is documented evidence that he had picked a fight over serious financial mismanagement with his manager George Middleton, and the most powerful figure in UK boxing, promoter Jack Solomons (Birtley, 1975, p. 141). After challenging Solomons, Randolph was beaten up by a gang from London, and received a series of death threats (Morton, 2004, p. 251). In 1966 Randolph was found dead at his home with gunshot wounds to his head and chest. He was 37 years old. The post-mortem concluded that he had committed suicide (Barrowcliff, 1966).

Constructing the Scene

The scripted scene takes place at Randolph's funeral, during which the character of his grieving wife, Gwen Turpin, reads a letter that had been written by Randolph two years prior to his death. Among the mourners are representations of both of Randolph's key antagonists, his manager George Middleton and promoter Jack Solomons.

The "j'accuse letter" that Randolph Turpin wrote in 1964 actually exists as a verifiable factual document in the Warwickshire Coroner's file, and the original held by the boxer's relatives. This piece of factual archive is what Virginia Woolf would have described as 'granite'. But, in reality, Randolph's antagonist, promoter Jack Solomons, did not attend the funeral service, and Randolph's wife, Gwen, did not read the letter out in public. These are both fictions, constructed from my imagination - the 'rainbow'. The archive shows that there was a request from Gwen to the Warwickshire Coroner, to read the letter in court, where Jack Solomons was present. The Coroner refused, presumably because of the letter's potentially highly slanderous content at the time, and the fact that the coroner had concluded that Randolph's death was suicide (Rosso, 1984).

By framing this letter in a fictional narrative device, such as that used, very effectively, in a film like *The Constant Gardener* (Meirelles, 2005), I could re-invent the past to make Randolph's j'accuse letter public. In doing so, the perpetrators of the death threats, the major financial irregularities that can be traced to Randolph's manager and promoter, the physical and mental trauma that Randolph suffered at the hands of Solomon's thugs, and the impact that all of these aggressions had on Randolph's mental health and subsequent actions, could be fictionally held to account. This is 'writing to right' in the biopic form.

By re-visioning a past event in the construction of this fictional scene (Figure 3), I am honouring my duty to the dead Randolph Turpin, who wanted his tormentors to be held to account, and I am honouring the late Gwen Turpin's wish to have the letter made public. To quote Jimmy McGovern, "the dead are no longer able to defend themselves so others have to do it for them" (McGovern, 2016).

Figure 3

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Gwen steps up to the pulpit in deathly silence. She turns to the throng. Her voice wavers.

GWEN

I'd like to read a letter released
by Randolph's solicitor, and written by
my husband two year's ago.

Gwen opens the letter with shaking hands.

GWEN

Today I feel so depressed and low in
spirits, that I must write down, what
is worrying me, and why.

Gwen takes a deep breath.

GWEN

I know that Mr J Solomons and G Middleton
have been in touch with a certain body,
in London, who do away with folks, who
they don't wish to talk.

Middleton flashes a glance across at Solomons, who drops his gaze to the floor.

GWEN

I have told both parties concerned,
meaning Solomons and Middleton, that
death doesn't frighten me, anymore,
so they have included my wife and
three children in their threats.

Solomons is now up on his feet. He tries to remain composed, but is forced to beat a humiliating retreat down the central aisle towards the main door of the church. Randolph's words follow him.

GWEN & RANDOLPH V.O.

So should they do away with me,
I would like the government, and
whoever deals with this letter, to
know, that Mr Middleton has money in
a bank deposit in London, Piccadilly,
which belongs to me, which I would like
paid to my wife and children.

Middleton takes his cue and scuttles towards the exit.

VOICES
(whispering)
Shame, shame.

GWEN & RANDOLPH V.O.
I'm not of unbalanced mind, or anything
like that, on the contrary, I'm perfectly
sane, but know that these people are
closing in on me, and have already made
three attempts on my life.

The main door of the church opens and closes as the accused
make their escape.

RANDOLPH V.O.
I've told them death doesn't worry me,
as I've already left this letter naming
those who have asked for my life.
But they will also have foolproof
alibis for their whereabouts
when it happens to me.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Randolph's body is lowered into a grave. His brothers support
their mother Beat.

Gwen, keeping her distance from Randolph's siblings, clutches
her children close.

RANDOLPH V.O.
All I ask, is, that the money in deposit,
plus half of the sum, which I was
sent bankrupt for, please, by the Grace
of God, see that this money is paid to
my wife and children, as by June, I
should have another baby to my family
making four. Signed this 4th day of
March 1964, on Oath of God Almighty,
Randolph Adolphus Turpin.

Chapter 2 - Sensing the Dead: exploring the tensions between fiction and historical fidelity

"Ignorance is the first requisite of the historian—ignorance, which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits, with a placid perfection unattainable by the highest art."

Lytton Strachey, Preface to *Eminent Victorians*, 1918

"To many of those who would transform historical studies into a science, the continued use by historians of a narrative mode of representation is an index of a failure at once methodological and theoretical."

Hayden White 1987, p. 26

The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

As I Walked Out One Evening, W H Auden

"Al talked then about the perfidy of the dead, their partial, penetrative nature, their way of dematerialising and leaving bits of themselves behind, or entangling themselves in your inner organs. She talked about her sharp earsight and voices she heard in the wall."

Hilary Mantel, *Beyond Black*, p. 57

Figure 4



General Gordon's Last Stand, (c. 1893), Artist: George W Joy.
Reproduced with kind permission of Leeds Art Gallery, UK.

Walk into the Art Gallery of the northern English town of Leeds, and you will find hanging in a ground-floor room an imposing (236cm x 175cm) oil painting (c. 1893) entitled *General Gordon's Last Stand* (See Figure 4). Painted by George William Joy, the image depicts the final moment in the life of General Charles Gordon (1833-1885), while defending the besieged city of Khartoum against the forces of a large Islamic uprising.

As an educator, I have used Joy's painting to explore the relationship between picture composition, storytelling and representation, and to emphasise the importance of understanding *mise-en-scène*, as a screenwriter, in order to make full use of the potential of moving-image composition to create meaning. The composition is built on the Golden Section, with clear references to Renaissance paintings of the crucifixion of Christ. The 'protagonist' of the story, General Gordon, is depicted as a straight-backed defiant man bravely and calmly facing death from the massed spears of his attackers. He also stands at the point of infinity (eternity) on the Gold Section, and in this way the composition underpins and symbolises the narrative of his martyrdom⁴.

What the casual observer will be unable to comprehend from this painting is the fact that the circumstances of Gordon's death remain unknown (Strachey, 1918, p.66). So the event as depicted in Joy's painting is a fiction. Indeed, the image of Gordon as martyr has been dismissed as "a piece of Victorian myth-making", a representation that does nothing more than pander to public opinion (Kirby, 2006). Some 30 years after Joy delivered his painting, Lytton Strachey offered a contrasting portrait of Gordon as an eccentric and flawed product of "the frenzies of Empire and the doom of peoples" in his irreverent series of short biographies entitled *Eminent Victorians* (1918). But this did not stop Joy's painting being used as the blueprint for both the production design, and the re-presentation of Gordon's death, in the historical epic film *Khartoum* (1966), in which Gordon was re-presented as a martyr by writer Robert Ardrey, director Basil Dearden and actor Charlton Heston (Ardrey, 1966).

⁴ An interesting post-colonial twist to the reading of this painting was recently demonstrated during an Australian Masters in Media Production course at RMIT University. The majority of students in the cohort were from former British colonial territories. With no prior knowledge of the painting, nor the political or historical context in which it was created, all the students from former British colonies identified the man about to throw the spear as the 'hero' of the narrative!

If, as discussed in the last chapter, the fictional representation of Gordon in Joy's painting is seen as a metaphor for a life lived (Styron, 2017; Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160; McKee, 1998, p. 108; Nichols, 1991, pp. 115-116), is it possible that this "piece of Victorian myth-making" is actually conveying a truth or an essence of the real William Gordon, a man whose widely-documented faith was central to his engagement with the world as a soldier and statesman, in the service of a dominant colonial empire? With respect to the later re-presentations of Gordon by Strachey and Ardrey/Deardon, how does the length of the temporal gap between historical referent and writer impact on the latter's understanding of their historical subject, and the integrity of any truth claims they make in the construction of their (fictional) representation? It is this temporal gap that forms one of the greatest challenges to engaging with my historical referent - Randolph Turpin.

A memory refracted:

I lie on the floor. On the patch of carpet where the paramedics left her, still attached to the paraphernalia of their efforts. I lie where they gave up, and left her body. The body of my wife, my lover, my friend. Here, on this hard floor, in this room, I lie quite still, feeling the overwhelming sense of her presence. Still. In this room. Entangled with me. Still. The pain inside. And I cannot bear it. Is she trapped? Is her spirit trapped in here? I open the windows. Letting her go. But the pain remains. Unbearable.

I was drawn to the figure of Randolph Turpin through my experience of grieving, and the depression that this grieving induced. But standing at Randolph Turpin's graveside, the span of the temporal, spatial and psychosocial gap between me, situated in the present, and my living, breathing historical subject, situated in the past, seems daunting. Throughout this process of research, of getting to 'know' my historical referent, I have never *felt* his presence, like I felt the presence of Alison, my dead partner. I don't *sense* him, after death, like I sensed Alison. But his character, the fictional construct, does speak to me, a phenomenon common to writers of fiction that I will discuss later in this chapter.

And this raises a crucial question that will be familiar to historians, historiographers and the writers of historical and biographical fiction. Is it possible to bridge the gap

between the self, living in the present, and the interiority of an historical referent, situated in the past, in order to gain access to what the subject was thinking and feeling? In other words, can a (screen)writer come to know, and re-construct, the personal identity of a man like Randolph Turpin, who died 53 years ago, a man who, considering his fame, left surprisingly few direct traces of his existence in the world beyond boxing artefacts, a handful of letters, and news reports of his victories, defeats, and violent demise⁵. Or are such attempts at knowing a person from the past doomed to failure, producing nothing more than the wearing of the historical referent's clothes in the present? Or does the process of (fictional) representation at the intersection between imagination and historical record, bring into existence something else entirely, a new reality with its own validity in the present?

To explore these questions I am going to draw on a series of BBC Reith lectures delivered by writer Hilary Mantel in 2017. The five lectures reveal important insights into how Mantel, as a writer of historical and biographical fiction narratives⁶, bridges the gap between herself and her historical subjects - situated a distant 500 years down the timeline - in the authorship of her acclaimed Tudor trilogy of novels, one of which, *Wolf Hall*, has been adapted into an historical drama series for television, starring Mark Rylance as Thomas Cromwell, and Damian Lewis as Henry VIII (Mantel and Straughan, 2015). These texts amount to a substantive reflection, by a practitioner, of how the *process* of writing fiction accesses the past.

The question and answer sessions that followed each of the lectures give a tantalising glimpse of a significant tension between Mantel's method of vivifying her historical referents, and objections to her 'truth' claims in relation to these representations, voiced by historians and historiographers⁷.

⁵ Simon Featherstone describes Turpin as 'inarticulate' when compared to that of fellow middleweight, American Sugar Ray Robinson, who "embodied a cultural transition in his [fluent] articulation of postwar black America ... a style that found its apogee in that of Muhammad Ali" (Featherstone 2009, p. 116)

⁶ Although Mantel refers to her Tudor novels as historical fiction, scholars working in the field of English Literature also describe them as biographical fiction (Lackey 2018, p. 130). This classification, which pivots around the dramatic role and point-of-view of a central protagonist, is open to interpretation, as can be seen by Rosenstone's decision to re-classify, as biographical, films he had earlier described as historical (Rosenstone, 1995, pp. 90-151; 2012, pp. 101-123).

⁷ For a comparative discussion see the objections raised by Australian historians Inga Clendinnen and Mark McKenna (Clendinnen, 2006) in response to the inaugural Thea Astley lecture delivered by

To open up this conversation, and explore the arguments for, and against, Mantel, I am going to draw on the work of the same post-modern historians - Hayden White, Robert Rosenstone and Keith Jenkins⁸ - cited by Packard and Stubbs in their model of ethical evaluation, discussed in the previous chapter, plus an insightful discussion that took place between novelist Jane Smiley, and historians Niall Ferguson and Gabriel Gorodetsky, during a transmission of the BBC Radio 4's *Start the Week* programme in 2015 (Marr, 2015). I will use this discussion to reflect on the challenges I have faced, while navigating the tensions between fiction and historical fidelity, when constructing the character of boxer Randolph Turpin.

Resurrecting the Dead: when characters begin to talk

A memory refracted:

I try to recall my childhood Midlands accent. Feeling my way around those downturned vowels. My mouth shaping the way Randolph Turpin would have voiced those *shared* words. Do you ever get the sense that your characters speak to you, or through you, not of you? Is that Randolph speaking to me? Or is it the pull of the fictional character, eliciting words into the curve of its arc, in pursuit of its goals. Am I a medium or a ventriloquist?

It is the novelist's job to put the reader in the moment, even if the moment is 500 years ago. There are techniques, but no tricks. You can only do it through honest negotiation with the facts, and the power of the informed imagination (Mantel 2017, L5).⁹

author Kate Grenville (Grenville, 2006), including an interesting (empirical) critique of empathy as method (Clendinnen, 2006, p. 21-22).

⁸ In focusing on the recent work of historians Jenkins, Rosenstone and White, I make no specific reference to the outputs of the two 20th-century giants E.H. Carr and Geoffrey Elton. A central dispute arose between these two historians that centered on whether the evidence of the past speaks for itself, or whether evidence can only be articulated through (subjective) interpretation. Carr's seminal work, *What is History?*, broadly rejected the truth claims of traditional historical practice, arguing that what is articulated as history is subject to the interpretative practices and bias of the historian. He can thus be seen as paving the way for the positioning of historians such as Keith Jenkins, Robert Rosenstone and Hayden White. For a broad critical overview of Carr's work see Cox, M. (Ed.). (2000) *E. H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*. Palgrave. For a short critique of the Elton-Carr debate, see Jenkins, K. (1991). *Re-thinking History*. Routledge, pp. 47-50.

⁹ In citing, and quoting, from Mantel's BBC Reith lectures, I will reference them according to the chronological order in which they were delivered (ie L1 refers to: Lecture No. 1, presented 7 June 2017)

Before becoming a writer of fiction Hilary Mantel had flirted with the idea of becoming a historian. What she wasn't prepared for were the yawning gaps in the historical record, "the erasures, the silences where there should have been evidence" (Mantel 2017, L1). It is these erasures and silences that compelled Mantel to become a novelist, together with the realisation that "if we want added value, to imagine not just how the past was, but what it felt like from the inside, we pick up a novel." (Mantel 2017, L1)

Mantel argues that "historical fiction is in dialogue with the past" (L5), and this dialogue enables her to re-present the past as present, as process, and in doing so to "free the people from the archive and let them run about, ignorant of their fates, with all their mistakes unmade." Crucially, Mantel did not see her move towards fiction as a move away from 'truth' telling. Indeed, she came to a singular understanding that "you become a novelist so you can tell the truth." (Mantel 2017, L1). The grounding of her historical and biographical fictions in meticulous and immersive methods of research, as practiced in the domains of history and ethnography, is central to this truth claim.

At first, you are a stranger in your chosen era, but a time comes when you can walk around in a room and touch the objects. When you not only know what your characters wore, but you can feel their clothes on your back, that rasp of home-spun wool, that whisper of linen and weight of brocade, the way your riding coat settles when you mount your horse, the sway and chink of the items at your girdle or belt... (L5).

Mantel's process becomes problematised in relation to historical fidelity, when she states that her chief concern as a writer of fiction is to evoke the interior drama of her characters, "...to take the past out of the archive and relocate it in a body" (L5). For Mantel, it is at the point where "the satisfactions of the official story break down", (L1) that research within the domain of history gives way to "the art and craft of resurrection" (L1). To press home her point about the limitations of written history in communicating the past, Mantel argues that "history is not the past, it is the method we've evolved of organising our ignorance of the past. It is the record of what is left on the record" (L1). In prioritising the interior drama of her characters over more

objective points of view, the tension with historical fidelity pulls tight, with Mantel articulating precisely the problem I am faced with when vivifying the character of Randolph Turpin. "From history, I know what they do. But I can't with any certainty know what they think, or feel" (L1).

So how does Mantel enter the hearts and minds of her historical subjects? And do the human interiors she constructs from this process have any fidelity to the identities of the living, breathing historical referents her characters represent?

In answer to these questions, Mantel's first lecture in the Reith series, 'The Day is for the Living' discusses whether the timeline to the dead is a two-way street. Mantel states that she cannot hear or see the past, but she can "listen and look" (L1). The use of "earsight", as the psychic protagonist of Mantel's novel *Beyond Black* likes to call it (Mantel, 2005, p.153), is a primary method in Mantel's research process, which she believes enabled her to bridge a 500-year gap to have an a-temporal conversation with Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court (L1).

