

PROPAGANDA, TRUTH, AND MORALITY

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PROPAGANDA, TRUTH, AND MORALITY

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Karle Ann, and father, James Lowell, my brother Paul, my sister Janet, and especially Laura, for all her love and support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Through the use of propaganda, truth is continually manipulated by power structures (Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 3). Jowett & O'Donnell (2012) in their book, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, state "...propaganda uses truth, half-truth, and limited truth (p. 4)." The manipulation of the truth through propaganda is delivered in many forms, including advertising, television, social media, narrative and documentary film, and persuasive verbal dialogue (Silverstein, 1987, p. 50-51). These forms manipulate the perception of the truth, which cannot be divorced from moral beliefs (Hinde, 2004, p. 1693). Persons and institutions with specific agendas manipulate the truth, and therefore beliefs and behaviors in the manipulators favor (Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 48). This thesis uses the media of film and print design to investigate how the manipulation of information can affect an individual's beliefs and actions, and how moral beliefs and actions can be examined and changed by an awareness of propaganda.

In the film, *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, propaganda is delivered via a printed form distributed to participants in the form of two moral dilemmas, one of which is fabricated, with both presented to the participants with the goal to spur the participants into verbal or physical action based on manipulated truth. *Thank You For Your Cooperation* examines to what extent persons will take action, verbal or physical, based on the manipulated truth (propaganda) introduced by the film's director.

Ideation and Concept

The inception of the film, *Thank Your For Your Cooperation* (2013), began with

my interest in human rights and the use of propaganda by governments to justify abuses. A number of my previous communication design projects explored this issue, spurring my interest into how persons, via propaganda, can be manipulated into believing that questionable moral actions are accepted as correct. In addition, I was interested in the designer's psychological role in the manipulation of truth in order to achieve a goal—be it to sell a product, idea or an agenda. I wondered if designers who create propaganda feel exempt from guilt at being complicit with those that abuse human rights? As a designer and artist I am interested in how design can be used to manipulate the truth and influence beliefs and actions—in this case the darker side of propaganda.

Influences

Thank You For Your Cooperation was influenced by a number of sources. In Craig Zobel's film, *Compliance*, a caller claiming to be a police officer manipulates a fast food worker and a supervisor into following orders that the viewing audience would find ridiculous. They comply with all of the orders given (for most of the film) without questioning the authenticity of the caller. In contrast, *Thank You For Your Cooperation* participants are told that the truth presented is being manipulated and are given the choice to argue a position based on information that may or may not be factual. Both films explore deception and manipulation of facts, but *Thank You For Your Cooperation's* thrust is about how the use of propaganda can manipulate thoughts, actions, and choices, whereas *Compliance* comments on blind trust and acquiescence to perceived authority.

An episode of *This American Life's* program, *The Incredible Case of the P.I. Mom* (2012), asks if one would know when lies are represented as the truth, leaving the listeners questioning truth in everyday life. *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, while also commenting on lies as truth, examines lies that people choose to accept as truth even though they know that there is the possibility that they are being deceived. The film, *Never Sorry* (2012), about the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei, investigates the Chinese governments manipulation of the truth to discredit and punish the artist for his views and

actions critical of government policies. In contrast, *Thank You For Your Cooperation* asks if the participants believe that the United States government participates in the same sort of truth manipulation against the event participants and the nation as a whole, and whether this affects their views. Banksy in his film, *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010), employed graffiti to criticize and comment on governments and cultural systems abuses while leaving the audience wondering if the film is truthful or a complete fabrication. The same sort of deception is employed in *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, but with the focus on deceiving and manipulating both the event participants and the viewing audience. Banksy takes action (through graffiti) to protest government policies but does not physically assault members of the government. However, in *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, the discussion escalates until a violent encounter ensues between participants with differing opinions brought about by false information. In Banksy's film it is clear that the government is the enemy, but in *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, the controlling agency's identity remains unclear, and the participants are left to confront one another. Unlike *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, *Thank You For Your Cooperation* not only examines the film's effect on the audience and participants, but my role as the film's creator and as a propagandist. Turning to other influences, the well-known graffiti artist, Shepard Fairey, created the infamous *Hope* poster intended to help President Obama get elected in 2008. Unlike *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, where the source of the propaganda is purposely kept hidden from the viewer, Fairey's personal propaganda, created to further his personal agenda to elect President Obama, and co-opted by President Obama's campaign to use against President G. W. Bush, paracitically furthered Fairey's agenda of electing President Obama (Interview Magazine, 2013). Fairey's propaganda was not hidden, as was its use by the Obama campaign, and was deemed appropriate by one group of people to be used against another group. Finally, Dutch artist, Jonas Staal, examines the relationship between art and propaganda generated by democratic structures (thehindu.com, 2012, para. 2). Staal approaches his work from a

scientific perspective, attempting to understand the link art has with political thought. Staal states, “With my research for PhDArts I also want to substantiate the artistic process in a scientific manner: can an artistic research project be more than just a suggestive reflection on political visualization in contemporary times?” (PhDArts.com, 2013, para. 2).

On a parallel with *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, which I consider a form of conceptual art, Staal creates installations that question the lengths that democracies will go to advance their agendas. His work, *Art After Democratism*, looks at democracies that use non-democratic methods to enforce democracy, and his project, *Art, Property of Politics*, examines the relationship between, and the effects of, art on democratic politics (art-agenda.com, 2013, para. 2). Where our studies diverge is that I am concerned with how governments and organizations manipulate truth to effect emotions that can change moral beliefs—with the focus on the individual. In contrast, Staal examines art as propaganda, and its relationships and ability to influence and change democratic governments (Staal, 2010, p. 60-68).

