

## **Scripting the Experimental Documentary Film:**

### **Developing the ‘Script’ for *Not Reconciled***

#### **Abstract**

Scripts for creative documentaries generally consist of a number of different texts, lists and notes or visual materials that come together to form a guiding plan for production. I discuss this with reference to my documentary, *Not Reconciled* (2009), located in Belchite, a town ruined in the Spanish Civil War. My intention was to provide a voice for the outsider—and to comment on the period of Spanish history that was dominated by the dictator, General Franco, who ruled Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975. With few script models to guide me during the development process, I filled notebooks with ideas, ruminations, lists and photographs. My decision to create fictional characters, ghosts evoked from the Civil War period, led to the development of a scripted dialogue of voice-overs. In that sense, therefore, the “script” exists only in fragments; or, one could say the “script” is the film itself.

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the development of the script for my short experimental documentary *Not Reconciled* (2009), which I wrote and produced as a practice as research project for my Ph.D.<sup>1</sup> The film is experimental in its use of hybrid strategies; enactment through fictional characters who are represented through extensive voice-overs combined with interviews and observational footage of place and the routines of daily lives. It is located in Belchite, a medieval market town in Aragon, northern Spain, the site of a 3-week battle in 1936 between Republican and Nationalist fighters in the Spanish Civil War. The town was left in ruins. *Not*

*Reconciled* builds on my previous film practice, documentaries produced independently of the mainstream film industry and broadcast television. They are located in places where traumatic events such as war have occurred or are suffering the effects of economic globalization. In developing scripts for my documentary films I take into account that the articulation of the past takes place in the present, and thus I seek to recreate the past rather than attempt to recapture it. I do not aim to provide certainty, but to focus on an extensive use of disconnected subjective voices in a range of tenses, which may create clashes of temporalities between sound and image. I rely on chance and the flexibility to change course according to circumstances and I treat the script as a working document that I adapt and change throughout the process of making the film. As Dwight Swain highlights in his manual of scriptwriting: “If there is something that you need in your survival kit it is flexibility” (1976, p. 10). This is particularly the case in making a documentary where changes in circumstances cannot always be foreseen. I am conscious that the term documentary may imply that this is a fixed genre but as Ken Dancyger points out “a documentary can be personal, political, educational, or cinema verite” (2011, p. 106). Further, Alan Rosenthal notes that unlike most fiction screenplays many documentaries do not have anything resembling a full preproduction script or outline but are built on the editing table (1996, pp. 9-10).

In developing scripts for documentary films, particularly where there is an element of experimentation with filmic form, the lack of a recognised screenwriting format such as may be found in the writing of a fiction screenplay with all of its certainties may sometimes appear problematic. However, I argue that where there is an intention to experiment with filmic techniques and strategies this lack may also be

viewed as an opportunity. As Sergio Puccini (2015, p.26) observes as long as there is a guide or plan to guide the development of the project during the preproduction stage there are no constraints on the form of the documentary script:

The work of scriptwriting made in the preproduction of a [documentary] film, will delineate a basic structure that will be used as a guide to the filmmaker during the shooting, with the provision of sufficient plasticity to be altered within the production process, taking into account possible contingencies

In script development for experimental documentary films there may still be, as may be found in a fiction screenplay, an initial treatment, a synopsis and ideas for characters. Scripts may consist of a number of different texts, lists and notes or visual materials that come together to form a guiding plan for production, something we might still describe as the script. In my documentary films I rarely have a fixed idea of what the film will be at the start of the process. I develop a script bearing in mind Jean-Luc Godard's observation that the form of documentary films is often only found during their production. He observed that directors like Jean Rouch: "Don't know exactly what they are going to do, and search for it. The film is the search. They know they are going to arrive somewhere—and they have the means to do it—but where exactly?" (1972, p. 180). Kilborn and Izod point out that spectators may expect documentary films to have an indexical link to the workings of the external socio-historical world before they are transposed into a representational form that can be understood by its audience. In other words, the production of a documentary is not simply an act of chronicling; it is just as much an act of transformation, changing the material in such a way as to change it from a direct record of actuality into a form which Kilborn and Izod refer to as "documentary discourse" (1997, p. 4).