Mantel's "earsight" bears a remarkable similarity to the kind of listening and looking ethnographer Barbara Myerhoff engaged in when her research into *Number Our Days* (1978) was cut short by the death of a key contributor (Myerhoff, 2007, p. 12). But there is a key difference of context. Unlike Mantel's relationship with Wolsey, Myerhoff knew her referent in person prior to death, so had first-hand inter-subjective impressions of her referent's identity with which to construct a dialogue. In the case of *Wolf Hall*, Mantel had no such knowledge, or first-hand impression, so was this really the dead Wolsey speaking to a 21st-century author from beyond the grave, as Mantel claims? (L1)

A challenge to this truth claim may be found in a phenomenon that will be familiar to many writers of fiction who, after a period of immersive research and story construction, find their characters apparently speaking independently of their creator.

While writing the screenplay for *Puncher*, I have had just such an experience writing the dialogue for the character of Randolph Turpin. In common with many screenwriters, the dialogue is the last thing I write in the construction of the

screenplay. By the time I come to writing the dialogue I have already shaped the story, and fleshed out each scene in the form of an old-school step-outline (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Step Outline:

INT. CAFÉ DAY

An anxious Randolph lets Mosh in. He tells Mosh to put word out that he wants to sell his Lonsdale title belt. Mosh questions the idea, but Randolph is adamant.

The same scene as above, scripted with dialogue:

150. INT. CAFÉ – DAY

Randolph unbolts the back door, calms down the dog, and lets Mosh in. Randolph is clearly in a state of acute anxiety.

MOSH

What's up mate, it's like a bloody siege in here.

RANDOLPH

I need you to put word out that I want to sell me belt.

MOSH

You sure mate?

RANDOLPH

I'm sure.

MOSH

I know some promoters who might be interested.

RANDOLPH

How soon can you do it?

MOSH

Soon as you like, but I can't make any promises.

RANDOLPH

I know.

When leaving dialogue this late in the writing process, the characters can appear to pre-empt my conscious choice of words and phrases. To quote Oscar-winning cartoonist, playwright and screenwriter, Jules Feiffer, "Once you put two or more people together in some sort of situation, and have already decided who and what they are, they're going to automatically say certain kinds of things ... I've often been surprised at what my characters have had to say to each other. You get them going and they take off on their own..." (Seeger, 1990, p.171). When the character is based on an historical figure, like Randolph Turpin, the effect can be uncanny. But can these words ever be those of the long-buried Randolph Turpin? Or can they only ever be a projection of me, fleshing out the factual traces of Turpin with my own experience of living in the world?

Mantel acknowledges that the voices she hears may be an echo of her own, that "the movement we see is our own shadow" (Mantel, 2017, L1). But she immediately counters with the assertion that the dead do still have a vital force, "they still have something to tell us, something we need to understand" (L1). As a result, the locus of the dead subject's voice, in relation to the writer Mantel, remains obscure, slippery.

A clue as to where Mantel locates the origin of the historical subject's voice can be found in her fiction novel *Beyond Black*, a darkly comic story about a professional psychic. The writing of *Beyond Black* was, in part, a preparation for the historical Tudor novels, "... an extended exercise in trying to imagine what it must be like to talk to the dead every day..." (L1). When the protagonist, Alison, is asked when she first knew she had psychic powers, she answers "...there wasn't a moment. How can I put it - I didn't know what I saw, and what I just imagined" (Mantel, 2005, p.120). The role of the *imagination* is therefore key to understanding Mantel's concept of 'earsight'. Whether or not anything uncanny is going on in the process of her research into Tudor lives, or her 'conversations' with Cardinal Wolsey, all re-presentations of the dead, Mantel argues, are constructs of the imagination. And, crucially, this dialogic of the imagination stems from an embodied connection to the past - "we carry the genes and the culture of our ancestors. And what we think about them shapes what we think about ourselves, and how we make sense of our time and place" (L1). In this way Mantel uses fiction as method - the imagined re-presentation of historical figures - to open up a dialogue between herself in the

present, and her historical referents in the past. Only through fiction, Mantel argues, can writers listen to "the restless dead asserting their claims" (L1). For Mantel, an historical method that rejects fiction on the grounds of fidelity simply cannot provide an effective alternative.

As soon as we die, we enter into fiction. Just ask two different family members to tell you about someone recently gone, and you'll see what I mean. Once we can no longer speak for ourselves we are interpreted. And when we remember, as psychologists so often tell us, we don't reproduce the past, we create it (L1).

Mantel's assertion that our representations of others from the past are, by definition, constructed fictions, aligns with Kendall Walton's argument that all representations are fiction (Walton, 1990, p. 3). Mantel acknowledges that there are facts and figures on the historical record that have little or no dispute, but these have to be evaluated in the context that "99 percent of the evidence ... is not available to us" (L1), in particular, *unrecorded speech*.

Just as information is not knowledge, and history is not the past, Mantel argues, "facts are not truth", (L1) echoing Robert McKee's critique of writers who mistake literal rendition for verisimilitude, as being "blind to the truth of life" (McKee, 1998, p.24). And, crucially, the undisputed facts that exist in the historical record, fail to answer questions of interiority. As a result, Mantel argues, the writer of historical fiction is in pursuit of a kind of knowledge that sits outside the academic field of the historian (L5). "When you want to know 'how did that feel from the inside? ...what you enter into is a dramatic process [with your characters], and that dramatic process is your writing life" (L1).

Mantel uses an analogy to describe the nature of the characters that are 'resurrected' through this dramatic process. In the 1940s, the English village of Derwent in Derbyshire was intentionally flooded in the process of constructing a large dam and reservoir. In the years that followed word got round that, when the water level dropped after a spell of dry weather, you could see the church steeple begin to emerge from the watery depths. This was a myth - the church had been demolished

prior to the valley being flooded. But, Mantel argues, the myth of Derwent church is not a falsehood, "it is a truth cast into symbol and metaphor - materially Derwent was gone, spiritually it still existed" (L2). As discussed in the last chapter, if story is viewed as a metaphor for life, and character as a metaphor for human nature (McKee 1998, p. 375), and metaphor as 'a principal vehicle of understanding' (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160), then Mantel is using fiction to re-present historical subjects as metaphorical (mythic) characters in order to communicate an understanding of the embodied human nature of the historical referent. Or, in Mantel's words, "*King Lear* is not history, it is myth; but it tells profound truths about the workings of power and love" (L5).

History and the imagination: projection or insight?

During the question-and-answer session that followed Mantel's first Reith lecture, the chair, Sue Lawley, cited a heated discussion between novelist Jane Smiley and historians Niall Ferguson and Gabriel Gorodetsky (Marr, 2015), in posing the question of whether Mantel's historical characters were actually 21st-century people dressed up in Tudor costume. Mantel retorted with a withering dismissal of historians, such as Ferguson, as making such criticisms "out of the defects and constraints of their own imagination" (L1).

In doing so, Mantel reasserted her contention that using your *imagination* to construct fictional characters is the *only* way of engaging with the interiority of the dead, and the only way of re-presenting the way they felt.

The argument between Niall Ferguson and Jane Smiley (with occasional interjections from Gabriel Gorodetsky in support of Ferguson) erupted towards the end of an edition of BBC Radio 4's *Start the Week*, presented by Andrew Marr, in 2015¹⁰. The disagreement was sparked off by Smiley who, echoing the words of Mantel, claimed that history tells us what happened, whereas historical fiction tells us about how it felt (Marr, 2015). Ferguson attacked this claim on two counts. First, he tackled the nature

¹⁰ A full podcast of the show can be accessed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b06gqdwk>

of the truth claim in stating that historical novels could convey how it felt to be an embodied person living in a different time. Far from telling the reader what it must have felt like, Ferguson argued, writers of historical fiction are projecting back the ideas of their own time onto characters of the past. To make his point, he cites Smiley's trilogy of novels that tell the story of a family living in Iowa. Ferguson argued that the books offer the reader an enjoyable story, but it would be a mistake to believe that they conveyed an understanding of "what it was like to be Iowa in the 1950s and 1960s". Second, Ferguson pointed out that Smiley's constructed characters are not real people, but a product of the writer's imagination, whereas historians "are in the business of reconstituting past experience ... from primary sources, from what people wrote down" (Marr, 2015).

Applying this argument to my writing of the screenplay *Puncher*, the narrative, according to Ferguson, not only fails to convey an understanding of what it was like to be Randolph Turpin, but what it was like to live in the Midlands region of England in the 1950s and 1960s per se.

Smiley countered that she also studied primary sources in order to discover what it must have felt like to be a character living in a different time. In other words, her imagined characters were grounded in the very same research methods as the historian. Further, Smiley questioned the fidelity of the very primary sources Ferguson refers to. Primary sources such as letters and diaries, Smiley argued, are themselves formed from the memories of the people who wrote them, and that each of these memories is itself a projection. The key difference between history and fiction in drawing from these sources is that history is bound by empirical notions of accuracy, and therefore must be incomplete, like the historical record. These are the same yawning gaps, erasures and silences that Mantel refers to in her Reith lectures. What the writer of historical and biographical fiction can offer the reader is a sense of completion and, to do this, she must use her imagination to make her characters live. Smiley summed up her argument by articulating the phenomenon of characters appearing to act independently of their author, discussed earlier. "The character, in order to live ... has to do things that the novelist didn't realise the character was going to do" (Marr, 2015).

So can the writers of a history book, and an historical fiction, drawing from the same primary sources, both be telling the truth?

Pressed by Andrew Marr, Ferguson acknowledged that, in some circumstances, "fiction may be a form of truth about the human condition. Tolstoy tells us a great deal about what it was to be a 19-century Russian. Does he really tell us about the Napoleonic wars? I don't think so" (Marr, 2015). In other words, using the imagination to construct contemporary characters may reveal general truths about the human condition in the context of a contemporaneous time and place, but Ferguson refuses to acknowledge any fidelity between constructed re-presentations and historical referents, maintaining his position that we are unable to escape our contemporary schema in order to enter into the time, place and mind of a subject living in the past. In his view, therefore, fiction can neither do history, nor vivify historical characters. "Making stuff up", as Ferguson disparagingly calls fiction, does not "serve truth" in the way that practicing history does (Marr, 2015).

So while Mantel and Ferguson would agree that the use of the imagination to construct a re-presentation of a historical character forms a dividing line between their two domains, it is this use of the imagination as a *method* of engaging with the past that provokes the most vociferous objection to Mantel's truth claims. In the face of such objections, how does Mantel defend her argument that historical fiction, and not history, is a more effective way to get to the truth of the past?

In an answer to a question posed after her first Reith lecture, Mantel acknowledges that working out of her time, and into the time of the historical referent, is an act of subjective interpretation. But "it is an honest interpretation based on the best [historical] evidence I can get", echoing Smiley's process of referencing primary sources in the construction of her fiction narratives (Mantel, 2017, L1; Marr, 2015). Mantel builds substantially on this answer following her final lecture, as if she had been reflecting, during the intervening weeks, on how best to articulate the methodological process of entering the mind (and body) of an historical referent.

You educate yourself towards your characters and that is why it takes such a long time. That is what all the hours, days, years in libraries are about. It is

about growing knowledge, knowledge and another sensibility that will stand beside the one you started out with, the one that is native to you. So in other words, you look to your characters to change you, and scrape up to their standard, if you like, get inside their heads and bodies. It is not quickly achieved. It is a kind of blend of intellectual requirements. So study, and playing. Just acting. Just being them. Just saying, let's suppose (Mantel, 2017, L5).

Here Mantel nails her approach to reaching an understanding of the interiority of her historical referent. Her core method is ***empathy***. And to gain an empathic understanding of another person that you cannot perceive directly - for example, a person who lived and died in Tudor times - necessitates the use of the imagination, not only to know how the historical referent felt, but how they *saw* the world in which they lived. The re-construction of the 'seen' world is crucial to this process, and requires meticulous research of primary sources to gain the requisite knowledge of the textures of the environment in which the Tudors lived, right down to the weave and feel of the cloth they used to make their clothes.

Further, Mantel's observation that she looks to her characters to *change her*, reveals for the first time her belief that the use of her imagination to reach an empathic understanding of her historical referent is inter-subjective. And that this inter-subjective dialogue with the (re)constructed identity of her historical referent will make a material impression on *her*, just as the inter-subjective interaction between two contemporaneous living subjects will materially change their identities¹¹. And so Mantel finally answers her opening question. The time-line to the dead is indeed a two-way street.

Mantel's research and creative methodology is now sounding more like that of a contemporary ethnographer, than a (traditional) historian¹². There are numerous

¹¹ Recent trans-disciplinary research in the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience has presented empirical evidence on intersubjectivity, now a measurable affect, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter (Allen et al 2011; Currie 2008; Lamm et al 2007; Marchetti et al 2014; McAdams 2018; Nichols & Stich 2003; Singer 2006).

¹² The discussion of historiography has centered on notions of fidelity in the representation of the historical referent, and the correlating relationship between fact, truth, narrative and the real. Ethnography had a well-documented crisis of representation in the 1980s, most cogently articulated in

examples of ethnographers describing empathy, or the inter-subjective notion of rapport, as central to their practice. To cite just one, ethnographer and visual anthropologist Cristina Grasseni felt that to gain an empathic understanding of a group of Alpine hill farmers in Italy, she needed to learn to look at her hosts' cows in the way they did. This took years of living with, and sharing her hosts' practice, and touring some 50 stables with a breed expert (Grasseni, 2007, pp. 208-209).

Of course, the key difference between the enquiries of Mantel, and ethnographer Grasseni, are temporal. Grasseni is engaging in an empathic understanding of a contemporary subject, whereas Mantel's empathic method has to span a 500-year time gap. Even the ethnographic engagement with the dead practiced by Barbara Myerhoff involved people she had known personally (Myerhoff, 2007). Indeed, it is the question of whether empathy can bridge the temporal gap to an historical referent that deepens the rift between those scholars working in the domain of history and the writers of historical and biographical fiction.

Empathy as Method: the historian's red line?

empathy

[ORIGIN Greek *empathēia*, formed as EM- + *pathos* feeling; translating German *Einfühlung*.]

The power of mentally identifying oneself with (and so fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation.

M.L.King "Pity is feeling sorry for someone; empathy is feeling sorry with someone"

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Vol 1, Sixth edition (2007), Oxford University Press

A primary reason empathy is one of the key methods employed by the writers of historical and biographical fictions, is that mainstream fiction narratives in the West are orientated around the deeply subjective experience of the *individual* protagonist

Clifford, J. & Marcus, G.E. (Eds.). (1986) *Writing Culture*. University of California Press. In this seminal text the subject/object dichotomy of logocentric writing was rejected in recognition that our knowledge of other cultures was contingent on intersubjective dialogue, interpretation and projection. So the challenge for ethnographers was "to confront and take responsibility for our systematic constructions of others and of ourselves through others" (Clifford, 1986, p. 121). Filmmakers, particularly the makers of authored documentaries, have much in common with what Clifford describes as "the ethnographer's distinctively intimate, inquisitive perspective" (p. 23), and concepts of ethnographic practice will be central to an articulation of filmmaking (and screenwriting) creative practice methodology in the final chapter of this thesis, 'Filmmaking as Methodology'.

(Field, 2003; McKee, 1997; Seger, 1994). To be able to tell a story from an individual's embodied point of view (POV), a writer needs to be able to look at the world through an individual protagonist's eyes, and convey the experience of that individual's being in that particular time and place. So, although Mantel's trilogy of Tudor novels features a large ensemble of characters, the story is told from the point of view of (protagonist) Thomas Cromwell (Mantel, 2009). To tell the story from Cromwell's POV, Mantel needs to understand the interiority of Cromwell in a way that "if I make an assessment of a certain figure - maybe Anne Boleyn, Thomas Moore, or whoever, you're not getting Hilary Mantel's opinion, you're getting what I think would have been Thomas Cromwell's opinion" (Mantel, 2017, L5).

Similarly, in my biopic screenplay *Puncher*, I have constructed the character of Randolph Turpin as a protagonist, and so the dominant point of view of the narrative, the way in which the world and other characters are depicted, is largely conveyed subjectively, from his perspective.

The way that Mantel's 'dramatic process of the imagination' enables the screenwriter to construct an individual protagonist who personalises and emotionalises the past in historical and biographical fictions, is central to the discourse posited by historian Robert Rosenstone¹³. Indeed, Rosenstone is one of the few historians to have written extensively on the relationship between history as practiced in the academy, and representations of historical subjects in historical and biographical films¹⁴.