Propaganda Defined

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary propaganda is defined as: “ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one’s cause or to damage an opposing cause; *also*: a public action having such an effect” (Merriam Webster, 2013). Brett Silverstein in his article, “Toward a Science of Propaganda”, defines propaganda as “communications delivered with the conscious intent of manipulation” (Silverstein, 1987, p.51). In Stanley B. Cunningham’s article, “Responding To Propaganda: An Ethical Enterprise”, propaganda is defined as, “... its utter indifference to superior epistemic values and their safeguards” he continues, “... an undue reliance on authority figures and spokespersons; the use of abstract language that does not lend itself to empirical validation; a panoply of simplistic thinking and reductionistic language in representations of people, institutions, and situations; and an inordinate preoccupation with conflict”

(Cunningham, 2011, p.138–139). Finally, Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell in their book, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, define propaganda as, “... a form of communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2013, p.1).

While the above definitions of propaganda vary, they are in agreement that propaganda is a device to further an agenda. In *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, propaganda is delivered to the participants and viewers in order to further my agenda. In this case the agenda is to create a film and use the film to study the deception perpetrated on the participants and viewers.

Manipulation

In the of making of *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, the *participants* were manipulated by the following methods:

1. The participants were invited to a party (the event). At the event the participants were provided with two moral questions and told to debate them. The participants were made aware that one of the questions was a complete fabrication and the other question was factual and taken from a current news story. The participants were not told which question was true, with the goal of observing whether the participants would base their arguments and (or) actions on information that was either fabricated or truthful.
2. Actors were introduced into the event with instructions to manipulate the conversations concerning the moral dilemmas among the non-actors at the event. The actors were directed to interject anecdotes about the topics even if they were fabricated in order to sow distrust, suspicion, and disinformation. The non-actors were not aware of the actors’ identities, however they were made aware that there were actors at the event with the intent to add suspicion to the conversations and make the participants

aware that there was a third party controlling, or attempting to control, events.

3. The participants were filmed and their conversations recorded, with the goal to observe whether the participants examined and edited their comments and actions during the event.

The persons *viewing* the completed film were manipulated by the following methods:

1. Viewers were asked to complete a survey if they viewed the film online, or a questionnaire if they viewed the film in a theater. The survey and questionnaire questions were created to not only gather data on the viewer's opinions about the film, but as a cue to tell the viewer that elements of the film may have been false. Because of the survey, the viewer is uncertain as to which moral dilemma was fabricated, and therefore cast doubt on what the viewer initially thought was true in the film.
2. The viewers of the film *were never told that there are actors present*. The film is presented as if the participants were all non-actors. The participants must base their opinions about the film on information that may have been provided by actors acting in a deceptive manner and communicating false information. Through the survey and questionnaire question (see Table 3), the viewers were made aware that there may have been actors in the film.
3. During the viewing, *the audience was never told which dilemma was true*. Again, through the survey and questionnaire questions (see Table 1, 2), the viewers were made aware that one of the dilemmas may have been untrue.
4. *The viewers were never informed if the film was scripted or unscripted*. Through the questions asked of viewers via the same questionnaire and survey, the viewer was made aware that parts of the film may have been scripted and the truth manipulated (see Table 5).

5. The completed film becomes the propaganda targeted at the persons viewing the film. As shown by the viewer survey and questionnaire, a number of viewers were not able to separate fact from fiction, in both the moral dilemmas and the film itself (see Table 1–10).

The deception perpetrated on the *viewer*, using moral dilemma, actor, and scripting manipulations, reinforces doubt as to the film's authenticity, leading the viewer to question what is truthful in their real life lives, and who or what agency or organization may be attempting to control them.

Surveillance and Disinformation

In order to examine the effect propaganda has on people's actions and beliefs, the surveillance applied in the film was intended to draw parallels with surveillance and disinformation methods applied by government agencies to further their agendas. The propaganda employed was audio recordings, film recording, and the introduction of disinformation by actors into the event.

In an example that influenced the film, in 2011, the FBI used a community outreach program in San Francisco and Minneapolis, ostensibly intended to inform the community about the FBI and address community concerns, to gather personal information on potential terrorist activities on American Muslim religious organizations (ACLU, 2012). This was a systematic and planned operation where FBI employees posing as outreach personnel were actually agents with the agenda to gather potentially damning information on suspected or potential terrorists—not unlike the film with actors with an agenda posing as non-actors. In another example, as in *Thank You For Your Cooperation*, where fictitious facts were presented as truth in order to sway opinions, President George W. Bush knowingly put forward a number of erroneous facts in order to justify war with Iraq (Pfiffner, 2004, pp. 25–46). Most disturbingly about this case was the large amount of United States citizens who were willing to accept these erroneous facts as truth. As with citizens swayed by President Bush, the film participants were

willing to accept, and indeed act, on manipulated truths even though they were aware of the possibility that the information was fabricated and they were being monitored and manipulated. Indeed, none of the participants refused to participate because the potential facts might be false.

CHAPTER II

THE FILM

Pre-production

Actors and Non-actors

It was determined that a mix of actors and non-actors would be used to create a sense of distrust and to “seed” the event, with people tasked to inject paranoia and manipulated truth and keep the conversations focused and continuous. The actors were chosen for their improvisation ability and film experience. Actors were also included for their willingness to be directed should the need arise.