The aim of chronicling and transforming gives me a rationale for the early stage of developing ideas for my documentaries. Dancyger notes that a documentary, unlike a fiction film may evolve from an idea rather than from a script (1991, p. 63) and as Rosenthal observes, “you can’t have a film without a concept” (1996, p. 10). I begin my script development journey with an idea, that may be triggered by an event, a memory, a film, book or article, or a conversation. At this stage I generally carry out research through the internet, books, journal articles and newspapers, and I visit libraries. The research develops into notes, lists and quotes that roughly resembles a treatment for the film. Dancyger notes the value of research for documentaries: “On many documentaries the challenging phase closest to writing is the research phase. Much of the interesting material, characters, and locations generate out of that research” (1991, p 63). To further my research I carry out field trips to specific locations to stimulate the development of ideas and to remove myself from the distractions of everyday life. My script development journey for my film, *Not Reconciled* began from a brief conversation with a friend about his visit to Gualchos, a mountain village near Motril in southern Spain; a village abandoned during the civil war when its inhabitants fled. My friend said he felt like he was in a place full of ghosts. His story resonated with me due to my personal experience of living in Spain many years ago; my interest in the civil war and the passionate debates in Spain around the lack of a truth and reconciliation process to deal with memories of the war. My intention was to make a film about remembering and forgetting the civil war, taking as my starting point the discussions around whether to excavate the thousands of unmarked mass graves from the civil war period and its violent aftermath. I noted in my diary that Gualchos could well be a fruitful location for a film. I always follow up these research activities by visiting the location where I might find tangible traces

of historic events or meet eye-witnesses to supplement my research. Rosenthal notes that the documentary script “is a *working document* not a *literary document*. It is the basis from which plans can be made and action carried out” (1996, p. 11). My “script” for *Not Reconciled* consisted at this early stage of a magpie collection of research findings, preliminary reflections and ideas stored in a notebook and computer files (see Extract A). I set off to Gualchos armed with an embryonic idea and a notebook. This notebook stayed with me throughout the production of the film.

### **Extract a: Notebook**

#### **Find people Around Who Know About the Civil War and the Battle**

As it was before the civil war – photos – sounds of church bells, ploughing, birds, interior of bar. Where was the location of the village cemetery?

#### **Sounds (some from the location, some created later)**

Sounds of war – shooting – bombing, protagonists, start of villagers

Names.

Wheels – carts – water flowing – agricultural sounds – not mechanised – horses – sound of ploughing – digging

Possible music – Ay Carmela; singing in the Figaro. Drums.

Rocks knocking together –

### ***Not Reconciled* – the premise**

My aim in visiting Gualchos was to explore how local inhabitants in the vicinity remembered the bitter conflict that often divided families and whose effects may linger to this day. I have a personal preoccupation with Spain and the Spanish civil war of 1936 to 1939 because of my own intimate and familial connection with Spain. Since *Not Reconciled* was produced as part of my doctoral thesis I did not make applications for funding. I wanted full control of both the aesthetic decisions and the length of the film. Unfortunately, this trip was not a success. After a hair-

raising drive into the mountains above Motril in southern Spain through dense fog I arrived at a small hamlet and a deserted bar. The bartender had never heard of Gualchos. No other living soul could be found in the vicinity. Back in Motril I made enquiries about the whereabouts of Gualchos, but a village ruined in the civil war sparked no interest in the locals.