The paucity of scholarly material on this subject is indicative of the fact that historical and biographical fiction film narratives, like historical fiction generally, have been dismissed by historians as having no historical veracity, and are therefore unable to make a contribution to "genuine knowledge" (White, 1987, p. 48). Rosenstone was drawn to write about historical and biographical fiction films while working as an

¹³ Rosenstone is the author of two books on this subject - *Visions of the past: the challenge of film to our idea of history* (1995), and *History on Film/Film on History* (2012). Although the latter is largely a re-hash of his 1995 work, it contains an important chapter on biopics, a genre that Rosenstone refers to as 'biofilms', and in which he re-classifies works, such as *Reds* (1981), on which he was employed as a consultant.

¹⁴ Another important contributor to the scholarly literature on historical and biographical film drama is American-Canadian historian Natalie Zemon Davis. Davis's recommendation that historical dramas use Brechtian distancing devices to remind viewers of the gap between past and present (Davis, 1988, p. 281) aligns with what I refer to as Rosenstone's 'caveat' (see p. 201).

advisor on several mainstream features, including the Oscar-winning biopic *Reds* (1981), based on the life of American journalist Robert Reed, written, directed by, and starring Warren Beatty.

Rosenstone argues that we need to rethink about how we engage with the past, and that personalising and emotionalising the past through the point of view of a central protagonist *can* have historical integrity (Rosenstone, 1995, p.11). This appears to be a radical and important paradigmatic shift for a historian, and one that supports the truth claims of writers of historical fictions such as Hilary Mantel, so I will spend some time discussing his arguments, together with those of fellow (postmodern) historians Hayden White and Keith Jenkins.

Rosenstone begins his discussion by acknowledging the narrative turn in the practice of history in the academy - history as interpretative construction - and the profound impact this turn has had on the notion of historical fidelity.

...all history, including written history, is a construction, not a reflection. That history (as we practice it) is an ideological and cultural product of the Western World at a particular time in its development. That history is a series of conventions for thinking about the past. That the claims of history to universality are no more than the grandiose claims of any knowledge system (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 11).

Fellow historian Keith Jenkins concurs.

No matter how verifiable, how widely acceptable or checkable, history remains inevitably a personal construct, a manifestation of the historian's perspective as a 'narrator' (Jenkins, 1991/95, p. 12).

Rosenstone then moves beyond re-defining written history, to question its very relevance in a post-literate world increasingly dominated by engagement with screen-based moving images.

In a postliterate world, is it possible that visual culture will once again change the nature of our relationship to the past? This does not mean giving up on attempts at truth, but somehow recognizing that there may be more than one sort of historical truth, or that the truths conveyed in the visual media may be different from, but not necessarily in conflict with, truths conveyed in words (Rosenstone, 1995, p.44).

Rosenstone's critique of history as practiced in the academy, culminates in a broadside against the methodological framework of a profession that delimits historians' aims and methods, and continues to orientate practice towards positivist ways of representing the past. (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 111.)

Again, Jenkins concurs, citing Raphael Samuel in dismissing much contemporary work in the domain of history on the grounds of "its fetishism of the document, its obsession with 'the facts' and its accompanying methodology of naive realism" (Jenkins 1991/95 p. 2). Jenkins contextualises his discussion of modern historiography with the observation that there are no longer foundations to support the traditional Western notion of absolute 'truth' in an a-moral, sceptical, ironic and secular modern culture. Therefore, historians can no longer justify attendant correspondence theories of truth in history that are grounded in Platonic absolutes, the moral certainties of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the secular certainties of reason and science (Jenkins, 1991/95, pp. 28-30).

Interestingly, 'essence' is listed by Jenkins as one of the certaintist concepts that loses its power in a post-modern (and now post-structuralist) world. So Jenkins would dismiss film scholar Belén Vidal's question, posed in 2014, of whether it is possible to capture the essence of a life in a biopic - cited in the introduction to this thesis - as a product of the habitual tendency for scholars to slip into using the outmoded language of certainty.

In the context of this bleak reading of the contemporary historian's profession, Rosenstone argues that the way in which filmmakers of historical and biographical dramas engage with history, offers a possible alternative way of engaging with the past, that has the potential to shift historical discourse away from its obsession with

'the facts' and notions of 'absolute truth'. That through a process of dramatisation historical and biographical fiction films emotionalise and personalise the past, so that history is presented as "triumph, anguish, joy, despair, adventure, suffering, and heroism" (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 59).

For a historian like Rosenstone, this emotionalising and personalising of the past raises the most contentious question: "Does history gain something by becoming **empathic**? Does film, in short, add to our understanding of the past by making us feel immediately and deeply about particular historical people, events, and situations?" (Rosenstone, 1995, p.59, my emphasis)

This question, in turn, evokes the Ferguson/Smiley argument about whether it is possible, with any kind of historical fidelity, to see a past world through the eyes of an historical referent? Or is the constructed representation, as Ferguson and Gorodetsky argue, merely a projection of the author?

Interestingly, Rosenstone does not defend empathy as method on the grounds of whether the constructed representation has fidelity to fact, as demanded by Ferguson et al, but on the grounds that fiction, and the use of empathy and the imagination in the construction of the historical character, may be an alternative, but equally valid way, of engaging with the meaning of the past, as documentary or the empirical (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 76).

Perhaps film is a postliterate equivalent of the preliterate way of dealing with the past, of those forms of history in which scientific, documentary accuracy was not yet a consideration, forms in which any notion of fact was of less importance than the sound of a voice, the rhythm of a line, the magic of words (Rosenstone, 1995, p78).

Rosenstone, by referencing a time before the birth of Western empiricism is, like Mantel, referring to myth making (Mantel, 2017, L2; Rosenstone, 1995, p. 43). And he goes on to explicitly compare historical fiction films to the kind of history as told by bards, or the griots in West Africa (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 78). The use of myth as a means or method of engaging with the meaning of the past recalls Mantel's reference

to symbol and metaphor being used to render Derwent's demolished church as materially gone, but spiritually still in existence, or her description of mythical constructs, such as *King Lear*, as a conveyor of truths about the human condition (Mantel, 2017, L5). Rosenstone quotes Barthes in describing biopics as films that take "people's real lives and transforms them into the realms of myth" (Rosenstone, 2006/12, p. xvi), and cites the depiction of 19th-century American mercenary William Walker in the Rudy Wurlitzer-scripted feature *Walker* (1987), directed by Alex Cox, as an example of a film that re-presents an historical referent as mythical construct. Rosenstone observes that the film repeatedly alters material facts in order to express historical truths as metaphor or symbol. For example, Walker was documented as riding into battle riding a horse. The film, however, depicts Walker, dressed in a black suit, marching into battle on foot, thereby constructing the indelible image of a man who showed no fear, an attribute that was clearly described in all contemporary accounts (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 145).

Another notable narrative device used in *Walker*, is what Rosenstone refers to as "the creative strategy of anachronism". This is the use of anachronistic interjections into the narrative, such as planting contemporary cars, Zippo lighters, coke bottles and cigarettes into the reconstruction of a 19th-century world¹⁵. Such strategies have occasionally been used by the makers of historical and biographical films who want to explicitly communicate to the audience that the narrative that they are receiving is not only an authored (subjective) interpretative story, but one that points to "the inevitable interpenetration of past and present" in the construction of such a narrative (Rosenstone, 1995, p.148).

This creative strategy of anachronism also calls to mind Keith Jenkins' view, that "the past that we 'know' is always contingent upon our own views, our own 'present'. Just as we are ourselves products of the past so the known past (history) is an artefact of ours. Nobody, however immersed in the past, can divest himself/herself of his/her own knowledge and assumptions" (Jenkins, 1991/95 p.12).

¹⁵ A more recent example of anachronism being used in a biopic, is the planting of a pair of contemporary Converse sneakers in the re-presented shoe collection of Sofia Copolla's *Marie Antoinette* (2006).

Rosenstone's Caveat

The incorporation of narrative devices, or 'strategies', that overtly draw attention to the relationship between past and present, emerges as a key caveat in Rosenstone supporting any (historical) truth claims made by historical and biographical films. Unlike Mantel, Rosenstone insists that the filmmaker make transparent, and draw attention to, the notion "that the past can exist only in light of the present" (Rosenstone, 1995, p.235).

Rosenstone's support for anachronism as strategy in historical and biographical fiction echoes Jenkin's critique of empathic knowledge, in which he argues that the *only* way in which an historical referent can be re-presented in the present is to imbue them with our own sensibility, and that this process is what it "means to think a-historically; quite literally anachronistically" (Jenkins, 1991/95, p. 45).

Citing the same historical referent that Hilary Mantel spent years researching and vivifying as the protagonist in her Tudor trilogy of novels, Jenkins poses the question of whether it is possible to empathise with Thomas Cromwell's intention to reform Tudor government. He suggests that a starting point might be to read existing texts, such as those written by Tudor scholar Geoffrey Elton. In doing so, however, Jenkins argues that we are accessing information about Cromwell indirectly via Elton, "so actually we are empathising less with Cromwell's mind than Elton's" (Jenkins, 1991/95, p. 42).

In addition to his caveat, by the time Rosenstone was writing about 'biofilms' in 2006, he was playing down the importance of an empathic understanding of the historical referent, of emotionalising and personalising the past, in favour of the protagonist's symbolic or 'emblematic' role in conveying "the larger historical events he witnessed and chronicled..." (Rosenstone, 2006/12, p.123).

So, despite the radical claim that personalising and emotionalising the past can have historical integrity, Rosenstone retreats significantly from a full endorsement of empathy as method. The appearance of Rosenstone situated out on a

historiographical limb is thus revealed to be something of an illusion. There is, in fact, a significant alignment evident between his positioning, and that of a historians like Niall Ferguson and Keith Jenkins. None of these historians will support Mantel's notion that imagination and empathy can transport a person in the present, beyond their contemporary schema, into the interiority of an historical referent in order to convey the referent's identity in a re-presentation that would have any historical validity. Ferguson argues that such attempts are a straight projection. Jenkins agrees, citing Wittgenstein and others as having categorically concluded that it is impossible to enter other minds in the present, let alone the past (Jenkins, 1991/95 p.39). Rosenstone is less emphatic but, by 2006, had clearly become sceptical that a fiction writer's imagination is capable of bridging the temporal gap in a way that will enable them to gain an understanding of the interiority of a referent that has any historical fidelity (Rosenstone, 2006/12, p.123).

Rosenstone can thus be seen as positioning himself somewhere between continuing attempts at historical objectivity, and the committed empathic and subjective approach of the writer of historical and biographical fiction. Crucially, he doesn't fully trust the latter as a method of engaging with, and conveying truths about the past, in the absence of additional caveats. Instead, Rosenstone continues to question whether the human imagination is able to produce what Hayden White refers to as "a specifically human truth". (White, 1987, p. 57). This position is revealed when Rosenstone discusses the device of combining documentary interviews and constructed fictional scenes in the biopic *Reds*.

Which is more fictional and which more accurate - the dramatized past or the remembered past, history or memory? (Rosenstone, 2006/12, p. 120).

Here, despite repeated claims to the contrary, Rosenstone, in his most recent work, slips into making an explicit, oppositional, distinction between fiction and an absolute term such as accuracy. I am assuming here that the word accuracy relates to historical fidelity or, to cite Jane Smiley, the 'accuracy of incompleteness' to which the historian must always point (Marr, 2015). In using such language, Rosenstone repositions his argument in an empiricist non-narrative context that evaluates fictional

constructs as being true or false, rather than as real or imagined. He is thus firmly caught in a dilemma articulated by fellow historian Hayden White 20 years earlier.

If we view narration and narrativity as the instruments with which the conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in a discourse, we begin to comprehend both the appeal of narrative and the grounds for refusing it (White, 1987, pp. 3-4).

As a result, Rosenstone's caveat begins to look like a tool of evaluation that differentiates fictions that qualify for consideration as viable histories from those, the majority, which don't; between those fictions that overtly reference White's dilemma, consciously subverting continuity of story, suspension of disbelief, and the form of narrative itself, and those films that invent in order to complete the gaps and silences in the historical record and give a sense of a complete story.

In other words, it is not enough for Rosenstone that films about the past are *self-evidently* constructed artefacts, received in what Jonathan Coe calls "an honest pact in which the viewer and maker of fiction are complicit in the sharing and receiving of story" (Coe, 2004, p.6). Rosenstone's caveat demands that the (historical) truth claims made by historical and biographical dramas be further contextualised with Brechtian embellishments that draw attention to the contemporary (and authorial) frame through which the historical re-presentation is being projected. This argument aligns closely with that of fellow historian Natalie Zemon Davis who cites Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) in arguing the importance of incorporating Brechtian distancing devices into the narrative to remind viewers of the gap between past and present (Davis, 1988, p. 281).

It is perhaps ironic that the use of narrativity in history to shape chronicled events into coherent stories, with a beginning, middle and end, is doing precisely what Rosenstone appears to critique in most historical and biographical fictions - the creation of the illusion of narrative continuity, described by Hayden White thus,

While the chronicle represents events as existing "within time," the narrative represents the aspects of time in which endings can be seen as linked to beginnings to form a continuity... (White, 1987, p. 52).

Indeed, one of the problems with this caveat is that it rules out the majority of historical and biographical films that have been produced to date, effectively excluding them from consideration as vehicles that have the potential to convey historical truths. For example, applying Rosenstone's caveat to some recent feature films directed by critically-acclaimed auteurs, Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* (2006), with its overt use of anachronistic devices would, presumably, make the cut, but Mike Leigh's *Peterloo* (2018) would not.

And this in turn raises a further problem. The few films that do conform to Rosenstone's caveat all contain narrative devices that a historian, like Jenkins, would argue simply highlight the a-historical anachronistic thinking that re-presents historical referents as fictional characters in the present (Jenkins, 1991/95, p. 45). In other words, these constructs of the imagination have no value in any discussion about factual events as chronicled by historians. In this context, Rosenstone's caveat is in danger of undermining his central premise - that historical and biographical fictions that personalise and emotionalise the past can convey historical truths. On the contrary, his caveat reveals fundamental doubts over whether the use of the imagination (and empathy) as method, by a writer of fiction, *can* convey historical truths. The ultimate effect of Rosenstone's caveat, therefore, is to position him, ironically, in opposition to the work of one of his major references, Hayden White, who argued, in relation to historians re-constructing the past,

...how else can any past, which by definition comprises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an "imaginary" way? Is it not possible that the question of narrative in any discussion of historical theory is always finally about the function of the imagination in the production of a specifically human truth? (White, 1987, p. 57).

In summary, Rosenstone's willingness to consider historical and biographical fiction as an alternative and valid method of re-presenting the past appears to be undone by a caveat that excludes the vast majority of historical and biographical film dramas. Those it does include contain narrative devices, chiefly 'anachronism as strategy' which, rather than validating these film narratives as viable re-presentations of the past, is in danger of unintentionally underlining Keith Jenkin's *dismissal* of any attempt to empathise with an historical referent as inevitably leading to thinking a-historically and anachronistically (Jenkins, 1991/95, pp. 39-45).

Conclusion

The reluctance of even the most progressive of historians, in the Western tradition, to acknowledge empathy (and imagination generally) as a valid method of engaging with the past, raises an important question of how writers of narrative fiction are to conduct a meaningful discourse about historical fidelity, that relates to their praxis.

There is a profound methodological gap between writing history and writing historical fiction, evident in the conversations between Smiley and Ferguson et al. It is interesting to observe that, despite this gap, writers of historical and biographical fiction, such as Smiley and Mantel, continue to engage in conversations about historical fidelity on the methodological terms of the historian.

Even more problematic, is that fiction screenwriters, such as Felicity Packard, are attempting to *formulate* screenwriting practice on the terms of the historian (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, pp. 104-120). As discussed in the last chapter, by rejecting the idea of story as metaphor for life lived (McKee, 1998, p. 375), and conflating historical fact with objective 'truth', Packard et al end up reducing the practice of writing narrative fiction to a process of last resort, rather than the 'principal vehicle of understanding' through which truths about their historical referents are revealed (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160).

Hilary Mantel directly contradicts Packard et al, by arguing that historical facts are not truth (Mantel, 2017, L1), that the writer of biographical and historical fiction is, in fact,

pursuing a kind of knowledge that sits outside the academic field of the historian (Mantel, 2017, L5). And that the dramatic process that the fiction writer enters into with her characters, the process of imagining herself into the head of the historical referent, is the point at which the limitations of what sits on the historical record - and the defective imaginations of some historians - gives way to, what Mantel calls, "the art and craft of resurrection" (L1). This description of her practice as a writer of historical fiction amounts to nothing less than a paradigmatic rejection of the empirical methodologies as practiced by historians such as Niall Ferguson.

In her final lecture, Hilary Mantel fully articulates a methodological approach to writing biographical and historical fiction narratives in which a range of methods, central of which is empathy, are employed in a performative inter-subjective process of the imagination to construct her historical characters. In doing so, she draws a clear line between her methodological approach as a writer of fiction narratives, and that of the historian (Mantel, 2017, L5).