Location

Because of a limited budget it was determined that it would be advantageous to hold the event at the directors house. In addition to being rent free, the environment would be easier to control than rented locations; the main concerns being noise control and room to create the fight and arrest scenes.

Moral Dilemmas

Germane to the project was the creation of one factual and one fabricated moral dilemma that would be provided to the participants at the event. The intent of the dilemmas was to create a vehicle to introduce propaganda and untruth into the discussions at the event. One of the dilemmas would be truthful and the other dilemma would be a complete fabrication. A list of possible questions was compiled from current news stories for consideration. The factual dilemma settled upon was drawn from a 2009

speech given at Harvard by the Dalai Lama (guardian.co.uk, 2011, para. 1):

“At Harvard in April 2009, the Dalai Lama explained that “wrathful forceful action” motivated by compassion, may be “violence on a physical level” but is “essentially nonviolence”. So we must be careful to understand what “nonviolence” means. Under the right conditions, it could include killing a terrorist. Do you agree with the Dalai Lama?”

This dilemma was chosen because it would take advantage of the general western perception of Buddhism as a completely non-violent practice, and the very complicated and varied Buddhist dogma explaining that in some cases killing can be used to create karma for a common good (Keown, 1996, p. 344). It was expected that most of the participants, and indeed the viewers, would be surprised that the Dalai Lama would make such a statement and assume that the dilemma was fabricated. In actuality 66.04% out of 159 survey respondents thought that the statement was false (see Table 1).

For the second moral dilemma I created a fabrication to play on conspiracy rumors and the general distrust among citizens toward government agencies (Cook & Gronke, 2005, p. 784).

“In secret documents recently accessed through the freedom of information act it was disclosed that the CIA has been secretly selling illicit drugs, via drug dealers employed by the CIA, to areas in the Midwest to create a new pool of drug offenders to fill under-populated, privately owned prisons. The memo said that the policy was important to support the economy of rural areas in troubled economic times. Do you agree?”

This statement was composed to take advantage of the moral conflict between supporting local economies and the distrust citizens have with the CIA’s alleged involvement in illegal drug trafficking (Cockburn, 1988). Survey results showed that 46.20% of the viewers indicated that they thought that the fabricated statement was true; furthermore 53% of the respondents indicated that the United States Government had an

agenda to control the population (see Tables 2, 9).

Primary Photography

Primary filming took place on November, 10, 2012 with additional photography taking place on November 17, 2012. Approximately thirty people attended the primary event including six actors. Four of the actors were called back for the second shoot at which time the “fight” scene was shot. Additionally, microphones were placed in all the rooms of the house to capture conversations that were not caught on film. The dilemmas were provided to the participants on printed forms as they entered the event. Camera’s used: Panasonic DVX 100B mini DV camera, an iPhone camera, and a consumer grade digital camera recording approximately six hours of footage.

Crafting the Film

An important part of the production of *Thank You For Your Cooperation* was to design a look that was completely transparent—devoid of any design elements that would pull the viewer out of the documentary, government-issue feel of the film and away from the feeling of being “in” the event. This “anti-design” would include omission of all unnecessary fonts and styles that would not fit a generic government look. Any sentimentality and forced beauty in the camera angles and acting would be avoided. The final film was presented in black and white to emphasize the documentary, cold war era attitude of the film and avoid the distraction of color. The cameras were hand-held, with limited use of a tripod in order to avoid a scripted narrative film feel. The goal was to make the viewer feel that they were a “fly on the wall,” watching the events unfold. In addition, the documentary approach worked well within the limited budget available. The excellent quality of the Panasonic DVX100B footage contrasted well with the grainy, poor quality footage of the other cameras—creating texture and further accentuating the documentary feel of the film.

Directing, Editing, and Audio Strategies

Even though the film was presented as an unscripted party, a large part of the

film required direction, especially the fight scene, the arrest scene, and a number of scenes with the participants interacting during the party. Interestingly, according to the results of the survey, 52.53% of respondents thought that the events at the party were unscripted and 35.03% thought that there were no actors present (see Table 5, 3). Unlike a conventional scripted film, with the character names and persona's created by the screenwriter, the characters names and biographies were created and added in the editing phase, and a story arc was created around these various personas.

Audio played an important part in the film with a primary goal to support the illusion that the viewer was surrounded by numerous party conversations. The audio was mixed so that the viewer must choose which conversation to listen to—with the aim that viewers would be compelled to watch the film again to focus on other conversations. At various points, the film fades to black leaving only a single voice audible. This served to focus the viewer on the spoken message without visual distraction, and signals something important is being communicated. The varying quality of the sound was intentional, with good sound quality being achieved using a high quality microphone on the primary camera, boom microphone, and stand alone microphones. Fairly “bad” sound was recorded using the consumer grade cameras microphones. The wind noise, static, and ambient sound captured outdoors created a contrast to the high quality sound captured indoors, supporting the documentary feel of the film and generating aesthetic interest. Music was added in editing to enhance the party illusion and the sound levels were gradually reduced to zero during the course of the film to enhance the tension in the film's last scenes.

Story Arc

At the films inception, I wanted the story to begin with a festive art party and end in violence. Beyond that the entire story was created in editing, relying on chance and improvisation to provide the content. As the editing progressed a storyline was crafted with the energetic and light-hearted party becoming increasingly tense as the

persons of interest were revealed and the conversations became serious and passionate. Studying the performances it became apparent to the director that the characters of Ricky Owens Woods and Francis Haynes Jones should be pivotal protagonist in the film. Their passionate argument (minute 13:15) about the manipulated moral dilemma would lead to a violent conclusion to the film. Interestingly, the person playing Ricky Owens Woods was not an actor and this was his first role. The role of Alberto Vasquez was edited to be the voice of reason, balancing the irrational and sometimes confusing views of many of the characters in the film. Ken Davis Montgomery's solo guitar scene was included to give comic relief to an otherwise increasingly serious story. The scene of Ricky Owens Woods driving at the beginning of the film established the event setting.