After this failed trip I scoured the internet for larger villages or towns in Spain that were sites of battles in the civil war. I discovered Belchite, a medieval town in Aragon, Northwest Spain (see Fig.1), the site of a three-week battle between Nationalists and Republicans in 1936, which resulted in the ruin of the entire town and the dispersal of most of the inhabitants. It had been left untouched since the war. It was still partially inhabited in 1954 when the last remaining inhabitant was relocated to a new eponymous village, next door to the ruins. Before the civil war, in this arid area of Spain there was an extensive system of irrigation channels to support agriculture. They were destroyed during the war. After the Nationalist victory, the authorities abandoned the ruined town to the elements. They did not repair the irrigation channels and decided to build a new town of “model” housing a few meters away from the ruins. The lack of irrigation channels ended agriculture and thus destroyed livelihoods. Many inhabitants were plunged into poverty and a forced labour camp of Republican prisoners was established next to the ruined town to build a new town.



Fig 1: The ruined medieval town of Belchite

Belchite was a promising location for my film; there were plenty of published first-hand accounts of the battle to stir my imagination. My aim at this point was to use the images of ruins to evoke the interruption of time and to its dislocation (Benjamin, 1940 [1973], p. 263), in order to examine the metaphorical nature of silence and absence in a place where history tells us that once there was the opposite, the chaos and roar of guns and bombs. I wanted to create a documentary that acknowledges the inevitable limitations of bearing witness, to mediate a past that cannot be recuperated but must be re-imagined through an elliptical cinematic strategy and exploration of subjectivities. The development of the premise for the script was taking shape but I needed more material to develop it further and that would involve knowing more about the town in the present through chance encounters and observations of daily lives.

In the script development of a documentary I rely heavily on flexibility. As Dwight Swain points out in his manual of scriptwriting “If there is something that you

need in your survival kit it is flexibility” (1976, p. 10). In documentary films it is virtually impossible to control every element of the film before it is shot. Unlike fiction, actuality can never be completely controlled in advance. Chance provides some of the most creative and meaningful inclusions in the finished film because they were not even imagined beforehand. They may shape and change the film in new ways and enrich the possibilities open to the filmmaker, particularly when a budget is small. “New possibilities may be discovered while shooting. Strange characters may turn up and marvellous, unexpected events happen even in the best-planned film” (Rosenthal 1996, p. 11).

Chance and the flexibility to change course according to circumstances was an integral part of the plan for *Not Reconciled*. The inclusion of chance involves a script model, which as Kathryn Millard helpfully suggests, is one that “places the emphasis firmly on the creative process and the generation and development of new ideas rather than pre-determined templates” (2011, p. 155). In a documentary it is often places or objects that give rise to ideas that lead to the path the writer will take. This was particularly relevant in *Not Reconciled* when I decided to treat Belchite’s ruined buildings as the central character of the film. Most of the smaller outlying buildings were just piles of rubble, but the churches were empty shells retaining traces of their former grandeur; many buildings in the central street retained their wrought iron balconies, and traces remained of shop signs. Millard, explaining her writing method for her film on Charlie Chaplin, *The Boot Cake* (2008), said she gave her collaborators a 10,000 word essay, a four minute trailer and what she describes as a “grab bag of Chaplin related relics that I had assembled over the term of the project’s incubation: a talcum powder holder in the form of Charlie Chaplin from Adipur in India, a flexible bamboo cane” (Millard 2011, p. 154), and other assorted Chaplin memorabilia garnered from her global travels. Some of the scenes in *The Boot Cake* were based around these objects. In words which many documentary filmmakers

would recognise, she states: “we were finding our way step by step” (ibid). In *Not Reconciled* the most important item to me was the notebook which I carried everywhere. I wrote all my ideas, quotes from readings, lists, notes, and reminders of what I wanted to film in the notebook; from the premise through the pre-production and production process to the end of post-production. My use of a notebook was supplemented through the script development with stills, video footage and computer files consisting of research and transcripts of interviews and later a dialogue script for fictional characters. The dialogue script was the closest I came to the production of a conventional fiction screenplay. Reading many eye-witness accounts of fighters in the battle in Belchite I decided early on to include my surrogate, the character of a flaneuse and story-teller who is also the author of the film. (see Extract B)

#### **Extract B: Notebook for *Not Reconciled***

The idea of someone writing this story, piecing together these characters – describing the process of creating these characters – crossing out, building up the identity. And in between these attempts and misattempts are the conjured sounds of the town, peace, war, then peace and in the new village maybe no sound at all – silent parts - transpose the sounds of the new village to the old village, even the sounds of traffic