Mantel's identification of such a serious methodological gap, would suggest that any useful practice-based insights into the intersection between the narrative fiction writer and the biographical historical subject, can only be gained by re-framing the conversation away from the practice of the historian, and towards an alignment with a methodological approach that has the requisite scope to encompass empathy as a valid method of generating knowledge.

Chapter 3 - Screenwriting the past: re-framing the conversation

"Why do poets write tragedies, elaborate fables and plots, and use such "strange" words as metaphors? Because tragedy itself is related to a more fundamental project - that of *imitating* human action in a *poetic* fashion.

Paul Ricoeur, 1978, p. 146

"If I would tell you, it would change you. You won't be anymore the same. If I tell you and you are still the same, why should I bother to talk?"

Heschel, in conversation with Barbara Myerhoff, 2007, p. 25

The discussion concerning historical fidelity has revealed an expectation that (screen)writers of historical and biographical narrative fiction defend their process, and their work, on the broadly empirical terms of the historian (Mantel, 2017; Marr 2015). This expectation has been fortified by calls for a cross-fertilisation between screenwriting practice and applied models of media ethics (Maras, 2016), which have a tendency to place fiction in binary opposition to truth telling (Black et al., 2011; Deaver, 1990). As a result, as soon as the conversation turns to the use of imagination and empathy as method, methods that are central to the creative practice of the fiction writer engaging with an historical referent, there are no shared reference points to frame the discussion. The conversation begins to break down. Indeed, there seems to be little basis for a conversation at all.

Therefore, my enquiry turns to the need to re-frame the conversation, within the fledgling field of screenwriting research, and the broader field of filmmaking practice, to encompass fiction, imagination and empathy as valid methods and strategies to generate knowledge.

To map out a possible locus for this discourse I reference debates around empathic knowledge in the fields of cultural studies and journalism, reflect on my own practice as a filmmaker engaging with a historical referent, explore some fascinating trans-disciplinary empirical research into the documented human capacity to attribute states of mind to another person, a phenomenon referred to by psychologists as

'Mindreading', before drawing on recent interviews with three contemporary writers of biographical fiction - Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín - exploring the relationship between biographical fiction and notions of historical fidelity (Lackey, 2018; Lane, 2018).

Squeezing Oranges: extractive encounters versus inter-subjectivity

It is not only the historian and proponents of applied media ethics who object to the narrative fiction writer's use of empathy as method. There is a similar objection within the broader interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. Here, the objection to empathy is situated within the framework of colonial and post-colonial power structures where, it is argued, attempts at empathic understanding can lead to uncritically speaking for others, extractive encounters, cultural appropriation and acts of epistemic violence towards people from oppressed positions in society (Ayotte & Husain, 2005; Dotson, 2011; Pickering & Kara, 2017; Spivak, 1999). In common with the historian's objection, the cultural studies position on empathy is underpinned by notions of fidelity, but also driven by an ethical concern to give agency to the participant.

Charges of cultural appropriation are being met with strong resistance from writers of fiction who fiercely defend their right to "get inside the very heads of strangers" and write any characters of their choosing (Shriver, 2016). Lionel Shriver, in her keynote speech to the Brisbane Writers Festival of 2016, argued that the concept of cultural appropriation, when taken to its logical conclusion, would result in memoir being the only acceptable form of narrative 'fiction' writing. Although there is an interior logic to this central argument, Shriver's provocative celebration of the fiction writer being "the appropriator par excellence" (Shriver, 2016), is problematic in the absence of any kind of coherent ethical positioning. The fact that Shriver chose to deliver her speech in a country where European settlement, and the incorporation of a 'White Australian' assimilation policy, resulted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people sustaining devastating levels of dispossession, social disruption, economic exploitation, discrimination, and cultural devastation (AIATSIS, 2020)¹⁶ only served to highlight the

¹⁶ The right to vote was only extended to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all Australian states in 1965. Queensland (where Shriver was giving her keynote speech) was the last state to grant this right. The 'White Australia' assimilation policy was formally renounced in 1973 under the Whitlam Labor government. <https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>

lack of an ethical framework for her argument. It should have come as no surprise to Shriver that her text was met with such strong objections during and after its delivery¹⁷.

However, even the most well-intentioned attempts by contemporary non-indigenous Australian scholars, with full ethics approval, to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can result in what Spivak describes as 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 1999), the silencing of the oppressed voice (Treloyn and Charles, 2014). Non-indigenous ethnomusicologist Sally Treloyn spent a decade working with Ngarinyin/Nyigina indigenous elders using established Western research processes to record indigenous musical practices (legacy recordings) for the purposes of cultural preservation. In 2013, an intervention by a younger member of the community, Rona Googninda Charles, changed everything. Charles posed the question "How do you feel about squeezing oranges?" (Treloyn & Charles, 2014, p. 170). The extractive metaphor confronted Treloyn with the realisation that a process which she understood to be an act of preservation was in fact causing cultural damage by disrupting the traditional methods of musical knowledge transfer within the Aboriginal community.

Spivak's notion of epistemic violence raises important questions about my attempts to understand and give voice to Randolph Turpin, in the form of a fiction biopic. While there is a strong cultural schematic alignment in my writing about a man who grew up in the same West Midlands community that shaped me, though 50 years out of my time, what of the fact that Randolph Turpin was dual-ethnicity (English/Afro-Caribbean), and of a working-class background? Is it enough that I have a working class heritage on my mother's side, and an Afro-Caribbean ancestor three generations back on my father's side, when my own experience of growing up in the Midlands was as a white middle-class boy? Mantel would argue yes, because these ancestors are in my genes, and it is this shared ancestry that underpins the process of using empathy to resurrect figures of the past as an inter-subjective process of the imagination in which "the restless dead" assert their claims (Mantel, 2017, L1).

¹⁷ Yassmin Abdel-Magied described Shriver's speech as "a poisoned package wrapped up in arrogance and delivered with condescension" (Abdel-Magied, 2016).

But in making this statement about my own ancestry, am I not getting drawn into shoring up the act of writing fiction with what novelist Zadie Smith describes as false defences, such as "the dubious idea that one could ever be absolutely "correct" when it comes to representing fictional human behaviour"? (Smith, 2019). Smith observes that even if authors were to practice a form of separatism in writing fiction, "the infinite variety of selves and experience that lie within whoever claims to be 'a people' will overwhelm any fantasy we have of controlling the reactions of our readers" (Smith, 2019). To make the point, Smith argues that she can pick up a novel written by a woman who is like her in every particular (within a cultural studies lexicon) - "same race, class, sexuality, nationality, heritage", but then "read the first sentence and find she is not, after all, "like me" (Smith, 2019). The problem is compounded by Smith's observation that "we do not always know ourselves perfectly or well", and need others to reveal this to us. "I have closed novels and stared at their back covers for a long moment and felt known in a way I cannot honestly say I have felt known by many real-life interactions with human beings, or even by myself" (Smith, 2019). How can a man like Leo Tolstoy, Smith asks, demonstrate so much knowledge about women in writing the fiction *Anna Karenina*? Smith suggests that this 'mystery' is not so mysterious at all. "Husbands know a great deal about wives, after all, and wives about husbands. Lovers know each other. Brothers know a lot about sisters and vice versa" (Smith, 2019). Smith acknowledges that the 'accuracy' of this process cannot be guaranteed, but without an ability to imagine what the other might be thinking, "we could have no social lives at all" (Smith, 2019). Crucially, Smith echoes Mantel in describing the empathic interaction with others that forms our social and personal lives as an *inter-subjective* process of fictionalization, "as we internalize the other-we-are-not, dramatize them, imagine them, speak for them and through them" (Smith, 2019).

Interestingly, the notion of inter-subjectivity was central to Treloyn's ethically-driven response to Charles's 'squeezing oranges' question. Treloyn and Charles agreed to engage in an inter-subjective process of collaboration. Drawing on historian Catherine Manathunga's work on intercultural knowledge construction (Manathunga, 2009), Treloyn re-defined her project as participatory action research, where the idea of a 'contact zone' was re-configured as a 'discomfort zone', "looking upon the intellectual and social spaces of our collaboration as defined by both 'difference',

where borders are maintained, and inter-subjective identification and 'hybridity', where boundaries are crossed". Through this inter-subjective process "productive tensions" enable a "transcultural production of knowledge" (Treloyn & Charles, 2014, p. 170).

Scholar of refugee studies Mammad Aidani echoes the experience of Treloyn in making a clear distinction between the (potentially) extractive act of gaining *rapport* with his participants and the inter-subjective Ricoeurian notion of an 'exchange of memories' in which the participant "demands reciprocity". Crucially, this inter-subjective 'exchange of memories' is embedded in an ethics of engagement that resonates with the auto-ethnographic concept of 'writing to right'. That is, the researcher must "answer to the call of the (other)". In Aidani's case, he continually asks "the existential question, what can/must I do?" (Aidani, 2013, p. 213), the very same question posed by an ethics of authenticity as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. It is the ethical demands of 'writing to right' that have guided me in responding to the injustices suffered by my subject, Randolph Turpin, and constructing a fictional vehicle through which Turpin's actual words can be heard in the reading of his 'I accuse' letter of 1964.

Further, Aidani observes that shared experience is another access point to gaining an empathic knowledge of the other beyond a common cultural memory, in his case the shared experience of persecution, trauma and displacement as a refugee - Aidani's home was destroyed during the Iran-Iraq war (p. 212).

Engaging with the other through shared experience

The notion of shared experience is central to Australian journalist Leigh Sales identifying the kinds of journalistic enquiries that she is drawn to pursue, and the subjects she selects. In writing *Any Ordinary Day: Blindsides, Resilience and What Happens After the Worst Day of Your Life* (2018), Sales's own experience of trauma - a birth experience that nearly ended in the death of both her and her baby - drew her towards conducting a journalist enquiry into the traumatic life experiences of the subjects cited in her book. It is perhaps not surprising that journalism, with its

(ethical) drive towards 'objective' reportage, discussed in Chapter 1, aligns with the empirical leanings of the historian when it comes to rejecting empathy as a valid method of enquiry. But Sales challenges this position, asserting that embodied empathic interviewing ethically underpins, rather than undermines, the rigour of her journalistic method (Joseph, 2019). Sales's trauma, and the way she uses this to gain empathic knowledge of her subjects, is precisely the kind of embodied experiential rupture, or personal narrative turning point, that auto-ethnographers refer to as epiphanies, and around which they structure their enquiries (Denzin, 2015; Ellis, 2004).

It is just such an epiphany that gave Martin Scorsese empathic access to the interiority of Randolph Turpin's boxing contemporary, "Raging Bull" Jake La Motta. Scorsese had repeatedly rejected requests from Robert De Niro to consider the story - indeed he didn't even like the sport of boxing - but a serious bout of depression opened an empathic insight into La Motta's character, a self-destructive man whose enemies were not his opponents in the ring, but himself, and this insight compelled Scorsese to make the film *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1989, pp. 78-80).

I felt that Jake used everybody to punish himself, especially in the ring. When he fights 'Sugar' Ray Robinson, why does he really take that beating for fifteen rounds? Jake himself said that he was playing possum. Well, that may be Jake in reality, but Jake on the screen is something else. He takes the punishment for what he feels he's done wrong. And when he's thrown in jail, he's just faced with a wall, and so with the real enemy for the first time - himself (Scorsese, 1989, p. 80).

Similarly, my 'epiphany' was the psychological trauma of losing my wife to MS, and this gave me a way of intersecting with the mind and body of a character like Randolph Turpin, who also suffered psychological trauma.

In all these cases, there is a clear therapeutic purpose to the process. Sales explicitly states that she was "looking to write her way out of aggregated pain and sorrow" (Joseph, 2019). Similarly, a therapeutic driver for me, was writing my way into the interiority of Turpin through our shared experience of psychological trauma, in order

to gain an empathic understanding, or knowledge, of what went wrong for him, in order that I might find a way through the trauma I was experiencing.

The following is an attempt to articulate my use of shared experience as empathic access point, when applied to the process of constructing a biopic film narrative about boxer Randolph Turpin, a man who died the year I was born.

Empathy as method refracted:

Depression. I know what it is to be in that windowless box. No way out. Trying to find a space where there is no space. No hope. Still trying to find a way out through narrative. Trying to write my way out of the box. Imagining a way. Creating a way. Unimaginable. I have Randolph Turpin's bank book. Hidden in the vaults of the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper for 40 years. Double-entry book-keeping. Randolph's pencil marks? Circles around the looping ink figures. Handwriting from another age. And there it is. The missing purse. A huge amount of money, never paid. The catalyst that all the journalists, the biographers, the doco makers missed. The unmistakable sign of sibling **betrayal**. Managerial **betrayal**. Promoter **betrayal**. **Betrayal** as emotion. Psychological trauma. Clear as day. How could the hacks have missed that? Now I *know* that Randolph declared war against a force he could not defeat. Against his brother, surrogate father, his manager George Middleton, surrogate father, his promoter Jack Solomons, surrogate father. This is a fight he couldn't possibly win. Or could he? Randolph Turpin in that windowless box. Trying to find a space. A way out. Imagining a terrible way. Out. Transcendence.

I then use the insights gained through this empathic interaction with the historical subject, informed by factual artefacts such as Randolph's bankbook, to construct the narrative, within a fictional frame, and guided by an ethics of authenticity. This is Maras's dynamic space of invention in action (Maras 2016, pp. 14-15).

In the following scene, figure 6, from the feature screenplay, *Puncher*, I imagine a clinically depressed and increasingly paranoid Randolph Turpin, reeling from the discovery of the missing purse - a verifiable fact. And I imagine the sense of betrayal he must have felt at discovering the theft. Indeed, one of Randolph's professional boxing managers was his own brother, middleweight British champion Lionel "Dick"

Turpin. I imagine how Randolph, facing bankruptcy and ruin - another fact recorded on the historical record - might have turned against his siblings. I imagine what might have been said. That is, I construct a fictional representation of that which was never recorded in the case of Randolph Turpin - the dialogues. And in doing so, I write a scene which is a constructed (fictional) interaction and conversation between Randolph and middle brother, Jackie, built upon the empathic knowledge gained from engaging with the historical subject, and interpreting the historical record, through my own experience of psychological trauma.

Figure 6

107. INT. KITCHEN — DAY

Randolph walks back and forth in a daze. There's a loud knocking at the back door.

RANDOLPH

Who is it?

There is no answer. Randolph walks over and wrenches the door open to reveal Jackie.

JACKIE

Alright, bab.

RANDOLPH

What does it bloody look like?

JACKIE

Sorry I asked.

RANDOLPH

What do you want?

Jackie shrugs.

JACKIE

Since you ask, I'll have a cup of tea.

Randolph walks over to the café's main kettle and switches it on. He slumps down on a chair.

JACKIE

If you need anything...

RANDOLPH

I want those bastards as took
my money to pay me back.

As the kettle heats up Randolph becomes more agitated.

RANDOLPH

Honest to God Jackie I feel
like killing someone.

Jackie keeps his distance.

The kettle begins steaming. Randolph pours water into a
pot, swills it around, slops some tea into a mug and puts
it on the counter.

Jackie takes the mug.

JACKIE

Ta.

He goes to take a sip but Randolph gives him a filthy
look.

JACKIE

What?

Randolph jabs his finger to a sign above the counter which
reads: DO NOT ASK FOR CREDIT AS REFUSAL OFTEN OFFENDS.

JACKIE

Very funny.

RANDOLPH

I'm not joking.

Jackie takes a long hard look at his brother. Randolph
stands his ground.

Jackie puts the mug down without taking a sip of tea,
shakes his head and leaves the cafe without a word.

So, how can we reframe the conversation to encompass situational, relational, embodied accounts of screenwriting practice such as this, and of those writers, such as Hilary Mantel, Jane Smiley and Zadie Smith, who have clearly articulated that the use of empathy, as method, is central to the process of constructing narrative fictions about historical and biographical subjects? (Mantel, 2017; Marr, 2015).

'Mindreading': an empirical case for empathic knowledge?

Recent trans-disciplinary research in the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience has presented fascinating empirical evidence of our ability to use imagination and empathy to understand, with some accuracy, the interiority of others, as a measurable inter-subjective process¹⁸. Further, scholars in these fields argue that the capacity for people to use their imagination to empathise with, and attribute states of mind to others, is an inter-subjective process that *materially shapes* an individual's identity, a measurable affect (Allen et al., 2011; Bilek et al., 2015; Currie, 2008; Gallese, 2003; Lamm et al., 2007; Marchetti et al., 2014; McAdams, 2018; Nichols & Stich, 2003; Pfeifer et al., 2008; Singer, 2006). Historian Keith Jenkins' dismissal of empathic knowledge on empirical grounds (Jenkins 1991/95 p.39) can thus be challenged on his own methodological turf.

