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**"Whose side are you on?"**  
**Representations of journalism of attachment**  
**and detachment in the movies**  
**Graham Fraser**

## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

“This project is an original piece of work which is made available for photocopying, for inter-library loan, and for electronic access at the discretion of the Head of School of Creative Industries”

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Graham Fraser – BA (Hons) Journalism

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## **ABSTRACT**

**"Whose side are you on?"**

### **Representations of journalism of attachment and detachment in the movies**

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The journalism of attachment is an idea from veteran war correspondent Martin Bell, who argues that journalistic objectivity in war is inappropriate and unworkable. With his supporters, he argues for a moral journalism that tries to get closer to the truth. However, his opponents believe that such an adoption of subjective reporting is very dangerous. This debate has been further enhanced by the events of 9/11 and its subsequent affect on journalism. With these academic discourses in mind, I have chosen to look at the issues of objectivity in war reporting, and its particular representation in two Hollywood films: *Under Fire* and *Salvador*. The academic writing on journalism films is quite limited, while the writing on objectivity and its filmic representation is even smaller. However, *Under Fire* and *Salvador* offer some excellent examples and representations of the problems of objectivity in war reporting. In a qualitative method, the films will be researched in depth to find a deeper understanding of war reporting and objectivity. After studying the films and the available literature, I will conclude that objectivity, or detachment, should still be the ideal of war reporting, but we should also have a moral reporting that highlights the problems in the world. While aspects of journalism of attachment have many qualities, such as a caring reporting to the suffering people of the conflict, the abandonment of objectivity in journalism leads down a dangerous road – a path that could result in the truth from the world's front lines being lost.

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"Whose side are you on?"

Representations of journalism of attachment and detachment in  
the movies.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the prevailing debates in the academic fraternity of journalism has always been objectivity, whether it is possible, and if it is the best vehicle to achieve the ultimate goal of the media – the truth. From racial stereotyping in the media to civic journalism, the debate of impartiality and balance has remained an important discourse in media circles. In my dissertation, I have chosen to look at one facet of this debate, the journalism of attachment and detachment in war reporting, and its particular representation by two Hollywood films. In the literature review, I will examine the current writing on this issue.

Martin Bell, the principal thinker of the journalism of attachment school, proposes a change in our conceptions of war reporting in an effort to record greater truths, although it should be noted that he was a true professional and objective in his news reports, even in Sarajevo, unless it was a clearly labelled personal view (See Tumber 1997, p. 5). He doesn't argue for campaigning journalism, like Orwell, but argues that journalists should sometimes embrace passionate, moral journalism instead of standing back and watching people suffer in the name of objectivity. As Robert Capa noted in 1941 'I had a conversation with myself about the incompatibility of being a reporter and hanging on to a tender soul at the same time.' (Quoted in Di Giovanni 2004, prologue page) This emotional journalism has attracted some of Bell's

colleagues into questioning the role of objectivity on the front line, believing that it gets in the way of truthful reporting. However, this idea has drawn criticism from other academics and practitioners of journalism, who note how the truth can be blurred because journalists become personally embroiled or even fail to understand the political context in where they work, which, as Rwanda demonstrated, can have severe consequences for the credibility of journalism and the subjects of the news. This debate has deepened since the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, with emotional, patriotic reporting once again being at the forefront of academic discussion.

In the methodology, I will examine the current literature on filmic representation of journalists and the motivations behind choosing my selected works, *Under Fire* and *Salvador*. I have chosen to examine the films in a qualitative manner, which will allow deeper understanding of the reasons behind the films characters and issues. In my primary research, I will examine three themes: how the films represent the notion of objectivity in journalism, how *Under Fire* and *Salvador* examine the relationship between the journalists' professional commitments and personal moralities, and how the represented political context affects the journalists' judgements and actions in the two works.

After my examination of these themes in *Under Fire* and *Salvador*, I will conclude that while the arguments of journalism of attachment advocates present many noble attributes, the professional commitment of detachment and objectivity should not be abandoned so easily. As Rwanda demonstrates, or as *Under Fire* concludes, the abandonment of detachment by journalists can have grave consequences. The future

of war reporting is important as ever in our current world climate of terrorism, and journalists must remain vigilant in getting the truth.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Objectivity, as a professional norm, is at the very heart of the ethos of journalism. In an effort to attain the professionalization of journalism, media workers in newspaper and broadcast offices all around the world, particularly in western countries, strive for this ideal. However, in search of objectivity, are we missing the truth? Over a hundred years ago, journalists simply accepted the version of events from the military. William Howard Russell was one of the first journalists to go against the official sources, and was hounded by the authorities for sending back letters that told the truth from the Crimean war (Goodman 1991, p. 3). Through both World Wars and beyond, journalists, in patriotic fervour, have towed their countries line, leaving out damaging material while hyping propaganda against the enemy (See Knightley 2003). Even James Cameron, one of the greatest foreign correspondents, believed that objectivity in some of his reporting was pointless and hopeless, getting in the way of the truth (See Cameron 1978, also Royle 1989, p. 229). Such concerns have moved into modern times, with John Pilger highlighting Philip Knightley's (2003) work, where the author 'lament(s) that, for all the dazzling advances in media technology, the media has little or no memory, as the same bogus 'truth' is served up again and again' (Pilger's introduction to Knightley 2003, p. xi). The debate has taken another turn since 9/11, a change that I will examine in depth later. As we move deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how will objectivity be related to war correspondents?