#### ***Not Reconciled* Script - Pre-production**

In the development of the script for *Not Reconciled* I carried out two pre-production visits to the location with a non-filmmaker friend. Two women with low budget equipment seldom attract much attention. I took extensive photographs in the ruined town. Some found their way into the film during the editing. I observed the routines of everyday lives. The streets in the new town were generally empty but on

Sundays the locals went to church and to the bars. I discovered a social club for pensioners. I also found that the ruins were not entirely empty. Tourists came, wandering round and in the ruined buildings; men exercised their horses; children played, and traces of graffiti pointed to the presence of lovers. There was no hotel in Belchite so I became embedded in the daily life of the hotel in Lecera, a neighbouring village, getting to know the owners and the locals who ate in the hotel restaurant and drank in the bar. I sought out inhabitants of other neighbouring villages who may have witnessed the civil war. Jaime Cinca, the local historian specialised in the civil war and showed me the location of a mass grave of local inhabitants killed in the war and secretly buried. He was anxious to explain the history of a 3-week battle that ended in a Republican victory and showed me the extensive trenches the opposing forces had dug in the mountains.

After I had spent days roaming the desolate ruins, taking photographs, listening to the sounds of birds and ghostly music carried by the wind, I abandoned the idea of creating a semi-autobiographical flaneuse. I considered it to be an inappropriate trope since I had no connection to the town and would have had to write an account of why, and how I had wandered by chance or intention, into this remote area. For a while I struggled with the script. However, I decided to create fictional characters of ghosts, buried in a mass grave under the ruins. They would be represented as combatants; prisoners, or former inhabitants; unseen but heard through voice-overs, telling the history of the town and giving their versions of the battle and squabbling. These characters would provide some character motivation and narrative conflict in what would otherwise I felt, be a very static film. I drew on the published interviews and diaries of combatants in the civil war for dialogue and characterisation.

I wrote a new list of varied types of characters as the basis for the ghosts (see Extract C).

### **Extract C: Notebook for *Not Reconciled***

#### **Fictional characters**

The Dictator

The Farmer – I am dead - memories

The American – I am dead and I died in glory – memories

The Nationalist – I am dead – pride

The male ghost who can't let go - whose bones lie in an unmarked grave. He is watching. A woman he doesn't know lies next to him – she talks about her memories - of watching of not being reconciled – she describes - – they are the guides. They want to find out who killed her.

Archive material from the battle was not available to me, but I found still photographs of the town and its inhabitants before the civil war and its subsequent destruction on the internet. I decided that my voice off-screen would be heard in the film through brief filmed conversations carried out direct to camera with local inhabitants, asking them the same questions about the war, whether they were witnesses to the battle (most were too young). I wrote lists of brief questions on memory and forgetting the civil war. The shooting script for the production of the film was beginning to take shape (see Extract D).

### **Extract D: shooting 'script'**

#### **Ruined Belchite - shots**

Underground shots at night, light moving, shadows.

Camera: Tripod and hand held.

Shots of remains of writing and tiles in the earth, anything that looks like the traces of humans.

**New Belchite - shots**

Shots in the old bar. Try to get different times, with different people, particularly old guys playing cards.

Guy opening up the bar. Or closing - might be very late!

Shots of new bar. Weekend when it's busy.

Where was the prison camp? Everyone but Jaime says it's the Casas Rusas.

Why doesn't he agree? Film the camp if I find it.

**People to look for to interview:**

Guy who owns the bar.

Aurelio Salavera in his memoir talks about how they shot 370 villagers one day including his father, 11 uncles and aunts, 3 pregnant women, what he calls the village idiot and Mariano Castillo the socialist mayor. Find their descendants?

Julio Diaz had a father who served 18 years in the concentration camp building the new Belchite. He knows about the bars and who drinks in which bar.