The final film's story arc is as follows:

- a. Three screens of text giving important information to introduce the movie (see Figure 1, 2, 3).
- b. Sequence showing one of the non-actors driving to the event (see Figure 4).
- c. Montage of people interacting in a party atmosphere (see Figure 5).
- d. Screen of text stating the first moral dilemma (see Figure 6).
- e. Introduction and sequence of first person of interest: Ricky Owens Woods (see Figure 7).
- f. Introduction and sequence of second person of interest: Tina Chan (see Figure 8).
- g. Introduction and sequence of third person of interest: Alberto Vasquez (see Figure 9).
- h. Introduction and sequence of fourth person of interest: Ken Davis Montgomery (see Figure 10).
- i. Sequence of Ken Davis Montgomery playing guitar (see Figure 11).
- j. Screen of text stating the second moral dilemma (see Figure 12).
- k. Introduction and sequence of fifth person of interest: Crissy Smith (see Figure 13).
- l. General debate among participants (see Figure 14).

- m. Introduction and sequence of sixth person of interest: unknown person (see Figure 15).
- n. Sequence of Crissy Smith being arrested (see Figure 16).
- o. Introduction and sequence of seventh person of interest: Francis Haynes Jones (see Figure 17).
- p. Ricky Owens Woods introspection sequence (see Figure 18).
- q. Fight scene sequence (see Figure 19).
- r. Credits (see Figure 20).

CHAPTER III

OUTCOMES

Observations and Analysis

The production of *Thank You For Your Cooperation* revealed some interesting observations:

1. The participants were not aware which of the dilemmas was a fabrication, yet they passionately argued their position knowing the dilemma may be untrue.
2. The presence of actors, and their injection of disinformation had little effect on the non-actors opinions and actions. According to the survey, 83.33% of the participants said that the actors had no effect on their opinions about the moral dilemmas (see Table 19).
3. The film was presented as an unscripted event and the viewers were asked, via a survey, to state which dilemma they thought was true. According to the survey results, 46.20% of the respondents thought that the question about the CIA was not fabricated, when in fact it was (see Table 2), and 66.04% of respondents thought that the question about the Dalai Lama was a fabrication, when in fact, it was not (see Table 1).
4. A review of the footage suggested that none of the participants changed their views on the issues. Interestingly, and in contradiction, the survey showed that 16.67% of the participants responding altered their views on the moral dilemmas and 33.33% were not sure (see Table 18). According to the footage, the participants that did challenge the positions generally took a combative,

entrenched stance, without any flexibility to consider changing their opinions on the issues.

5. Even though the film was almost completely directed (but not scripted), the footage and survey suggested that the participant's verbal arguments could transcend civil debate and had the potential to enhance violence (see Table 17). In the final scene of the film where there was a violent confrontation, heightened emotions caused by the previous arguments perhaps resulted in the fight becoming more authentic than would normally be expected in a directed fight scene. Considering that the viewers knew that it was a film, and knew that generally films are contrived entertainment, it is interesting that 32.48% of the viewers surveyed thought the fight was authentic (see Table 4). Indeed, one of the participants was sent to the hospital with suspected broken ribs, suggesting that the directed fight had turned "real". Possibly some of the viewers sensed that authentic emotions had taken over, and the line between the participants pretending that they were passionately debating an issue and letting their true emotions drive the conversation had become blurred. This is marginally supported by the participant survey that show 8.33% of the participants were angered by the discussions, and 16.67% thought that they might have resorted to violence to prove their point (see Tables 16, 17).
6. Even though the participants were aware that their conversations were being recorded, even when not on camera, and had signed a release, some of them asked the director if their conversations would be omitted from the final cut (some were, some were not). Apparently they either forgot their conversations were being recorded, or didn't care and had second thoughts after the production. 25% of the participants responding to the survey indicated that they were worried that their conversations could have negative consequences, and a further 8.33% were not sure (see Table 13). Indeed, review of the audio conversations did reveal some

sensitive and personal discussions.

The Film Becomes Propaganda

As the director, I originally intended *Thank You For Your Cooperation* to be a documentary, recording the conversations at the event. Instead, the film evolved into a complete work unto itself, able to manipulate the viewer's perceptions of the truth. I manipulated the footage into a simulated documentary film with a story line intended to deceive, but in doing so highlighting the manipulation of truth. The audience was given the option to accept the film as fact or fiction, and only when presented with the questionnaire or survey did they realize that they may have been lied to, and even then they were unaware to what extent.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The primary intent of this thesis was to investigate how the manipulation of truth calls into question an individual's belief system, and that moral belief systems and actions can be examined and changed through awareness of propaganda. After a review of the footage, production of the film, and the results of the surveys and questionnaires, it was clear that very few participants or viewers changed their moral beliefs or opinions due to a dialogue with another participant or by viewing the film (see Tables 7, 18). Instead, the event became an examination by the participants of each other passionately discussing the authenticity of the dilemmas, the details of the circumstances surrounding the dilemmas, and to air complaints about the government. Interestingly, the participants were aware that there were elements of propaganda being introduced into the event, but this knowledge had no measurable impact on their opinions, beliefs, or actions (see Table 19). Furthermore, participants were willing to emotionally argue the dilemmas even though they knew that the dilemmas may or may not have been factual, and at no point did any participant refuse to discuss the dilemmas or question the validity of the event.