Mindreading: the relationship between emotion and imagination

Watching a film with a highly original and unsterotypical plot, we see the hero smile at the villain and we all swiftly and effortlessly arrive at the same complex theoretical diagnosis: 'Aha!' we conclude (but perhaps not consciously), 'he wants her to think he doesn't know she intends to defraud his brother' (Dennett, 1987, p. 49).

A starting point for these trans-disciplinary enquiries is an assumption that it is advantageous for humans, as social beings, to be able to imagine other states of minds, and that this capacity has evolved to enable us to predict the behaviour of others (Morton, 2006, p. 65).

This human capacity to attribute states of mind to another person aligns closely with philosophical theories of mind, and what psychologists refer to as 'folk psychology' or 'Mindreading', all of which have argued that there is a demonstrable efficiency in the way people read each other.

¹⁸ Nichols and Stich (2003) cite a more detailed breakdown of trans-disciplinary activity in this area, including behavioural ecology, cognitive ethology, anthropology, cross-cultural psychology, developmental science, psychopathology, clinical psychology and philosophy (of mind).

We do a lot of very complicated imagining of one another's minds, quite routinely, without remarking on it. And very often the imagining is extremely vivid. It seems very real to us. Suppose, for example, that you are comforting a friend who has recently been bereaved and is extremely upset. His feelings, as you imagine them, are for you just a definite fact about the situation (Morton, 2006, p. 57).

It is in relation to this documented capacity for people to attribute states of mind, and feelings, to others, that an empirical trans-disciplinary consensus emerges with an account of the imagination. Currie et al (2002) outline the obvious function of imagination, as a way of projecting ourselves into a different situation from which to perceive the world, whether that be through the eyes of another person, or to imagine you believe something that you don't believe, or the hypothetical perspective of say, a fictional character (Currie et al., 2002, p. 1).

Neuro-scientific studies have identified a neural network, referred to by neuroscientists as the Default Mode Network (DMN), which has been associated with our capacity for imagination. Studies of the DMN's role in our cognitive ability to imagine someone else's perspective and mental states - beliefs, intentions, and goals - have revealed that Mindreading is inter-subjective. That is, to some degree, we subsume this cognitive representation of other's mental states into ourselves (Marchetti et al., 2014). Indeed, measured activity in the DMN network and Mirror Neurons System (MNS) has shown that an individual's morphogenetic history is materially shaped by our interaction with others (Allen et al., 2011, p. 11). In other words, interacting with other people literally makes an impression on the plasticity of our brains, giving a whole new twist to the notion of first impressions!

Further, enquiries in the fields of philosophy and psychology into our apparent ability to open a window into the interiority of others, dovetail with neuro-scientific studies with the observation that our emotions are hardwired into our imagination system (Currie et al., 2002, p. 197). Neuro-scientific models of empathy have shown that imagining another person's emotional state activates associated autonomic and somatic responses in the observer (Singer, 2006, p. 858). In other words,

empathising with a friend who is experiencing grief activates the same affective grief circuits in the perceiver's body as if the perceiver themselves were experiencing grief.

The development of our ability to empathise with the pain of others by using representations that reflect our own emotional responses to an equivalent pain, has been attributed to an evolutionary advantage in being able to predict the behaviour of others (Singer, 2006, p. 859). And imaging studies into emotional awareness of internal body states (Critchley et al., 2004), or feelings generated by rating the trustworthiness in other's faces (Winston et al., 2002), have consistently demonstrated activation of the same somatic regions.

These studies also reveal that our imagination does more than enable us to replicate the feelings of others in ourselves, it also enables us to imagine what the other feels about us. Again, it is argued that there are evolutionary advantages, as social beings, to being able to project ourselves into this perspective. "If we want to please or placate others, we need to know how they *feel* about us, as well as what they see and think" (Currie et al., 2002, p. 197, my emphasis).

Mindreading and the pitfalls of misimagining

Despite an emerging trans-disciplinary empirical consensus on the nature of our capacity to use our imagination to gain an empathic understanding of the other, the same mechanism is problematised with the observation that our emotions can cross the boundary between imagination and reality (Currie et al., 2002, p. 203). This permeable boundary can pose significant problems in evaluating what is 'real', particularly when engaging with others who are far removed from our subjective worldview. In other words, our emotional responses to our imaginings can make them so compellingly vivid, that we can mistake them for being real, a phenomenon that philosopher Adam Morton refers to as 'misimagining' (Morton, 2006, p. 59).

The concept of misimagining has profound implications for my using imagination and empathy as method, both to engage with my historical referent, Randolph Turpin, in the process of research, and in the construction of the fictional biographical representation. It also questions the phenomenon of fictional characters apparently talking independently of their author, in the process of writing dialogue (Mantel, 2017,

L1; Marr, 2015; Seger, 1990, p.171). To quote Morton, any truth claims I make in relation to imagining Randolph Turpin's state of mind "are hollow if understanding a person does not mean getting something right about her. Otherwise, anything we imagine can count as understanding. Or, to put the point differently, it has to be possible to *mis*-imagine, and consequently misunderstand, why someone acted or what their experience was like" (Morton, 2006, p. 59).

Such are the variables around the shaping and context which form another identity's perception of the world, Morton argues, that correctly imagining their point of view appears to demand the impossible - that one actually becomes that person. The difficulties of such an enquiry into Mindreading, conducted within an empirical frame, does not stop there. It is not simply that the task of correctly imagining the interiority of the other is so daunting, "it is not clear what would count as succeeding ... the task could be so ill-defined that the contrast between success and failure becomes meaningless" (Morton, 2006, p. 60).

However, Morton doesn't give up on the possibility of 'getting it right' about another person, and proposes a process that is strikingly similar to the methodological approach of a fiction writer like Hilary Mantel attempting to experience the world through the senses of her Tudor subjects (Mantel, 2017), or an ethnographer like Cristina Grasseni attempting to experience the world through the senses of her Alpine hill farmers (Grasseni, 2007, pp. 208-209).

The process is designed to gain an understanding of the way in which the target subject organises information in the implementation of an action. This is done through a process of meticulous research to construct a framework, or context, in which the target subject operates. The framework is formed of "a fabric of interweaving person strands, each strand at each moment being the origin of a self-centred coordinate system. One strand in each person's perspective, her own life, glows with a special significance, providing each moment with an especially significant set of spatial relations" (Morton, 2006. pp. 65-67). In other words, it is not enough for me simply to project my own experience of psychological trauma onto a documented event, such as Randolph being made bankrupt, in the hope of gaining a 'truthful' emotionally-grounded insight into his subsequent decision to kill himself. To

gain an accurate insight into cause and effect, I need to construct, through a process of meticulous research, as much of the temporal and spatial detail of Randolph's life up to that point - a kind of ethnographic 'thick description' - so that my imagining the organisation of information that would lead to a series of actions in response to being made bankrupt, matches that of Randolph Turpin's actual organisation of information, and the resulting sequence of actions that resulted in his suicide.

The process of my (screen)writing, and making a biopic is described by Morton as a larger structure, one that centres on my being in the world, and on my purpose of constructing a fiction narrative, of which imagining the interiority of my historical referent, Randolph Turpin, is a part. Within this larger structure of (screen)writing and making a biopic, I embed the information structure I am using to imitate that of my historical referent, Randolph Turpin.

It is this difference in the problems to be solved, and this embedding of one structure in another, that makes the act of imagining someone different from simply employing a similar way of thinking (Morton, 2006, p. 67).

'Mindreading' in action: Scene 107

This process or model aligns closely with the research methods of Hilary Mantel and Jane Smiley, as discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, the way in which Mantel uses an ethnographic approach of researching and meticulously (re)constructing the textures of her Tudor world, to form a context in which she then uses her imagination to enter the sensory space of her historical subjects, from where she can fill in the gaps of the historical record (Mantel, 2017, L1). In doing so, according to Morton, Mantel is narrowing down the possibility of mis-imagining the interiority of Thomas Cromwell. Further, the scope and depth of this contextual research correlates with an ethical drive to tell a 'truthful' story (Mantel, 2017, L1: Marr, 2015).

Like Mantel and Smiley, my own creative practice as a filmmaker has involved years of trawling through archives, and visiting and familiarising myself with the places - and their textures - that Turpin frequented. Like Mantel and Smiley, the scope and depth of my research correlates with an ethical drive to tell a 'truthful' story and, like

Leigh Sales (Joseph, 2019), a therapeutic drive to understand and work through my own grief and the psychological trauma of losing my wife to MS. The output of this research enables me to construct Morton's "fabric of interweaving person strands", in order to construct a representation of Randolph Turpin's perception of the world, from the outside in.

By way of example, here is an account of the construction of the two-hander Scene 107 of *Puncher*, cited above (Figure 6), framed by Morton's model of Mindreading. The account begins with a list of some of the key person strands I use to create a representational fabric of the world in a bid to replicate the structure that is Randolph Turpin's self-centred coordinate system:

- letter from leading US boxing agent, Lew Burston, to Randolph's manager George Middleton, describing Randolph's older brother, and part manager, Lionel 'Dick' Turpin, as a "rat in the camp" in relation to charges brought against Randolph following his world title fight against Carl 'Bobo' Olson.
- analysis of Turpin's bank book, held by retired Sports Editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, revealing the missing purse (title fight with Carl Olson, New York).
- j'accuse letter written by Randolph Turpin, detailing all those who he believed wanted him dead, including boxing promoter Jack Solomons, and his own manager, George Middleton.
- memoir of the late Pete Price, close friend of Turpin, "Randolph was a better father than I could ever have made. We'd been up there, Pat and me on a Sunday night, and he'd be bathing the kids, the two girls, and brushing their hair, and they'd complain ... I couldn't have done that, wouldn't have done that" (Price 2006, p. 53).
- I am bathing *my* daughter. Combing her thick hair. Trying to get the knots out. She complains bitterly.
- memoir of Pete Price, who remembered Randolph telling him of anonymous phone calls delivering death threats to him, Gwen and the kids.
- walking the back streets of the deprived neighbourhood - midlands red brick - where Randolph shot himself, and his youngest daughter, in the attic room of his cafe.

- archive photograph of the cafe interior with a prominently positioned sign reading 'DO NOT ASK FOR CREDIT AS REFUSAL OFTEN OFFENDS'.

These strands form the spatial and temporal framework that guide my imagination in constructing the emotional and psychological state of Randolph Turpin at a moment when middle brother Jackie enters his cafe, and imagining the resulting sequence of Randolph's actions, including his dialogues. In turn, this imagining is embedded in my own larger structure of (screen)writing and making a biopic, and the empathic driver (shared psychological trauma) that first drew me to the subject, and formed the core purpose of my constructing a narrative fiction story about Randolph Turpin.

Mindreading: summary

Ironically, while these trans-disciplinary enquiries within the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience offer possible empirical grounds to challenge historian Keith Jenkins' dismissal of empathy as a viable method of enquiry, the methodologies employed to carry out this research are still defined by what Jenkins also refers to as the 'outmoded language of certainty'.

Morton's structural models are a good example of this. When considering Mindreading, and the problem of mis-imagining, his proposed solution is motivated towards 'correctness' in re-presenting the referent (Morton, 2006, p. 60). In other words, fidelity, and attendant notions of absolute 'truth', becomes key drivers in constructing a working model designed to improve (and measure) the accuracy of our capacity to read and re-present the interiority of others. At the same time, Morton acknowledges the serious limitations of conducting research into Mindreading on empirical grounds, explicitly warning that attempts to establish parameters to test and evaluate such a phenomenon would be so ill-defined as to be meaningless (Morton, 2006, p. 60).

Therefore, Morton appears to be drawn towards a similar dilemma to that of historian Robert Rosenstone, who has become caught in an oppositional tension between narrativity and empiricism, discussed in the previous chapter (White, 1987, pp. 3-4). In using the language of certainty, Morton anchors his argument within an empirical

context and, in doing so, attempts to evaluate the real or imagined (in considering the phenomenon of Mindreading) in terms of being true or false.

The narrative turn in psychology

When we read a good story or watch a good movie today, we observe social interactions up close. We witness the clash of human intentions and the timeless social conflicts and motivational dilemmas that characterize so well what human life has always been about. It is probably no exaggeration, then, to claim that stories teach us how to be human (McAdams, 2018, p. 364).

The limitations of empirical methodologies in understanding the human condition have been further amplified by a major narrative turn in the domains of social sciences and humanities (McAdams, 2018).

Scholars working in the field of psychology of mind, are now describing a person's identity as a form of autobiographical life story, the third of three personality levels that includes dispositional traits and personal concerns (Alea, 2018, pp. 271–292; McAdams, 1995, pp. 375–388; McAdams, 2018, pp. 359–372; Singer, 2004, pp. 437–460). If identity is an autobiographical life story, McAdams argues, then it needs to be understood in narrative terms, such as " 'imagery,' 'plot,' 'theme,' 'scene,' 'setting,' 'conflict,' 'character,' and 'ending' " (McAdams, 1995, p. 385). This lexicon of narrativity is, of course, the language of narrative fiction writers, and key components of the psychology-of-mind model of identity, appear in pedagogical screenwriting texts when discussing the construction of fictional characters (Field, 2003, pp. 45–95; McKee, 1997, pp. 100–110, pp. 374–387; Seger, 1990, pp. 22–119).

McAdams argues that this definition of identity, and its attendant lexicon of storytelling terms, compels psychologists to assess a person's life-story-as-psychological-construct through storytelling methods. As a result, psychologists must "resist attempts to taxonomize and evaluate identities in the traditional terms of traits, types, syndromes, stages, and other well-worn scientific nomenclatures" (McAdams, 1995, p. 385).

When scholars working in fields such as psychology re-frame their discourse on the terms of the narrative fiction storyteller in this way, it is time for narrative fiction storytellers to stop attempting to articulate and defend their praxis on positivist terms, and reframe the conversation.

Re-framing the Conversation: beyond absolutes

In a series of recent interviews, English literature scholars Michael Lackey and Bethany Lane discussed the relationship, or tension, between biographical fiction and notions of historical fidelity, which Lane refers to as 'contested realities', with three acclaimed contemporary writers - Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín (Lackey, 2018; Lane, 2018).

It is of particular relevance to this discussion, that Lackey did not conduct the interviews within the empirical framework of a historian, but suggested two parameters, or reference points, within the field of biographical fiction, as articulated by Oscar Wilde and William Styron.

Lackey describes Oscar Wilde's position thus: "[Wilde] would say that an artist is not interested in portraying the past—or clarifying how it shaped and determined us in the present. For him the artist appropriates a figure from the past in order to bring into existence a new reality in the present and for the future" (Lackey, 2018, p.123). Lackey contrasts this with the position of Styron who stated that he was not doing biography or history, but using invention to create a metaphor to illuminate something that happened in the past in order to gain insight into similar socio-political structures in the present. For example, the novel *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) re-presents the experience of black Americans during the slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia, in August 1831, to gain insight into the structures that oppressed gay people in 1967, through inventing a 'symbolic' homosexual experience for the character of Turner (Lackey, 2018, pp.124-125). Interestingly, both positions effectively involve the 'destruction' of the past in order to either create something new (Wilde), or anachronistic (Styron). In other words, neither of them see biographical fiction as "doing history" (Lackey, 2018 p. 125).

Emma Donoghue, reflecting on her own praxis as a writer of biographical fiction, resists aligning herself with either position. She uses the analogy of a tree to describe the characters that she creates - rooted in the past, the real historical referent, but connected to her authorial concerns as a writer living in the 21st century. In other words, she is using her contemporary experience and insight as a subjective tool to understanding her historical referent. Further, Donoghue feels an ethical commitment to the re-presentation of her historical referent, and this compels her towards (historical) research that ensures her writing is directed towards a real person, rather than making her characters up (Lackey, 2018, pp. 124-127). This ethical imperative results in an imagined dialogue in which her historical referents are saying "Come on, Emma, write about us, get it right" (Lackey, 2018 p. 127). Mirroring Mantel's and Smiley's observations that over 90 percent of the historical record is incomplete (Mantel, 2017, L1; Marr, 2015), Donoghue confirms that 90 percent of the biographical narratives that she constructs are invented, but that this invention is a product of being "turned on by the real", and through fiction she offers the world her (subjective) version of the truth (Lackey, 2018, pp. 132-133).