**Interview questions** (some of these will be vox pops chance encounters with elderly people who may have been children during the civil war).

What is it like living with the past?

Do people want to forget the past?

What should be done with the ruins? Raze them?

Did their grandparents fight in the war?

How many people were in the prison camp and what nationalities were they?

Did anyone try to speak to them?

Did the people watch when they were working?

Was there an order in the camp?

A pecking order?

Where were people buried when they died?

Water. Was it true that the water was the reason they wouldn't rebuild the town?

A central aim of the film was to explore whether present inhabitants in Belchite and Lecera, retained loyalties to former political allegiances. For years after the civil war ended a labour camp outside the ruins imprisoned Republican fighters, including Russians, British, Americans and Serbs; trade unionists and civilian supporters of the Republicans; There was confusion amongst local inhabitants about the location of the concentration camp. I was told that disused farm buildings outside the town, known locally as *Casas Rusas/Russian houses* was used as the camp, but later it transpired that these buildings had been used to house the relatives of the political prisoners; it was common for relatives to live near a concentration camp in the Francoist period after the civil war, to bring food to the prisoners. In poverty-stricken post-civil war Spain there was little to eat for the general population and virtually nothing for political prisoners. The new town was built around the camp. After the town was completed in 1954 the camp was razed. Since there was no longer a camp to film I decided to film the relatives' houses. According to historic accounts these relatives had to feed the concentration camp inmates and were housed in buildings with boarded up windows, probably used previously for animals, located near an old chapel, isolated from any human settlement. They evoked in me a strong sensation of unease. I discovered that there were two bars in the new town; one containing dark wooden floors and a stag's head on the wall, frequented by poor and older workers, mainly men; and a modern bar with younger clientele. The bars and their clientele found their way into my shooting script. I decided that conversations with inhabitants, through chance encounters, would be conducted in the streets and these were also added to the shooting script. When it was time to go into production I

had a developed premise and shooting script. Enough to lay the foundations for the first shoot.

### ***Not Reconciled: Production***

The filming of *Not Reconciled* consisted of two shoots, each lasting a week. The notebook, the stills from the research period, and the lists of things to film, as well as the way the interviews and observational footage would be framed and shot formed the shooting script. In the first shoot I shot observational footage of daily lives and I carried out brief filmed interviews with inhabitants I found in the streets. The brief questions were expanded to highlight nuances of opinion between groups of people. The second shoot expanded this collection of footage. Both shoots were supplemented by many valuable chance encounters.



Fig 2: The fire at *Casas Rusas/Russian Houses*

### **Chance encounters**

Several chance events occurred during both shoots which were fortuitous in overcoming some of the problems I was experiencing in the sense of stasis conveyed by extensive shots of ruined buildings. One evening at dusk, driving through the countryside I saw a huge plume of black smoke in the distance and decided to investigate. It turned out to be the farm buildings where the prisoner's relatives had been housed. A heap of lorry tyres were ablaze. This fire became a key recurring image in the film, acting as a metaphor for violence, and even if I had imagined it would not have been scripted because I did not have the budget to create it myself (See Fig. 2).

Another chance occurrence was an encounter with Pilar Paris Minga, a woman who was wandering around the ruins. Now in her nineties she had lived in extreme poverty in the town throughout the civil war. She was very keen to act as my guide and I filmed her showing me various ruined buildings. However, I was unable to locate Pilar again to carry out more filming when I returned. I found her address in the telephone directory and visited her house but nobody came to the door.