Thank You For Your Cooperation as an effective piece of propaganda in the traditional sense is debatable. The film succeeds as fiction disguised as a documentary, able to deceive and manipulate both participants and viewers. However, unlike traditional propaganda, it is lacking an obvious agenda such as glorifying the achievements of a political party, or advocating for a specific cause. Instead, the film subtly presents the manipulation of truth to the viewer for their conscious or subconscious consideration.

Originally I intended to make a straight documentary, sans any story, and rely on a jumble of clips to convey the commentary on truth manipulation and let the viewer come to their own conclusions. However, in editing, it became apparent that in order for the film to be effective as propaganda, it should hold the audience's attention and be assessed as entertainment and not as a scholarly document. In my view, if the viewer loses interest then they will not care enough to puzzle out the film's message and the opportunity to deliver propaganda would be missed. As defined characters emerged in editing, I saw the opportunity to create a story line and present the film in a narrative form, with the beginning leaning to a documentary style, and then transitioning to a narrative form. The effect is that the audience is unaware (at least for a while) that they have been pulled from a documentary style into a narrative story that they have become invested in.

As the director it was my intent to mimic covert organization's actions that attempt to manipulate persons to further an agenda. In this case, my agenda was to create an event to advance my thesis project. I was taking advantage of the participants, as they were going beyond what I might have done had I been asked to participate in a similar circumstance. However, during the production of the film this didn't affect me. In fact, I took a measure of pleasure listening to the participant's conversations and making judgments about their character. This led to a better understanding of how people could manipulate truth, and deceive for their own ends without regret, regardless of the morality of the underlying ideology. Furthering their agenda, as it was to me, was all that mattered. After the film was completed, I reconsidered my own moral beliefs and became uncomfortable that I had manipulated the truth (and people) for my own end. I questioned my ethics as both an artist and human being. Indeed, I had become the propagandist that I was studying. This line of questioning led me to investigate other sources of research into design ethics in the creation of propaganda. I found a number of sources on the current ethics of design, however they were generally related to the responsibilities of the designer to their clients and the marketplace. This includes Milton

Glaser's essay, *Since Then*, and Victor Margolin's essay, *The Citizen Designer* (Glaser, 2005, pp. 144-148) (Margolin, 2002, pp. 118-128). Unlike the thrust of *Thank You For Your Cooperation's* research, these writings assume that the designer is working from an attitude of benevolence. As far as studying *why* designers choose to stray ethically, Michael Schmidt in his essay, *Hello Mrs. Hernandez*, briefly touches on designers' needs to satisfy their creative urges but still satisfy the needs of their clients, even if the client's agenda is detrimental to some segments of the population. Milton Glaser in his lecture, *This is What I Have Learned*, discusses (if somewhat tangentially) his need to use his graphic design skills to affect the situation after 9/11, but for the most part studies on designers in modern times who create propaganda, their motivations and psychological makeup intended to injure, are few (Glaser 2002, p. 1) (Schmidt, 2004, pp. 13–14).

Future Research

Thank You For Your Cooperation's inconclusive outcome warrants a number of future research directions. These might include an examination of the effects of propaganda applied over a long period of time, an investigation into the history of propaganda, and how it changes the attitudes of populations as a whole. Another area of interest may lie in investigating why persons felt comfortable disclosing personal information even though they knew that their conversations were being recorded. A third area of study might include an examination of how and why propaganda can incite violence, and at what point does anger over issues spill over to violence. Finally, an arena of potential study would be the emotional motivations and consequences of designers who produce propaganda. Do they have to change their moral beliefs in order to manipulate truth for dubious motives?

The creation of *Thank You For Your Cooperation* was a risk. There was no script and the success of the film, as both entertainment and a study into the manipulation of truth, depended on the participation and enthusiasm of the actors, non-actors, and crew. As director I felt very fortunate that the film yielded results both as a work of

art and a tool to further an understanding of propaganda and the manipulation of truth. I was fascinated by the film's evolution during the production, but especially in the editing process where the story was created. The use of improvisation led to the creation of a story line that was not planned, and the layers of the audio became a much more important element in the film than was originally foreseen. All told, the project went beyond my expectations and resulted in a film that compels both the viewer and participant to consider how the manipulation of truth can affect their lives.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Viewer Survey Questions

Table 1. Viewer survey question 1.

After watching the film do you think that the following statement is a complete fabrication? The Dalai Lama explained that under the right conditions killing a terrorist is an acceptable form of nonviolence. He said, “wrathful forceful action” motivated by compassion, may be “violence on a physical level” but is ”essentially nonviolence”. So we must be careful to understand what “nonviolence” means.
Yes: 66.04%
No: 33.96%

Answered: 158 Skipped: 1

Table 2. Viewer survey question 2.

After watching the film do you think that the following statement is a complete fabrication? A memo recently accessed through the freedom of information act disclosed that the CIA has been secretly selling illicit drugs, via drug dealers employed by the CIA, to areas in the Midwest. The intent is to create a new pool of drug offenders to fill underpopulated, privately owned prisons. The policy is intended to support the economy of rural areas in troubled economic times.
Yes: 53.80%
No: 46.20%

Answered: 157 Skipped: 2

Table 3. Viewer survey question 3.

Do you feel that any of the participants in the film were actors?
Yes: 64.97%
No: 35.03%

Answered: 157 Skipped: 2

Table 4. Viewer survey question 4.

