

trapped between the complexity of making something look simple and the desire to give their films narrative clarity.

Video offers a way of cutting this Gordian knot, a magical transformation of poor image quality and clumsy angles from vice into virtue. When Lanzmann filmed his more reluctant contributors with a secret camera there was more at stake than merely securing a witness. The patina of the image, the way it sat within the more conventional grammar of the rest of his film, was a powerful bonus. Even if his ex-Nazis lied we knew they were lying 'sincerely', performing for no audience but the man in front of them.

The invisible camera introduces new ethical problems - of permission and privacy - but it solves others, particularly the long-running anxiety about the catalysing effect of a film-crew. All documentaries are subject to the laws of quantum physics, which teaches that the act of observing will always change the thing observed. This can take acute forms. In her documentary on New York sex workers, *Hookers, Hustlers, Pimps and Their Johns*, Beeban Kidron recorded scenes of an old man being humiliated by the woman he paid to act as his mistress. You saw him, wincing in expensive pain, with crocodile clips on his nipples, and it was clear that the camera had become an instrument of humiliation, another weapon in the dominatrix's armoury. Whatever else it was, the image was not innocent of complicity in what it witnessed. With a hidden camera, the morality of the event would have shifted subtly.

Video offers not only the possibility of discreet filming beyond the dreams of those who work with crews but also a numerical explosion of those who can film. The strategies of the professionals will have to accommodate the fact that a highly competitive version of the truth, one that stands in opposition to the manicured verities of filmed documentary, is available to anyone, at the touch of a button.

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BEATE KLARSFELD, WELL KNOWN NAZI HUNTER IN *HOTEL TERMINUS*, BY MARCEL OPHÜLS



## JOURNALISM & INVESTIGATION IN DOCUMENTARY FILM

BY MARK SAUNDERS & SIOBHAN CLEARY

# The Truth Lies in Rostock

**The Truth Lies in Rostock** is a feature-length documentary which meticulously and uncompromisingly investigates a fascist attack in Rostock, former East Germany. Police withdrew from the scene for over three hours, in which time a mob petrol-bombed a refugee centre and the homes of Vietnamese immigrant workers, while 3,000 spectators stood by and applauded. 120 Vietnamese men, women and children narrowly escaped death. Commissioned by Channel 4's innovative Independent Film and Video Department, the documentary was filmed by members of a fledgling Rostock-based co-operative and broadcast to over half a million people in Britain. It has been nominated for The Royal Television Society International Journalism Award. It has yet to be broadcast in Germany.

Mark Saunders and Siobhan Cleary, who helped set up the film co-operative and later co-produced and co-directed *The Truth Lies in Rostock*, wrote to dox about those three days of horror and their experiences of making the film possible.

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'In May 1991 we were invited to Rostock to help establish an independent media workshop group. Since 1989 we had, like many others, been fascinated by the prospect of eastern Europe developing a 'third way', a path separate from either capitalism or communism. And we saw that wherever that path led, the role of the media - or more crucially, access to the media - would play a key role.

The invitation to work in Rostock was based on our ten years of experience as independents in London, particularly as founding members of *Despite TV*, a workshop that produced programmes like *Despite the Sun* about the Murdoch News International strike and *The Battle of Trafalgar*, an investigation into the Poll Tax Riots.

We ran a two week workshop covering not only production skills but also strategies for funding, cultural development and economic survival. On our last day, *JAKO Media Co-operative* was launched to carry the work further.