One Sunday I was filming outside the church in the new town when a girl dressed in an old fashioned long red dress walked into frame, her back to the camera, she wove through the oppressive image of black-clad legs of old people in the foreground. It is unclear whether this girl is a child or a small woman. Reaching the opposite pavement she twisted her body to jump on to it and then walked out of the frame. This image made a strong impression on me; the contrast between men and

women, their faces out of view, dressed in somber black evoked in me a feeling of oppression, while the girl in the vivid red dress evoked joy and optimism



Fig 3: The Girl in Red

### **Editing script**

The editing script consisted of a guiding structure for the first assembly of the film, followed by a rough cut. In editing *Not Reconciled* I did not create a single editing script. I created a wall of ‘post-it’ notes detailing scenes and interviews from the footage itself. The ghosts’ dialogue was scripted as a separate script using a conventional fiction script format, albeit without slug lines, description or action. The dialogue was recorded and cut in as the editing progressed. There were many drafts of the dialogue script in Spanish and English, in collaboration with the actress who played Rosa, Judith Mora Toral. Rosenthal (1996, p.13), observes that in a documentary:

The editing script (visuals) may be the same as the shooting script or something radically different [...] the rushes, not theory, must guide the film, and this material may necessitate many departures from the original script. Hence, the occasional necessity to formulate a special editing script.

In *Not Reconciled* it was the rushes, together with the dialogue that guided the editing. As editing progressed, in order to give the film more depth and nuance I created further characters of ghosts based on published memoirs and interviews with fighters in the civil war. Their dialogue was added to the dialogue script.

**Extract F: dialogue script – opening sequence**

CARLOS (V/O)

Let's imagine the treasure we're hunting is there for the taking. It's somewhere close by, but too far to be seen.

ROSA (V/O - calling faintly at first as though waking up)

Here I am. I'm buried under a pile of earth somewhere, maybe this one. If you look out of the corner of your eye you might see me. I'm always here under the ground. It's strange to hear my voice. But they say nobody likes the sound of their own voice.

CARLOS (V/O - a bit cross to have been interrupted)

Even stranger given how long we've been here.

ROSA (V/O - a little defensive)

Of course.

A pause.

CARLOS (V/O)

Am I an actor outside the character playing a ghost? Or am I a ghost playing the actor who is playing a character?

ROSA (V/O)

## Death's addled your brain.

The creation of fictional characters through voices or enactments with scripted dialogue is not considered to be a conventional strategy in a documentary film by writers, such as Trisha Das. In her book 'How to Write a Documentary Script' she maintains that dialogue is not formally part of a documentary script. She acknowledges the existence of drama documentaries, where "this style mixes the techniques of drama and the factual elements of documentary" (2007, p. 8). However, she offers no advice on how to deal with dialogue in these films and she asserts that documentaries represent actuality, and when drama occurs it is integrated into the diegesis of the world of actuality rather than creating a binary relationship between fiction and actuality. This resistance to the notion of the inclusion of fictional enactment or re-enactment in documentary films lies in a perceived demand that documentary films should provide "evidence", which is generally found in the conventions of mainstream documentary filmmaking whose aim is primarily to provide authentication of the mediation of historical events. Experimental films are often considered difficult to "read" in their use of unconventional filmic language and my choices of tropes and techniques—such as realism or fictionalised enactments—and the inclusion of stills, archive material, found footage or slow-motion that may be deployed in experimental documentary films may be varied. However, contrary to this view I aimed to create just such a binary relationship in *Not Reconciled*. This and the conscious search for chance events to film afforded me a flexibility that helped to open a window onto distinctive and original ways of mediating historical events, thus deepening knowledge of those events. The dialogue enabled me to provide the viewer with exposition as well as character motivation. (see extract G dialogue script).

### **Extract G: dialogue script**

CARLOS (V/O)

Let's talk about the civil war; the fucking bastards on all sides. Their side and our side. And the Russians who were on their own Treacherous side. And the ruins.

ROSA (V/O - sighs then perks up as she talks)

OK. Then, the war. When it began, you have no idea how liberated I felt, drilling secretly in the fields with the others. Feeling like I was in a real army. Even my mother didn't know. No one's eyes on me, walking alone to the fields, feeling the sun on my bare arms. It was the best time of my very short life.

ROSA (V/O)

The fascists occupied our town almost straight away. We couldn't take it back until the Americans came and the Republican army. Our lot came from the villages nearby to fight. They fought for a while then went home for lunch. That was how they thought a war was fought.

Rosa giggles.