Do you think that the fight scene at the end of the film was real?
Yes: 32.48%
No: 67.52%

Answered: 157 Skipped: 2

Table 5. Viewer survey question 5.
Do you think the events at the party were unscripted (real events)?
Yes: 52.53%
No: 47.47%
<i>Answered: 158 Skipped: 1</i>

Table 6. Viewer survey question 6.
Do you think the arrest scene was real?
Yes: 26.28%
No: 73.72%
<i>Answered: 156 Skipped: 3</i>

Table 7. Viewer survey question 7.
Was the party created by an agency of the government to gather intelligence on the participants?
Yes: 30.57%
No: 69.43%
<i>Answered: 157 Skipped: 2</i>

Table 8. Viewer survey question 8.
Did viewing this film alter your moral beliefs?
Yes: 1.27%
No: 98.73%
<i>Answered: 158 Skipped: 1</i>

Table 9. Viewer survey question 9.
Do you believe the United States Government is attempting to control its citizens?
Yes: 53.16%
No: 46.84%
<i>Answered: 158 Skipped: 1</i>

Table 10. Viewer survey question 10.
Do you believe that this survey is an attempt by the United States Government to gain information about you?
Yes: 14.01%
No: 85.99%
<i>Answered: 157 Skipped: 2</i>

Participant Survey Questions

Table 11. Participant survey question 1.

Did you censor your conversations during the party because you knew they were being recorded?
Yes: 16.67%
No: 75%
Maybe: 8.33%
<i>Answered: 12 Skipped: 0</i>

Table 12. Participant survey question 2.

Do you regret anything that you said at the party because it was recorded?
Yes: 0%
No: 100%
<i>Answered: 12 Skipped: 0</i>

Table 13. Participant survey question 3.

Were you concerned that any information you revealed about yourself could have negative consequences to yourself, friends, and family?
Yes: 25%
No: 66.67%
Not Sure: 8.33%
<i>Answered: 12 Skipped: 0</i>

Table 14. Participant survey question 4.

Were you reluctant to discuss the moral dilemmas until the director told you to?
Yes: 8.33%
No: 83.33%
Not Sure: 8.33%
<i>Answered: 12 Skipped: 0</i>

Table 15. Participant survey question 5.

If you were reluctant to act without instructions from the films director was it because:
You didn't want to make a mistake and feel foolish: 0%
You didn't want to compromise the production: 41.67%
I wasn't reluctant: 58.33%
<i>Answered: 12 Skipped: 0</i>

Table 16. Participant survey question 6.

Did the discussions about the moral dilemmas during the party cause you to become:
Angry: 8.33%
Agitated: 25%
Calm: 0%
Introspective: 66.67%
I felt nothing: 16.67%

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

Table 17. Participant survey question 7.

Could being involved in a heated discussion about the moral dilemmas have driven you to commit violence in order to prove your point?
Yes: 0%
Maybe: 16.67%
Hell no: 83.33%

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

Table 18. Participant survey question 8.

At any point during the party did the discussions about the moral dilemmas change your position on the issues?
Yes: 16.67%
No: 50%
Not sure: 33.33%

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

Table 19. Participant survey question 9.

Did knowing that there were actors at the party, who may have been told to spread disinformation about the issues, change your position on the moral dilemmas?
Yes: 8.33%
No: 83.33%
I didn't know there were actors at the party: 8.33%

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

Table 20. Participant survey question 10.

Would your position on the moral dilemmas be different if you had not been filmed and recorded?
Yes: 16.67%
No: 58.33%
Not sure: 25%

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

APPENDIX B

SCREEN STILLS FROM THE FILM, *THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION*

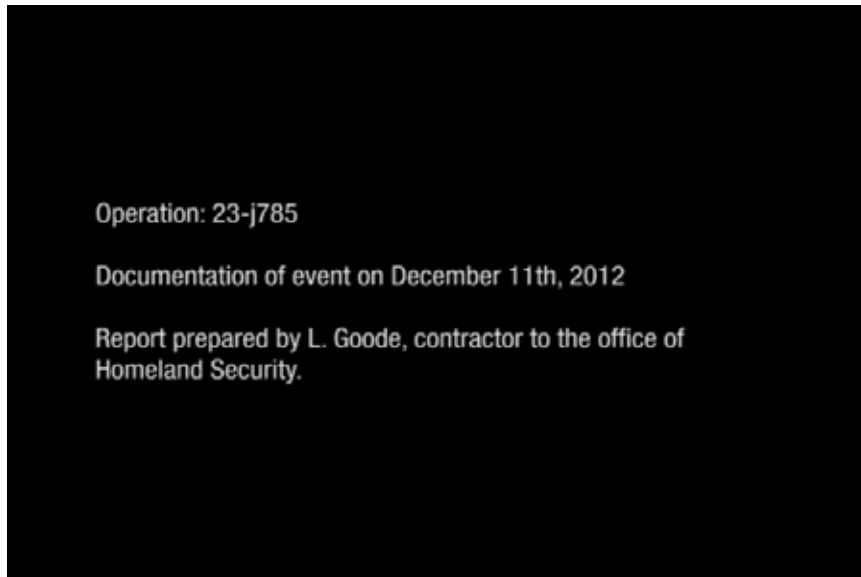


Figure 1. Film introduction screen.