Colum McCann frames his biographical fiction firmly within the all-representations-are-fiction definition argued by Kendall Walton (Walton, 1990, p. 3). McCann states that he does not see a significant distinction between that which is imagined and what is 'supposed' to have occurred in history (Lackey, 2018, p134). Indeed McCann, who trained as a journalist, questions any notion of the terms fiction and nonfiction as being diametrical, arguing that they both mean "to shape". In McCann's view, biography, journalism and fiction are not only essentially doing the same thing but, echoing Mantel, fiction does a better job of getting to the truth (Lackey, 2018, p. 135). To illustrate this, McCann sights reactions to his novel *Dancer* (2003), inspired by the life of Rudolf Nureyev, as compared to the literary biography *Nureyev: The Life* (2007) by Julie Kavanagh. Despite the level of invention - like Mantel and Donoghue, McCann estimates 90 percent of the narrative is imagined - close friends of Nureyev were reported as saying that the novel captured the character of Nureyev more profoundly than the literary biography (Lackey, 2018, p. 136). This is even more remarkable when you consider that McCann made a point of not interviewing these same friends as part of the research process of writing his novel. McCann states that

his reason for employing such a method of exclusion, is to give himself maximum latitude when imagining and constructing the interiority of Nureyev.

I was trying to go to the heart of what is actually true: Who gets to tell the truth, who gets to own the truth, and who gets to shape the truth—and how do we know what is true anymore? (2018, p. 138)

By circumnavigating Nureyev's friends, McCann argues, each of these individuals were able to freely form an imaginative relationship with the text through which they could make sense of the real. In other words, their absence from the novel was key to McCann "not intruding on their form of the truth", shaped by their individual and inter-subjective relationship with Nureyev (2018, p 138).

During his conversation with McCann, Michael Lackey cites Julia Alvarez, and her novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), as using similar methods to reach a similarly remarkable level of insight into the historical referent. McCann applied this same methodology, of circumnavigating friends and family, when writing about a living referent, Senator George Mitchell, in his novel *TransAtlantic* (2013). But he took his process even further by refusing to interview Mitchell himself, preferring to use his imagination to inhabit the interiority of his referent. When McCann sent a copy of the manuscript to Mitchell's wife, Heather, she responded by asking, "How did you know this stuff?" (Lackey, 2018, p 141).

There is nothing really mystical or crazy about that. It is just you knowing your subject well enough and feeling your subject out, imagining him deeply enough (2018, p. 141).

This is precisely the kind of *knowing* Mantel talks about in relation to the use of fiction as a dramatic process of engaging with the past, that enables the writer to access truths that historical and biographical facts miss (Mantel 2017, L1/L5).

However, Lackey challenges McCann over the nature of this truth claim in comparison to William Styron. Lackey argues that Styron is not seeking a biographical truth, but is using the past to communicate truths about socio-political

structures of the present. So what is the truth that McCann is trying to represent in his work? (Lackey, 2018, p. 143) Here McCann offers a definition that reconciles the two positions. What he is aiming for, and believes Styron is too, is an *emotional* truth. Like Mantel and Donoghue, McCann's notion of an *emotional* truth is grounded in ethical intent, "to be honest to the texture of the time and to be honest to myself: not to be didactic, not to tell people how to think or what to think, but to *allow* people to feel" (2018, p. 144, emphasis in the original).

This same idea of emotional truth and authenticity, encompasses Colm Tóibín's understanding of biographical fiction - which he aligns with all other fiction - as a veiled autobiography anchored in facts and anchored in the emotional (Lane, 2018, p. 161). Tóibín cites J M Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) as a biographical novel in which the death of Dostoyevsky's son gave Coetzee a metaphor that "offered him a way for certain feelings to be described and dealt with that he did not wish to deal with directly" in coping with the loss of his own son (Lane, 2018, p. 151). Conceiving of biographical fiction as a form of life-writing, Tóibín equates the use of the imagination, to construct the biographical character of someone like Henry James, including the process of empathic understanding, to engaging with his own memory. And this process is again guided by an ethical imperative towards truth telling, which Tóibín locates in reader expectation, and describes as "a kind of contract" that says, "More or less, I am sticking to the facts here. More or less, this is how I imagine this man lived in these years" (Lane, 2018, p. 160). Knowingly dispensing with known facts and replacing them with fabrication, Tóibín argues, has the tendency to 'dissolve' the emotional anchor to the historical referent.

You have no dialogue, but you know that James was in Rome then, or he was in Venice then, or he got that letter from his brother then. And that somehow or other acts as an anchor and gives you some further grounding that is emotional as well as factual (Lane 2018, p. 161).

Conclusion

Scholars working within the broad domain of cultural studies have argued that attempts at empathic understanding can lead to uncritically speaking for others, extractive encounters, and acts of epistemic violence towards people from oppressed positions in society (Ayotte & Husain, 2005; Dotson, 2011; Pickering & Kara, 2017; Spivak, 1999). Suggested methods to protect against epistemic violence include an inter-subjective process of collaboration towards a 'transcultural production of knowledge' (Manathunga, 2009; Treloyn & Charles, 2014), an ethically driven commitment to "answer the call of the other" with an emphasis on the importance of 'shared experience' in achieving an inter-subjective engagement with the participant (Aidani, 2013).

Australian journalist Leigh Sales argues, on ethical grounds, that empathic understanding gained through *shared experience* is integral to her journalistic method. Her experience of trauma guides her choice of topic, enables her to form an empathic connection to her human subjects, and provides a therapeutic way of navigating her way through her own experience of pain and sorrow (Joseph, 2019; Sales, 2018). However, Sales' field of journalism is still firmly entrenched, like historiography, in an empirical mindset when it comes to considering empathy as a valid method of generating knowledge (Joseph, 2019).

Recent trans-disciplinary research in the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience has presented empirical evidence of our ability to use our imagination and empathy to understand the interiority of others as a measurable inter-subjective process, referred to as 'Mindreading' (Allen et al., 2011; Bilek et al., 2015; Currie 2008; Gallese, 2003; Lamm et al., 2007; Marchetti et al., 2014; McAdams, 2018; Nichols & Stich, 2003; Pfeifer et al., 2008; Singer, 2006). While this might be useful in arguing the case for the demonstrable efficiency of empathic knowledge with a historian, or indeed a scholar of journalism, the discourse is still firmly situated within an empirical framework, centred on quantitative taxonomies (McAdams, 1995, p. 385; Morton, 2006).

These empirical frameworks continue to redirect the conversation back to Hilary Mantel's central (methodological) argument, that the writer of biographical and historical fiction is, in fact, pursuing a kind of knowledge that not only sits outside the academic field of the historian (Mantel 2017, L5), but that sits outside empirical research activities into our understanding of the emotional interiority of others *per se*. In other words, to gain meaningful insights into the intersection between the narrative fiction (screen)writer and the interiority of a biographical subject, the scope of the enquiry needs to move away from the empirical frameworks of the historian, journalist, psychologist and neuroscientist, and centre around the locus of praxis in which writers of biographical and historical fictions, like Hilary Mantel and Jane Smiley, operate.

This a space where narrative fiction writing would be recognised as the primary methodology of engaging with the past, where imagination and empathy are core methods used to gain knowledge of the interiority of the historical referent, and where the construction of fictional representations of others as metaphorical (mythic) characters becomes the 'principal vehicle of understanding' of the interiority of the other (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160; McKee, 1998, p. 375; Mantel, 2017, L2, L5).

The conversation between literature scholars Michael Lackey and Bethany Lane, and fiction writers Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín, does just that (Lackey, 2018; Lane, 2018). By framing the discussion between two reference points within the field of biographical fiction, as articulated by Oscar Wilde and William Styron, the writers are able to offer a breadth and depth of insight into their practice unconstrained by positivist notions of historical fidelity and absolutist and consequentialist models of ethical evaluation drawn from applied media ethics.

In this space, the intersection between writer and biographical subject is described variously as;

- a space of invention, a product of being "turned on by the real", using fiction to offer the world a subjective version of the truth. (Donoghue in Lackey, 2018, pp. 132-133).

- where "knowing your subject well enough and feeling your subject out, imagining him deeply enough" produces accurate insights into the biographical subject (McCann in Lackey, 2018, p. 141).
- where *emotional* truth is grounded in ethical intent, "to be honest to the texture of the time and to be honest to myself: not to be didactic, not to tell people how to think or what to think, but to *allow* people to feel." (McCann in Lackey, 2018, p. 144, emphasis in the original).
- an autobiographical space anchored in facts and anchored in the emotional, in which certain deeply personal feelings can be described and dealt with indirectly (Tóibín in Lane, 2018, p. 161).

I believe that reframing the conversation in this way opens up the discourse to consider how the methods and strategies employed by the makers of narrative fiction can generate knowledge that "may elude purely textual discursive forms" (Mees & Murray, 2019, p. 1).

Chapter 4 - Filmmaking as methodology

"This shouldn't be a book. You need more than words on a page to understand how film presents the world of the past" (Robert A Rosenstone, 2006/2012, p. xvi).

The interviews between literature scholars Michael Lackey and Bethany Lane, and fiction writers Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín (Lackey, 2018; Lane, 2018), discussed in the last chapter, demonstrate how reframing a conversation outside the methodological positioning of the historian, and consequentialist models of ethical evaluation drawn from applied media ethics, opens up the discourse examining the intersection between the writer of fiction and historical referent.

Crucially, this framework enables the three authors to freely discuss the methods and strategies they employ in the creative practice of writing fiction narratives about historical subjects. In other words, in describing how they generate and communicate knowledge in the form of biographical fiction, they articulate their creative practice as *methodology*.

Similarly, re-framing the conversation about the biopic in this way, promises a richer and more rigorous discourse about the cinematic process of engaging with an historical subject. But these insights can only be accessed through a clearer articulation of the creative practice that is filmmaking, of which screenwriting is a part. And so the conversation returns to the question of methodology.

To this end, the final chapter of this thesis will review recent texts that attempt to define methodologies within the field of 'screen production practice' (Batty et al., 2018), including a suggestion that screen practitioners should adopt the methodology of non-representational ethnography (Berry, 2018, pp. 103-120), before offering my own propositional working definition of a *filmmaking* practice methodology, that draws on Colin Young's vision of filmmakers as (ethnographically-engaged) cultural producers (MacDougall, 2001; Petrie, 2011, p. 129).

Filmmaking: the tension between theory and practice

Within the fledgling field of screenwriting research, a lively discussion is taking shape about methodologies, with a clear tension emerging between scholars working in the area of film studies, and those who practice screenwriting, and filmmaking generally, over what qualifies as the production and dissemination of new knowledge within the academy (Batty et al., 2018; Raskin, 2018).

Much of this tension stems from the locus of screenwriting, and screen production activity generally, *inside* established university film and media studies departments (Film Making Research Network, 2019). I believe this positioning is exacerbating attempts to define and articulate appropriate methodologies of filmmaking practice within the academy, particularly those that align with the notion of creative practice as research. The problem runs much deeper than film studies scholars asking different questions than filmmakers in relation to a genre such as the biopic.

As Richard Raskin recently argued, there is a pervasive assumption, or at least suspicion, among scholars of film studies, that screenwriting practice, and the kind of enquiries conducted within the broader field of screen production, lack academic rigour. Such assumptions betray a profound misconception of practice, one that views the *making* of moving images as simply the application of mechanical skills (Raskin, 2018).

This misconception manifests itself in repeated clumsy attempts to shoehorn screenwriting and filmmaking into a film studies framework, in an attempt to achieve some form of balance between theory and practice. Such attempts often result in the bolting of a film studies dissertation or exegetic thesis onto a practice output, or even subordinating the practice output to an aside (Berry, 2018, p. 104; Jones, 2018, p. 243).

Raskin argues that the balance (or interplay) in the field of filmmaking practice, should be between storytelling knowhow and applied craftsmanship. To illustrate storytelling knowhow, Raskin outlines five areas of reflexive practice, which can be seen as the basic building blocks of mise-en-scène:

- a) an ability to identify and resolve storytelling problems;
- b) an ability to determine whether in any given narrative there are missed storytelling opportunities that might enrich the viewer's experience;
- c) an ability to generate a set of alternate ways of moving from Point A to Point B in a narrative, and an ability to gauge the advantages and disadvantages of each of those possible choices;
- d) an ability to foresee whether or not viewers are likely to experience the meaning or importance of any given shot as intended;
- e) an ability to enhance the enriching, engaging, gratifying, fulfilling, pleasurable and meaningful qualities of a given film so that it earns the viewer's experience of the film as worthy of sharing and of watching again.

(Raskin, 2018)

However, arguments like Raskin's struggle to get heard, particularly when the subordination of practice is built into the very structure of a tertiary film studies department. Examples of this are evident in universities that have chosen to employ practitioners in non-research posts, pegged to a lower pay scale than their film studies lecturer colleagues, to design and deliver their film production courses. It is remarkable, and telling, that institutions that resist recognizing research equivalence in film practice outputs, in this way, are taking an active part in the recently formed Filmmaking Research Network (Filmmaking Research Network, 2019).

Indeed, such structural distortions are indicative of a level of misunderstanding about the process of *filmmaking*, that leads Raskin to argue that film theory should have no place in film production courses at all (Raskin, 2018)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Despite the restrictive effect of Screen Studies on Screen Production research, there is a small but significant body of screen production outputs in the academy that point the way to the viability of screen production practice as research. See, for example (Bentham, 2019; Millard, 2015; Wood, 2016).

Screenwriting as Research

A scholarly response to these tensions between film studies and film production methodologies, within the discrete field of screenwriting practice, is evident in the work of Craig Batty and Dallas J Baker, who have made some bold attempts to argue the case of screenwriting **as** research (Baker et al., 2015).

But by presenting screenplays as "research artefacts in their own right" (Baker et al., 2015, p1.), Batty and his fellow scholars have ended up separating the role of screenwriter from the wider collaborative (authorial) process of *filmmaking*. Their argument for annexing screenwriting practice in this way, is to free the screenplay from commercial demands and audience expectation, and thereby open up a space for greater self-reflection. But, in doing so, they disengage screenwriting practice from the methodological rigour of *filmmaking* practice, as outlined by Raskin, that both informs screenwriting, and of which the process of screenwriting is a part.

Situating Batty's argument in a broader creative practice context further highlights the problem. If screen production (filmmaking) is the methodological vehicle of creative practice, and research happens through this (collaborative) act of creation (Jones, 2018, pp. 242-243), then screenwriting is simply one of a number of methods, or strategies, employed by filmmakers engaged in the creation of an original artwork - the film. So the choice by screenwriting scholars such as Batty to 'publish' their screenplay artefacts in screenwriting academic journals (Baker et al., 2015), effectively disconnects the script, as strategy, from the wider filmmaking process of producing and disseminating new knowledge. Indeed, by presenting screenplays as research outputs in this way, Batty et al are in danger of re-situating the screenplay as a kind of traditional social-science paper. In other words, the destination becomes a written text divorced from its original *raison-d'etre*, as part of a collaborative, situational and embodied process of cinematic narrative fiction 'vision making'. This is somewhat ironic considering the narrative and sensory turns that have taken place in fields such as ethnography, in response to a decades-old crisis of representation (Clifford et al, 1986), towards embracing a situational and relational (embodied) notion of creative practice that will be familiar to any filmmaker (Oliver, 2017).

By re-situating the screenplay as the destination, Batty et al appear to be moving in the opposite direction. Paul Stoller observed that the written text in anthropology often resulted in excising the passion of the experience of being in the field.

This absence, in turn, usually hides how doing and knowing ultimately shape being in anthropology (Stoller, 2007, pp. 175-176).

By separating screenwriting from filmmaking, Batty et al are risking excising the passion from the embodied, situational experience of *making* films. Or, in the words of Robert Bresson,

My movie is born first in my head, ***dies on paper***, is resuscitated by the living persons and real objects I use...(Bresson, 1977, p.36, my emphasis)

Batty's separating of screenwriting from filmmaking appears even more problematic in a digital era that promises to expand the notion of screenwriting as a filmmaking strategy (Millard, 2010, pp. 11–25).

Kathryn Millard observes that many filmmakers, including Gus Van Sant, Jim Jarmusch, Tony Grisoni, Michael Winterbottom, Wong Kar Wai, Wim Wenders and Chantal Ackerman, are constantly shifting between the strategy of working with words, and the process of production, in a process that Millard terms '*cinematic scriptwriting*' (Millard, 2010, p. 13). In other words, the screenplay is not simply a delineated written text for the finished movie, a kind of blueprint, but part of a collaborative filmmaking process of fluidity and flux, "an open text that sketches out possibilities" (p. 14-15).

Screenplays can thus be seen as an integral part of production, "rather than as a destination in themselves" (Millard, 2013, p. 132). This is further evidenced by an increase in the use of digital image-based '*cinematic scriptwriting*' in the collaborative filmmaking process, including the use of digital photography that "privileges the impressionistic, the fleeting, the transitory" (p. 132), in the '*scripting*' of mood boards and photo storyboards.