In the extract below, the dialogue for three characters of ghosts was written and then edited into the film over a 5-minute take of a ruined church, while a few tourists wander around the bare earth that now forms the former square in front of the church.

### **Extract H – dialogue script**

THE AMERICAN (V/O)

I always tried to keep one pair of reserve socks. If I found a place where there was water then I'd take off my boots and socks and wash my feet. I wondered if my cigarettes would last till tomorrow and if my laces would hold out; or when my body split where exactly it would be.

ROSA (V/O)

I'm sick of these interruptions.

AMERICAN (V/O)

Sorry.

ROSA (V/O)

Stop repeating that!

AMERICAN (V/O)

Sorry..(faintly) So sorry...(fades out on)  
So sorry.

CARLOS (V/O)

Of course they shot the officers. What do you expect?

The battle was won and we retook the town but the war was lost.

They all left, the soldiers, the people, everybody.

Later at the end of the war, the fascists retook the town.

The people came back but by then the houses had fallen down over the bodies.

It was also in the editing that the importance of chance footage obtained during the filming became clear, offering a greater richness of visual and aural material than was conceived in the original script. During the editing much of the observational footage in the new town I had shot in the first shoot was discarded, including a football match and interviews with younger inhabitants who had no interest in the past and the footage of an academic conference although I refer to it in a title at the end of the film. The footage of occupants in two contrasting bars is included. Images of the ruins are extensive. On occasion the wind carried over very faint sounds that may have been singing and these ghostly sounds were edited into the film. Conversations with a few characters I encountered by chance were edited into the film during post-production. None were used in their entirety and some were discarded. The extract below is from the post-production transcript of the completed film. It is a chance encounter I had with two elderly men waiting for a bus.

### **Extract I: Vox Pops**

QUESTION (V/O)

What happened in the civil war?

MAN

There was a lot of jealousy.

SECOND MAN

There was a lot of jealousy.

MAN

Many people died. You had to pay 500 pesetas to hire a worker to work on the land. And if you couldn't repay the

money...

SECOND MAN

You were denounced.

MAN

They said you were a Red, or you were  
a fascist.

SECOND MAN

Have you seen Belchite, how it is?  
That was the war.

MAN

The fascists were bad but so were the Reds!  
When I was a boy I had to work all day for  
nothing.

SECOND MAN

The fascists didn't kill anyone here.  
But the Reds killed people.  
Four or five.

MAN

Four or five innocents.

QUESTION (V/O)

Are you left or right?

MAN

I am nothing.

QUESTION (V/O)

Is that possible?

MAN

Nothing. We're old. As long as they govern properly.

SECOND MAN

They govern very badly. The one who governed well is dead.

MAN

In the war we had communism here. And if hadn't ended Spain would have been ruined. He was a friend of Franco. Not me!

SECOND MAN

He wasn't a friend or an enemy. We won't see anyone like him again.

QUESTION (V/O)

Was it better under Franco?

SECOND MAN

We won't see anyone like Franco, no.

MAN

Franco did some good things and some bad things.

## **Conclusion**

I have explored the different stages in the development of my script for *Not Reconciled*. The documentary script, with its multiplicity of interlinked texts and visual material and allowance for flexibility through accident and chance, forms a

tightly enclosed symbiotic relationship with the final documentary film and can take many forms and formats. The creation of texts and visual material may be appropriate for the production of every idea and therefore it is not possible or necessary to offer a prescriptive script format. In order to scrutinize the documentary in all its forms it adds value to gain access to the working methodology of the texts and visual material that form a rich relationship with finished films more will become available. The examples of the varied formats of documentary scripts including my own, point to the need to underline the importance of creativity and flexibility in finding an appropriate format for a documentary script that creates in the imagination of the reader, the creative possibilities for the finished film. In that sense, therefore, the documentary 'script' exists only in fragments; or, one could say the 'script' for *Not Reconciled* is the film itself.

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<sup>1</sup> The title is a reference and homage to the eponymous film by Jean-Marie Straub and Huillet about history and memory in Germany after the Second World War.