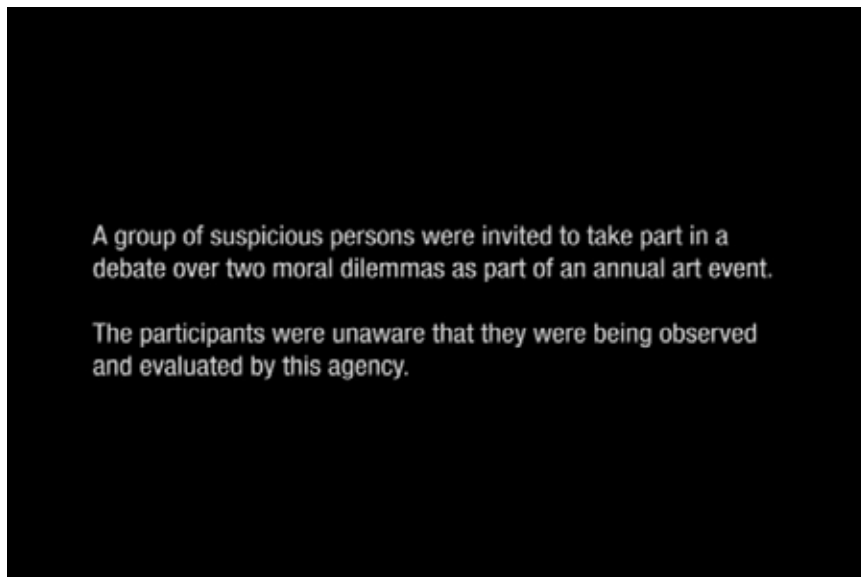


Figure 2. Film introduction screen.

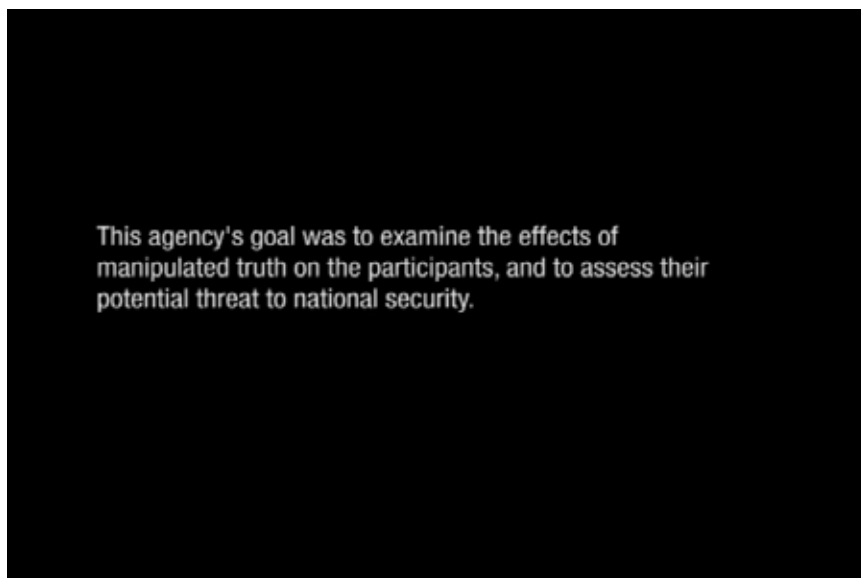


Figure 3. Film introduction screen.



Figure 4. Ricky Owens Woods driving to event.



Figure 5. People interacting at party.

Moral question 1:

The Dalai Lama explained that under the right conditions killing a terrorist is an acceptable form of nonviolence. He said, "wrathful forceful action" motivated by compassion, may be "violence on a physical level" but is "essentially nonviolence". So we must be careful to understand what "nonviolence" means.

Figure 6. The first moral dilemma.

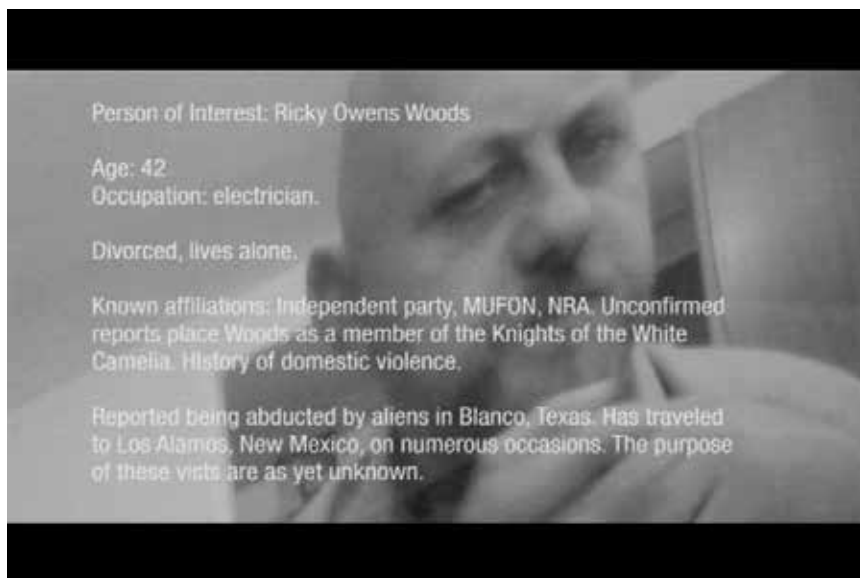


Figure 7. First person of interest.