An example of the latter is a mood board for my thriller *Deadlock*, made in collaboration with production designer, Richard Hudson, as part of the film development process (Figure 7). The mood board is a scripting process used to articulate a cinematic vision to the other filmmakers working on the production. The image was accompanied by an embedded music track - Jonathan Harvey's *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* (1980). The incorporation of embedded non-diegetic sound as cinematic scripting, further emphasises the limitations of conceiving the published written screenplay as a research destination in itself.

Figure 7: mood board



DEADLOCK production concept. © Richard Hudson, 2010

Asserting the Primacy of Screen Production Practice

More recently, as co-editor, with Susan Kerrigan, of *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry* (2018)²⁰, Batty has curated a series of texts that broaden the discourse around defining screen production practice methodologies in the academy.

In the collection's foreword, Ross Gibson offers a rather (politically) pragmatic view of the fate of screen production practice inside an academy that demands empirical methodologies that produce replicable outcomes. Gibson's prescriptive list of activities, designed to "guarantee that a filmed and edited venture counts as scholarly research" (Gibson 2018, p. ix) is, at best, over-determined and, once again, reveals a misconception of the reflexive rigour of filmmaking practice.

For example, in proposing his anthropologically-derived 'cognitive two-step' between the 'participant observer' and 'detached scrutineer', as a way of adding rigour to the filmmaking process, he fails to acknowledge that this 'cognitive two-step' already happens when a filmmaker engages in a cinematic enquiry through the deeply-reflexive dramatic process of *mise-en-scène*. That Gibson makes a fleeting romanticised reference to *mise-en-scène*, as a "force that courses through the filmmaker" suggests, at the very least, an underestimation of the central reflective role that *mise-en-scène* plays in high-end filmmaking praxis, a role that I will discuss in some detail later in this chapter.

Despite the downbeat prelude, and the reductive pressures of grouping all screen production practice, including filmmaking, under the same umbrella, this collection of essays does contain some robust arguments that recognise and articulate the deep reflexivity already embedded in areas of screen production practice, such as filmmaking. These arguments both support movement towards asserting the primacy of screen production practice in the academy, and outline methodological approaches that would help achieve this aim (Bell, 2018, pp. 47-66; Berry, 2018, pp. 103-120).

²⁰ Susan Kerrigan, University of Newcastle, is the Australian co-investigator in the Filmmaking Research Network.

In contrast to Gibson's attempt to fulfill the empirical demands of the academy, Desmond Bell flags up the absurdity of research funding bodies requiring replicable outcomes from fields that are concerned with creative originality (Bell, 2018, p. 52). Echoing the words of Hilary Mantel - that the writer of historical fiction is in pursuit of a kind of knowledge that sits outside the academic field of the historian (Mantel, 2017, L5) - Bell argues that the creative arts' emphasis on "making and doing" has its own "distinctive mode of apprehending and understanding the world" (Bell, 2018, p. 54).

Bell cites Christopher Frayling's (1993) delineation of art research in the academy, to demonstrate how the first of three categories - Research *into* Art and Design - is currently the dominant paradigm, most likely because it is a category that involves employing critical or empirical methods to evaluate media and design works (Bell, 2018, p. 58). This is the domain of film and media studies.

However, it is Frayling's third category - Research *for* Art and Design - that is closest to what artists actually do. That is, artists engage in a (research) enquiry, of which the artwork (film) output is the artefact.

While the academy may get itself tied up in knots about the methodological auspices of university-based arts research, no one actually doubts that artists engage in substantial research activity in the preparation and making of their work (Bell, 2018, p. 59).

I have described in some detail the research processes and methods I engaged in writing a biopic about Randolph Turpin. It is the nature of this research activity that meets the first objection from the academy. Such research, because it is often hard to evaluate under empirical conditions, is often dismissed as 'background' research (Bell, 2018, p. 59). Bell has no doubts as to the source of this objection.

Needless to say, many of these academics have little or no experience of the creative arts. That said, it seems strange that this set of grounded research activities receives so little attention from academics who have expended so much effort trying to delineate the character of practice-based arts research.

Maybe this research activity is all but obscured by surviving Dionysian notions of the artist as an individual genius. Or maybe from the academy's perspective, it's simply not 'the right kind of research' (2018, p. 60).

Bell contends that any account of artistic research *must* give a central place to the reality that the kind of research artists do engage with, is a "vital part of the process of making original work and improving the acuity and impact of this" (2018, p. 60). In other words, the kind of research methods and strategies I have employed in developing a biopic about Randolph Turpin - archival, historical, Mindreading, empathic, (auto)ethnographic, narrative screenwriting etc - are primarily shaped by pragmatic artistic concerns, and therefore must be recognized "as specific to the discipline and indeed institutional context within which a project is developed" (Bell, 2018, p. 60). Further, 'background' research of the kind I have outlined in this thesis, "both demonstrates the application of an acute research intelligence in its handling of sources and testing of strategies of creative innovation and, in turn, adds to the stock of knowledge and critical insight in art disciplines" (2018, p. 63).

Ethnography and Screen Production Methodology

Marsha Berry steers the discussion towards considering whether a turn in ethnography towards the 'non-representational', offers a way forward for thinking about Screen Production methodologies (Berry, 2018, pp. 110-118).

Like Colin Young, founder of the UK's National Film and Television School, Berry identifies an (historical) affinity between the fields of filmmaking and ethnography (Berry, 2018, p. 117; MacDougall, 2001). When Young first brought filmmakers and anthropologists together at UCLA in the early 1960s, he hoped such interactions might one day produce "anthropologists capable of making films, and filmmakers who would become anthropologists" (MacDougall, 2001).

Given the history of these close associations and collaborations, together with ethnography's narrative turn, it is perhaps not surprising that descriptions of non-representational theory (Vannini, 2015, pp. 2-16) can often read like descriptions of narrative filmmaking practice.

Non-representational theory, as articulated by Vannini (2015), is rooted in the fine and performing arts, but spans cultural studies, the humanities, and the social sciences²¹. Another response to the crisis of representation in the social sciences (see Clifford et al, 1986), non-representational theory is a methodological approach that recognizes what Lorimer describes as "our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds" (Lorimer, 2005, p. 83).

Like narrative fiction filmmaking, non-representational theory is relational (Vannini, 2015, p. 5), in the way *mise-en-scène* as a filmmaking strategy is relational in engaging the filmmaker in an inter-subjective dramatic process with performer, space and material objects, to evoke interiority, and create meaning through metaphor (Gibbs 2002, pp. 1-26).

Non-representational theory also proposes that research findings be situated in the present, with a movement forwards towards emergent knowledge (Ingold, 2011, p. 41). Similarly, films are conceived and presented as present-tense narratives, and experienced by the audience as a movement forward in space-time. Sarah Pink describes the non-representational notion of a generative moving-forward, as applied to video-making in anthropology, by playfully inverting the notion of 'playing back' video tape to describe the reception of a video as experiencing a trace of the world 'played forward' (Pink, 2011, p. 178).

Further, the dynamic, generative, 'moving forward' emphasis of non-representational research draws a clear distinction between traditional (empirical) research methods and what Vannini refers to as research 'strategies'.

Non-representational research renders the liveliness of everyday interaction through methodological strategies that animate, rather than deaden, the qualities of the relation among people, objects, organic matter, animals, and their natural and built environments. In other words, non-representational

²¹ Vannini observes that non-representational theory also draws from fields as diverse as "performance studies, material culture studies, science and technology studies, contemporary continental philosophy, political ecology, cultural geographies, ecological anthropology, biological philosophy, cultural studies, the sociology of the body and emotions, and the sociology and anthropology of the senses - to name only a few" (2015, pp. 2-3).

ethnographies aim to be as full of vitality as the lifeworlds they endeavor to enact (Vannini, 2005, p. 320).

As a filmmaker making a biopic about the historical figure of Randolph Turpin, I have used empirical data-collection methods that would be familiar to a historian, while employing 'strategies' - such as narrative fiction, scripting and mise-en-scène - to *animate* this data into 'cinematic utterances' (Gibbs 2002, pp. 1-26).

Stemming as it does from creative practice (Vannini, 2015), key aspects of non-representational theory can thus be seen as the fruit of a decades-old cross-pollination of ideas between creative practice and the social sciences of the kind Colin Young was facilitating between filmmaking and anthropology in the 1960s (MacDougall, 2001), and of the kind French filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch was applying to his practice as early as the 1950s in the form of 'ethnofiction' (Stoller, 1992).

It is therefore appropriate that Berry draws attention to this link at a time when the fledgling field of filmmaking practice attempts to establish its place in the academy. But I resist Berry's suggestion that non-representational approaches in ethnography simply be "pressed into service" for screen production research (Berry, 2018, p. 107). Implicit in this suggestion, once again, is the assumption that filmmaking practice lacks the required rigour to be considered a suitable methodology for conducting academic research.

Instead, I would like to consider Berry's proposal as a re-opening of a rich discourse between two equally rigorous fields, one that invites a response from the discipline of filmmaking.

My response, as a filmmaker, is to suggest an alternative, working definition of filmmaking methodology that draws on, develops, and fully articulates, Colin Young's ethnographically-engaged notion of the modern filmmaker as 'cultural producer' (Petrie, 2011, p. 129).

Towards a Working Definition of Filmmaking Methodology

To conclude this chapter, therefore, I will offer a (propositional) working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking methodology. This working definition is intended to open up a conversation, and contribute to a better understanding, of how filmmaking practice, of which screenwriting is a part, can generate and disseminate new knowledge. Such a definition will also provide guidance to scholars, irrespective of discipline, who wish to engage with filmmaking practice as a rigorous methodological approach to conducting their own enquiries.

An important step towards defining a filmmaking methodology, is to reach a clearer articulation of *mise-en-scène*, a core filmmaking *strategy* that is often poorly understood, but has the potential to re-connect theory and practice.

Mise-en-scène - re-connecting practice and theory

Literally translated as 'to put on stage', the term *mise-en-scène* originated in the theatre, and was a core concept in the development of film studies as a discipline (Gibbs 2002, pp. 1-5). In his excellent book *Mise-en-scène: Film Style and Interpretation* (2002), John Gibbs observes that many textbooks now underestimate the importance of *mise-en-scène*, and even offer incorrect definitions of the term. A likely reason for this apparent neglect is that *mise-en-scène* was, for some decades, pushed to the margins of film studies discourse by the post-structuralist debate concerning authorship. Implicit in the concept of *mise-en-scène* is authorial intent, so anti-intentionalism effectively broke the connection to the director, and removed her authority in the arbitration of meaning. The beneficiaries of such a significant shift of perspective - from directorial intent to audience reception - was the film studies scholar, and the film critic, who "managed to legitimise the act of reading at the expense of the notion of the author" (Sellors, 2010, p. 32).

But, as Paul Sellors argues, the abandonment of authorship ended up taking a heavy toll on under-represented groups who were struggling to get their voices heard. "In order to challenge norms of gender, race and sexuality, the capacity for individual expression was necessary" (Sellors, 2010, p. 129). As a result, there has been a resurgent interest in (authorial) intentionality - an acceptance that the construction of

moving images does come from somewhere - but one that has signalled a return to the pervasive auteurist assumption that the 'authors' of films are their directors (Cook, 2007; Kipen, 2006).

As discussed in the introduction, scholars, such as Sellors, have challenged the notion of the single auteur, and argued for a new definition of screen practice as a collaborative enterprise, or a collective intentional action, and that this collective intentional action is about communicating a meaning, "of which the material film constitutes an expression conveying [said] meaning" (Sellors, 2010, p. 110). I believe this definition of film authorship as collective action opens up the possibility of mise-en-scène coming to the fore as a means of re-linking the discourse between filmmaking practice and theory.

Drawing from exemplar texts, John Gibbs' working definition of mise-en-scène, in relation to film studies, describes a complex concept centered on the elements that make up the cinematic frame and, in particular, the way these elements are organised. These elements include lighting, costume, colour, props, décor, action and performance, space, camera position and framing. Crucially, it is the way these elements interact, which has a vast number of variables, and the 'accumulative strategies' that the filmmaker employs in making these elements interact, that is significant in understanding their potential for expression (Gibbs, 2002, pp. 1-26).

Mise-en-scène in filmmaking practice

Echoing Gibb's description of mise-en-scène in the field of screen studies, mise-en-scène in filmmaking practice is viewed as a holistic process of constructing (meaningful) moving images (Rabiger, 2008, p. 347), and is one of the key terms, and strategies, used in the collaborative discourse between professional filmmakers (Katz, 1991, p. 360)²².

²² One of the key European pedagogic figures associated with mise-en-scène in filmmaking practice, is Professor Andrzej Mellin, based at the Polish National Film School in Lodz, who has delivered mise-en-scène workshops at the UK's National Film and Television School, University of Television and Film, Munich, and the Norwegian Film School (DNF), and who was a recipient of a CILECT Teaching Award in 2016 (Mellin, 2015 & 2016).

The construction of meaningful moving image involves the interaction of multiple elements, including:

- production design;
- blocking (movement of actors);
- camera position, movement and composition
- lighting
- sound

(Rabiger 2008, p. 347)

Mise-en-scène, as applied to the process of filmmaking, is a problem-based reflective process that compels filmmakers to answer a myriad of questions. The conversations that arise from this reflective process form what Gibbs refers to as the 'accumulative strategies', in making the elements, listed above, interact in order to communicate meaning (Gibbs, 2002, pp. 1-26). At the scripting stage, this is most evident in the combining of rhythm, point-of-view, symbol, metaphor, motif, and dramatic devices such as foreshadowing, in the construction of dramatic content (Rabiger, 2009, p. 348).

In the opening scene of Lynne Ramsay's²³ debut feature, *Ratcatcher*, for example, the filmmakers (writer/director Ramsay, cinematographer Alwin Küchler, production designer Jane Morton and sound designer Paul Davies) used the strategy of mise-en-scène to construct a simple scene - a boy playing with a net curtain in front of a window - in a way that foreshadows the boy's death some 10 minutes into the story, while establishing a central theme of their fiction narrative enquiry - childish play leads to pain and death (Ramsay, 1999). The cinematic elements are made to interact as follows: The framing of the window (camera/composition) transform it into a (symbolic) crucifix. Extreme slow motion (camera) 'petrifies' the boy in the frame, while design and staging (production design) of the net curtain turns it into a death shroud. Non-diegetic sound (sound design) of children playing, together with an unnerving sub-bass tone, forms the final element in the constructed scene (Ramsay, 1999; Morton, 2013).

²³ Lynne Ramsay was a postgraduate student at the UK's National Film and Television School, and a member of Colin Young's final cohort prior to his retirement.

All of these elements can be conveyed at the scripting stage²⁴. For example, in Scene 4 of *Puncher*, I employed mise-en-scène as a strategy to write a similar narrative device that foreshadows Randolph's mortal battle with his siblings, promoter and manager, and the impact his demise has on his daughters. During the scene, Randolph's daughters watch a projected Super-8 film depicting their dad at the height of his fame. When a frame of the celluloid melts in the heat of the projector lamp, "Randolph's brothers, manager and promoter warp into monstrous shapes that begin to devour the smiling boxer. Gwyneth points at the image and bursts into tears" (Bentham, 2019, pp. 3-4).

The concept of mise-en-scène applied as a central strategy in filmmaking practice in this way, forms what Sellors refers to as the collective intentional action of expression (Sellors, 2010, p. 110).

Filmmaking Methodology

Once filmmaking practice is understood as an interaction between a synthesis of storytelling knowhow - employing core storytelling strategies such as mise-en-scène - and applied craftsmanship (Raskin, 2017), a working definition of filmmaking methodology can be outlined.

It is important to emphasise that the definition that follows is **propositional** and **aspirational**. That is, it is not a definition that reflects the breadth of methodological approaches currently employed across all screen production, in all areas and across all platforms. Indeed, the pressure of production schedules in many daytime television drama shoots, for example, severely restricts the possibility of the reflective implementation of mise-en-scène as a core strategy.

My working definition also assumes a series of quality indicators equivalent to those applied in the academy. To quote Robert McKee, "just as the composer must excel in the principles of musical composition, so the screenwriter must master the corresponding principles of story composition" (McKee, 1998, p. 21). It is no accident, that the makers of award-winning high-end cinema and television film and television

²⁴ See Lynne Ramsay's screenplay adaptation of Lionel Shriver's novel, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, for another example of mise-en-scène being applied at the scripting stage of production.

production outputs, are now dominated by filmschool graduates, all of whom have undergone 2-3 years of full-time post-graduate practice-led study. And it is no accident that the subsequent screen outputs of these graduates are those which tend to make the cut into leading peer-reviewed festivals (Wardle, 2019). And it is no accident, that the same outputs tend to be the critically-acclaimed subjects of film and media studies enquiries (Brown et al., 2014).

Lastly, this working definition positions filmmaking as an ethical practice, and filmmaker as 'ethical subject' as discussed in Chapter 1 (Eakin, 2009; Parker, 2004; Taylor, 1991). As Oliver observes with respect to creative practice generally, "quality and originality in practice are also about research ethics, honesty and rigour; and not least in the context of practice-as-research where the politics of representation can be acute" (Oliver, 2017, p. 118). By situating the filmmaker as ethical subject, she can be more resilient in resisting the pressure to compromise in the face of what Marilyn Beker describes as "an industry more cutthroat than a tracheotomy" (Beker, 2004, p. 15).

A (propositional) working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking methodology

Narrative fiction filmmaking methodology situates the practitioner as 'ethical subject' (Eakin, 2008; Parker, 2004; Taylor, 1991) in a collaborative and collective "dynamic space of invention" (Maras, 2016, pp. 14-15). In this space of invention, where truth is grounded in ethical intent (Eakin, 2009; McCann in Lackey, 2018, p. 144; Taylor, 1991, p. 29), filmmakers employ a range of methods (quantitative, qualitative, interpretative and performative), and a range of strategies (including scriptwriting) to conduct narrative enquiries through a dramatic (inter-subjective) process of the imagination (Mantel, 2017). The concept of *mise-en-scène* is applied as a core reflexive strategy (Gibbs, 2002, pp. 1-26; Rabiger, 2008, pp. 347-368; Vannini, 2015, p. 10) and, through a synthesis of storytelling knowhow (Raskin, 2017), generates new knowledge in the form of narrative fiction (re)presentations, with metaphor viewed as a 'principal vehicle of understanding' (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160; McKee, 1998, p. 375; Mantel, 2017, L2, L5; Nichols, 1991, pp. 115-116; Walton, 1990,

p. 3). The resulting screen artefact communicates this knowledge through 'filmic utterances', expressive constructs that convey meaning (Sellors, 2010, p. 110).

Summary

I believe a working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking methodology is essential in developing any scholarly discourse that aims to gain a fuller understanding of screen production practice outputs, forms and genres, including the biopic. I also believe that such a definition, where mise-en-scène operates as a core creative research strategy, has the potential to re-open a constructive discourse between practice and theory in the fields of filmmaking and film studies.

Conclusion: outline of research contribution

I began this enquiry 13 years ago, when the trauma of caring for my dying partner, Alison, connected me, empathically, with the life story of Randolph Turpin, an English middleweight boxer who lived and died a few miles from where I grew up in the Midlands area of the United Kingdom.

As a filmmaker, embarking on a scholarly enquiry within the fledgling field of screenwriting practice in the academy, I quickly realised that little of the existing film studies literature pertaining to the biopic described the process I engage in as screenwriter in the creation of a screenplay, or as a filmmaker making a film. To cite historian Robert Rosenstone, while it is appropriate for Robert Burgoyne to describe a film like *Saving Private Ryan* as a re-illusioning of America post Vietnam, within the field of film studies, such an enquiry gives no insight into the kinds of questions the filmmakers were asking, such as what did it feel like to be an American soldier under fire during the Normandy Landings of 1944 (Rosenstone, 2006/2012, p. xv).

Indeed, I have had to bypass film studies all together, and look outside the field to engage in a discourse appropriate to my creative practice as a reflexive filmschool-trained filmmaker screenwriting a biopic *into* the life story of boxer Randolph Turpin.

Literature

Bypassing film studies literature resulted in my widening the scope of my literature review to encompass some close relatives of the biopic - the literary biography, the biographical novel, historical fiction and the documentary - in order to broaden the scholarly contextualisation of my practice-based research.

One of the central themes arising from these scholarly enquiries into biographical narratives, is the tension between fact and fiction in the re-presentation of biographical subjects (Baker et al., 2017; Coe, 2004; Edel, 1957; Heilbrun, 1993; Lee, 2009; Lackey & Lane, 2018; Mantel, 2017; Nichols, 1991; Woolf, 1927).

As narrative fiction *is* the form in which the writer of the biopic works, strong tensions are evident between the positioning of the reflexive screenwriter/filmmaker and historical referent, and between narrative fiction and historical fidelity, and the truth claims therein. These tensions can be pictured as an axiographic space (see Introduction, Figure 1), a merging of Bill Nichol's diagram of the relationships that exist between the domains of history and narrative in documentary (Nichols, 1991), with the fact-and-imagination domains articulated by Virginia Woolf as 'granite and rainbow' in her analysis of literary biography (Woolf, 1927).

Ethics

The tensions between fact and fiction raise a number of important ethical questions. Can the essence of a biographical subject, like Randolph Turpin, be revealed at the intersection between screenwriter/filmmaker and historical referent, or will the process of constructing a narrative fiction result in delivering and disseminating a lie, or something else entirely, with its own validity as narrative re-presentation?

In *Ethics in Screenwriting*, Steven Maras suggests a way of tackling such ethical questions is through a cross-fertilisation of screenwriting practice with an applied media ethics (Maras, 2016). I argue that this is deeply problematic due to the links between applied media ethics and journalistic notions of objective 'truth', evidenced in a media ethics model developed by Frank Deaver (see Chapter 1, figure 2).

Deaver's *Truth Continuum* clearly conflates fiction with lying, and so leaves little room for the notion that fiction can convey 'truth' (Black et al., 2011; Deaver, 1990).

Therefore, when screenwriters attempt to apply prescriptive media ethics models to their practice (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, p. 113), they undermine the ethical validity of using fiction to engage with factual and historical subjects, resulting in a tendency to mistake literal rendition for verisimilitude (McKee, 1992, p.24; Rosenstone, 1995, p. 15).

As an alternative to prescriptive media ethics models, I propose that screenwriters engage with an 'ethics of authenticity', moving the locus of ethical evaluation towards authorial performance (Eakin, 2009, p. 78; Parker, 2004, p. 53). Applied to the process of writing a biopic, a shift is made away from a fidelity-to-fact orientation,

towards an *inter-subjective* relationship to the historical biographical referent. This (re)situates the screenwriter as 'ethical subject', opening up a space of ethical reflection in which the screenwriter can make judgments about her creative practice.

An ethics of authenticity, embedded within the Foucauldian "dynamic space of invention" that Maras espouses (Maras, 2016, p. 15), opens up profound storytelling possibilities for the screenwriter working in the fiction form of the biopic. One such possibility is to use narrative fiction to re-shape the past in order to give agency to victims of injustice, and hold perpetrators to account (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 129). This concept of ethical re-visioning has recently been proposed by auto-ethnographers as an explicit ethical code, called 'writing to right' (Denzin, 2015).

I have applied 'writing to right' in the final scenes of my biopic, *Puncher*, by framing a real letter (fact) within an invented scenario (fiction) so that Randolph's real-life tormentors can be fictionally held to account (see Chapter 1, Figure 3).

However, opening up a 'dynamic space of invention' in which to engage with the past in this way, further tightens the tension between the positioning of the narrative fiction screenwriter and historical referent, between the truth claims of historical fiction and the chronicles of history.

Historical Fidelity

Reflecting on the tension between fiction and historical fidelity, led me to the series of BBC Reith Lectures, delivered in 2017, by novelist Hilary Mantel. These texts reveal insights into how Mantel, as a writer of historical fiction, bridges the gap between herself, living in the 21st-century, and her historical subjects, living in the 16th-century. Question and answer sessions following the lectures, revealed a significant tension between Mantel's practice of 'resurrecting' her historical referents through narrative fiction, and objections to her 'truth' claims voiced, primarily, by historians (Mantel, 2017, L1-5).

There is a broad recognition by contemporary historians that history is subject to the interpretative practices and bias of the historian (Carr, 1964), but Mantel's stated praxis as a fiction writer becomes problematised in relation to historical fidelity, when

she states that her chief concern as a writer is to evoke the interior drama of her characters. Mantel argues that using *imagination* and *empathy* as methods to construct fictional characters, is the *only* way of engaging with the interiority of the dead, and the only way of re-presenting the way they thought and felt (Mantel 2017, L1). However, even post-modern historians, such as Keith Jenkins and Robert Rosenstone, draw the line at the notion that a writer can gain an empathic knowledge of their historical referent without thinking a-historically and anachronistically (Jenkins 1991/95 pp. 39-45; Marr, 2015; Rosenstone, 2006/12, pp. 120-123).

Despite the continuing reluctance of historians, in the Western tradition, to acknowledge empathy (and imagination generally) as a valid method of engaging with the past, it is interesting to observe that writers of historical and biographical fiction, such as Jane Smiley and Hilary Mantel, continue to be drawn into conversations about historical fidelity on the methodological terms of the historian (Marr, 2015).

The continuing empirical framing of this discourse has significant consequences when fiction screenwriters, such as Felicity Packard, attempt to *formulate* screenwriting practice on the terms of the historian (Packard and Stubbs, 2016, pp. 104-120). By rejecting the idea of story as metaphor for life lived (McKee, 1998, p. 375), and conflating historical fact with objective 'truth', Packard et al end up subordinating fiction to a method of last resort, rather than the 'principal vehicle of understanding' through which truths about their historical referents are revealed (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 160).

Hilary Mantel challenges historiographic models, such as those proposed by Packard et al, by arguing that historical facts are not truth (Mantel, 2017, L1), and that this directs the fiction writer in pursuit of a kind of knowledge that sits outside the academic field of the historian. To generate this knowledge, Mantel uses a range of methods and strategies, central of which is empathy, in a performative inter-subjective process of the imagination (Mantel, 2017, L5). This description of Mantel's creative practice during her final BBC Reith Lecture has more in common with the ethnographer's "distinctively intimate, inquisitive perspective" (Clifford, 1986, p. 23), than the contemporary historian, and for good reason.

Ethnography had a well-documented crisis of representation in the 1980s (Clifford et al, 1986), during which logocentric writing was rejected in recognition that our knowledge of other cultures was contingent on intersubjective dialogue, interpretation and projection, and that representations of others, and ourselves through others, were therefore constructs (Clifford, 1986 p. 121).

As a result, the kind of the knowledge pursued by Mantel aligns with the kind of knowledge pursued by anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, for example, who was moved to write 'anthropoetry' in an attempt to 'capture' the traumatic (Badiouian) 'eruption' of the sudden death of his wife, Shelley (Rosaldo, 2014).

It is the kind of knowledge pursued by Australian journalist Leigh Sales, whose own embodied experience of life-threatening trauma shaped her journalistic enquiry into an empathic, inter-subjective and *therapeutic* engagement with others who had experienced serious trauma (Joseph, 2019; Sales, 2018).

Celebrated filmmaker Martin Scorsese was in pursuit of the same kind of knowledge when depression opened an empathic insight into the self-destructive protagonist of his biopic *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1989, pp. 78-80).

It is the same kind of knowledge pursued by me, as a fellow filmmaker, when intersecting empathically and therapeutically with my historical referent, Randolph Turpin, through the embodied situated trauma of losing my wife to MS.

Depression. I know what it is to be in that windowless box. No way out. Trying to find a space where there is no space. No hope. Still trying to find a way out through narrative. Trying to write my way out of the box. Imagining a way. Creating a way. Unimaginable.

How can we reframe a conversation about the intersection between screenwriter and historical subject in the making of the contemporary biopic, to encompass accounts of creative practice like this?

Reframing the Conversation

It is interesting to note that trans-disciplinary research in the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience has presented empirical evidence of our ability to use our imagination and empathy to understand the interiority of others as a measurable inter-subjective process (Allen et al., 2011; Bilek et al., 2015; Currie, 2008; Gallese, 2003; Lamm et al., 2007; Marchetti et al., 2014; McAdams, 2018; Nichols & Stich, 2003; Pfeifer et al., 2008; Singer, 2006). While this might be useful in arguing the case for the demonstrable efficiency of empathic knowledge, the discourse is still firmly situated within an empirical framework that delimits the scope of the enquiry towards the taxonomization of experience (McAdams, 1995, p. 385; Morton, 2006).

Once again, the discourse is redirected back to the limitations of the empirical framework in which this discourse is situated, and the need to define a new framework that centres on creative practice.

A recent conversation in the field of English Literature, between scholars Michael Lackey and Bethany Lane, and fiction writers Emma Donoghue, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín, orientates the discourse between two reference points within the field of biographical fiction (Lackey, 2018; Lane, 2018). In this space, the writers offer a depth of insight into their practice unconstrained by empirical notions of historical fidelity and absolutist models of ethical evaluation.

Reframing the conversation in this way reveals a 'space of invention', where fiction is used to disseminate a subjective version of the (biographical) truth (Donoghue in Lackey, 2018, pp. 132-133); where the knowledge of your biographical subject comes from "imagining him deeply enough" (McCann in Lackey, 2018, p141); where *emotional* truth is grounded in ethical intent (McCann in Lackey, 2018, p. 144); and where deeply personal feelings can be (therapeutically) dealt with indirectly (Tóibín in Lane, 2018, p 161).

By describing how they generate and communicate knowledge in the form of biographical narrative fiction, Donoghue, McCann and Tóibín are articulating their creative practice as *methodology*.

Similarly, to gain insights into the cinematic process of engaging with a biographical subject, a clearer articulation of filmmaking practice (as methodology), of which screenwriting is a part, is needed.

Filmmaking as Methodology

As the fledgling fields of screenwriting and screen production practice look to establish their place in the academy, scholars are attempting to define methodologies appropriate to screen production practice (Batty et al., 2018).

However, much of the new literature struggles to articulate *existing* creative practice methodological frameworks of the kind described by Mantel, Donoghue, McCann and Tóibín. As Raskin recently argued, this is due to a pervasive assumption that screen production practice lacks academic rigour. Such a misconception has resulted in attempts to shoehorn filmmaking into a film studies framework, in an attempt to achieve some form of balance between theory and practice (Raskin, 2018). And so a familiar pattern has been formed, of an exegetic thesis being bolted onto a practice output, or the subordination of a practice output to an aside (Berry, 2018, p. 104; Jones, 2018, p. 243). In this space, no attempt is made to explore and articulate the creative practice that is filmmaking, and whether it has the methodological rigour appropriate to conducting enquiries in the academy.

This is evident in the foreword to a new collection of essays that promise to articulate 'screen production as a mode of enquiry' (Batty et al., 2018), with Gibson offering a rather prescriptive model of screen production practice aimed at fulfilling the demands of an academy still wedded to empirical methodologies that require replicable outcomes (Gibson, 2018, p. ix).

However, this collection does give a platform to some emergent scholarly voices asserting the primacy of practice. Desmond Bell, for example, insists that any account of artistic research *must* give a central place to the reality that the kind of research artists do engage with, is a "vital part of the process of making original work and improving the acuity and impact of this" (2018, p. 60).

Marsha Berry takes a different tack, drawing on the history of collaborative associations between the fields of filmmaking and ethnography, to consider whether non-representational theory offers a way forward for thinking about Screen Production methodologies (Berry, 2018, pp. 110-118).

Core qualities of non-representational theory, as relational, generative, and situated in the present, can be seen as the fruit of a decades-old cross-pollination of ideas between creative practice and the social sciences of the kind Colin Young, founder of the UK's National Film and Television School, was promoting between filmmaking and anthropology in the 1960s (MacDougall, 2001). Indeed, descriptions of non-representational theory (Vannini 2015, pp. 2-16) can read like descriptions of narrative filmmaking practice.

It is therefore timely that Berry draws attention to this link when scholars in the fledgling fields of screenwriting and filmmaking practice attempt to establish an appropriate and effective place in the academy. I hope that Berry's suggestion that non-representational theory be "pressed into service" for screen production research (Berry, 2018, p. 107), can be read as an invitation to re-open a rich discourse between two equally rigorous fields.

As a filmmaker I have responded to this invitation with a working definition of filmmaking methodology that uses *mise-en-scène* as a core reflexive filmmaking *strategy* (see Chapter 4, pp. 242-243).

Towards a fuller understanding of the biopic form

I believe that such a working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking methodology can re-open a constructive discourse between practice and theory, and revitalise collaborations between filmmaking and a multiplicity of other disciplines, including ethnography. A clear articulation of the filmmaking process is essential in reaching a fuller understanding of filmmaking practice outputs, forms and genres, including the biopic. Indeed, I would argue that scholarly enquiries that tackle questions such as Belén Vidal's "is it possible to capture the essence of a life?" (Brown et al., 2014, p. 1), in relation to the biopic form, must account for the profoundly inter-subjective filmmaking creative practice of authoring the biopic film, a process that is often

spearheaded by a screenwriter with a keen sense of their (ethical) responsibility to the biographical subject. Only then, can enquiries into the biopic move beyond a reductive and generalised evaluation of the form as "a troublesome genre, often cavalier in its handling of historical fact" (Vidal, 2014, p. 1), towards a recognition that the quality biopic is a fictional and crafted 'resurrection' (Mantel, 2017) that is simultaneously a re-presentation of the biographical subject *and* a making of the authorial soul (Myerhoff, 2007, p. 19).

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