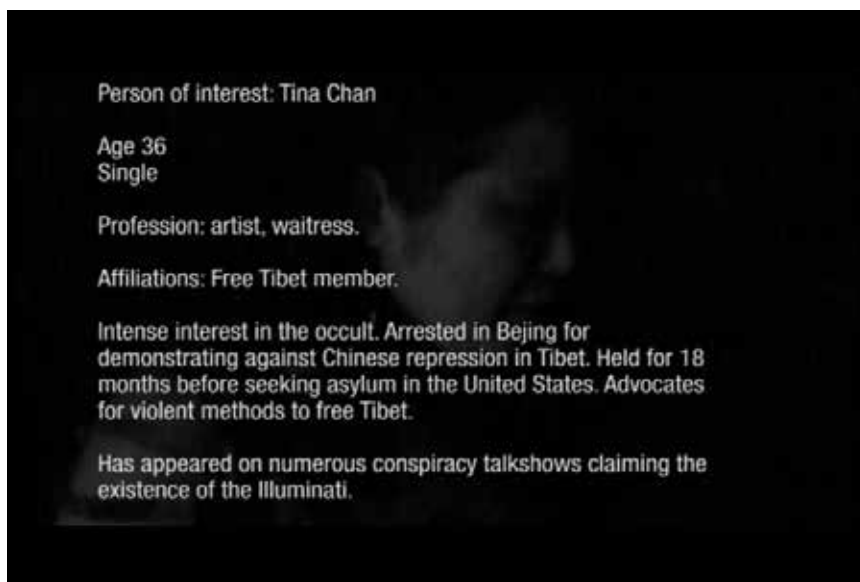


Figure 8. Second person of interest.

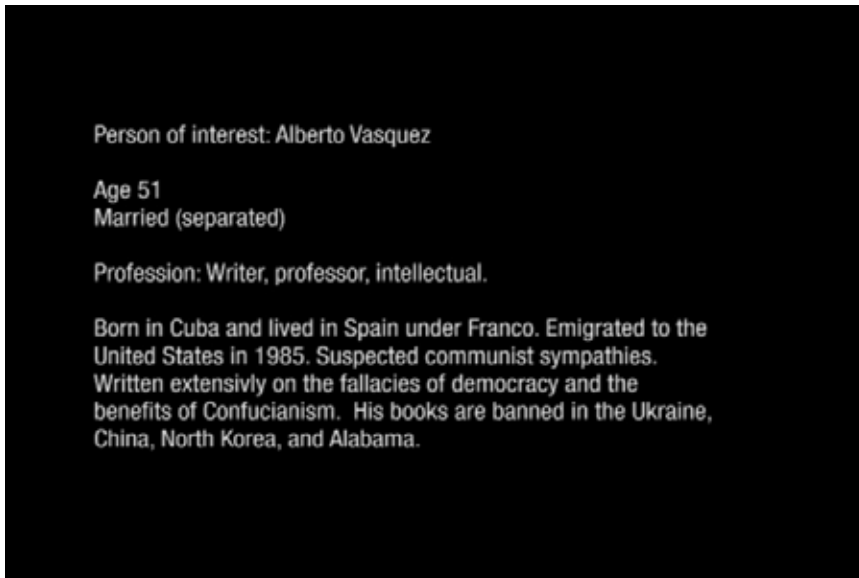


Figure 9. Third person of interest.



Figure 10. Fourth person of interest.



Figure 11. Ken Davis Montgomery playing guitar.

Moral question 2:

A memo recently accessed through the freedom of information act disclosed that the CIA has been secretly selling illicit drugs, via drug dealers employed by the CIA, to areas in the Midwest. The intent is to create a new pool of drug offenders to fill under-populated, privately owned prisons. The policy is intended to support the economy of rural areas in troubled economic times.

Figure 12. Second moral dilemma.



Figure 13. Fifth person of interest.



Figure 14. Participants debating.

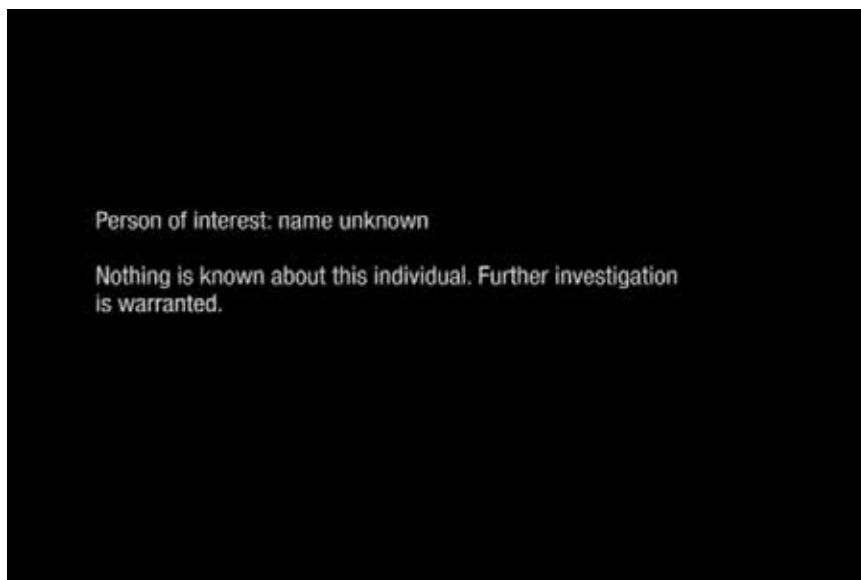


Figure 15. Sixth person of interest.



Figure 16. Crissy Smith being arrested.



Figure 17. Seventh person of interest.



Figure 18. Ricky Owens Woods introspection sequence.



Figure 19. Fight scene.



Figure 20. Credits.

APPENDIX C

LINK TO THE FILM, *THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION*

<https://vimeo.com/59110054>

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VITA

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