While impartiality in war zones has always been of some concern to journalists and media academics, the debate only started to flourish after Martin Bell coined his term journalism of attachment, the argument of journalists becoming more partial in the war zones they cover. However, before this debate took hold of the media, Hollywood looked at a series of conflicts in the developing world that brought journalistic objectivity into question. *Under Fire* and *Salvador* were two of a series of 1980's films that looked at war correspondents and their challenges, from *The Killing Fields* to *A Year of Living Dangerously*. *Under Fire*'s plot surrounds the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, while *Salvador* examines the civil war in El Salvador. The concerns raised in the films were not simple Hollywood fiction. Shirley Christian, 1981 Pulitzer prizewinner for her coverage in Nicaragua, claimed that 'the American press, in its eagerness to rid Nicaragua of (President) Somoza and his brutal National Guard, misrepresented or overlooked the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Sandinistas'. The press went on a 'guilt trip in Nicaragua, the legacy of a half-century of U.S. mistakes there' (Christian 1982, summarized in Good and Dillon 2002, p. 64). The films, especially *Salvador*, also demonstrate the problems of the US intervention in the region. As US Ambassador Robert White argues in *Salvador's* accompanying documentary *Into the Valley of Death*, 'The Reagan administration came in and simply didn't want to understand' (See Kiselyak 2001). I will look at the represented political context of both films in the primary research.

It is clear from my research that the war in the former Yugoslavia precipitated a number of journalists on the front line to question their roles and professional ideals of objectivity and detachment (See Knightley 1996, Little 2003, Bowen 2005a, 2005b). Indeed, it was this conflict, which saw Martin Bell coin the term journalism

of attachment. The former BBC reporter's experiences in the former Yugoslavia, notorious for its brutality of the civilians and the journalists alike, coupled with increasing pressures on broadcast journalism driven by global satellite networks like CNN (Campbell 2004, p. 175), shaped Bell's thinking. He defines journalism of attachment as a journalism which recognises the media as part of this world and one 'that is aware of its responsibilities, that will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor' (Bell 1998, p. 16, also see Sanders 2003).

He dismisses objectivity as an 'illusion and a shibboleth' (Bell, 1998, p. 16), which stands in the way of a more truthful depiction of the horrors of war. Echoing these opinions, Kemal Kurspahic decreed 'no one should be proud of being neutral in the face of genocide' (Quoted in Kirtz 1997, p. 10). Before I explore the fallacies of such an argument, let us consider an example of why journalists shouldn't believe themselves to be a neutral observer or a witness to a conflict. A correspondent in Bosnia wanted to get a story on a sniper, the soldiers causing most damage on the hills above Sarajevo. The reporter arranged to meet one in his position. The sniper caught two people in his viewfinder. The reporter asked, 'What do you see?' The sniper answered, 'I see two people walking in the street: which one of them do you want me to shoot?' The reporter, realising that he had made a grave error, urged the sniper not to shoot any of them, and turned to leave. As he did so, two shots were fired. The reporter looked at the sniper, who said, 'That was a pity, you could have saved one of their lives' (Bell 1998, pp. 16 – 17, also Millar 1996, p. News Review). Bell's argument has gathered momentum on a debate of whether war correspondents

should remain objective and impartial on the battlefield or if they should realise that they cannot remain detached from the wars they report.

Journalism of attachment advocates seek a greater truth in their war reporting than the one that they are restrained to tell by the handcuffs of objectivity. Bell and his followers seek a moral journalism, a 'journalism that cares as well as it knows' (Bell 1998, p. 16). There are some important points here, but is it too dangerous to abandon objective war reporting for such an attachment?

Journalists seeking celebrity status is one argument cited by those who support journalism of detachment, a school of academics committed to objectivity and impartiality. When journalists, like Martin Bell, attach themselves to a cause, they become the news, not the objective deliver of it. John Lloyd (2004) noted 'Martin Bell had the platform, the guts and the brains to make a difference. But he opted for celebrity, and celebrities, in order to become and stay what their public wishes them to be, are doomed to an endless round of repetition' (Lloyd 2004, p. 21, also note Lloyd's criticism of Christine Amanpour, CNN's star foreign correspondent, in Lloyd 2005). In a culture obsessed with fame, we must be careful that the reporter doesn't become 'more important than the event, prescribing how the audience should feel and react' (Welch 2000, p. 5).

The key questions asked by the school of detachment thinkers are 'to what do reporters decide to be attached' and are 'conflicts so open to such a judgement?' (Lloyd 1997, p. 41). The subjective reporting in war has already caused several instances of certain truth's being buried to maintain the established discourse of

western powerbrokers and even journalists (See Hari 2004). Philip Hammond (2000) noted one such example in his study of the war in Kosovo. The alleged massacre of over 40 ethnic Albanian civilians in Racak prompted NATO leaders to issue an ultimatum to Yugoslavia to sign a peace deal with the Kosovo Liberation Army, or face bombing. A French television crew filmed Racak on the day of the alleged attack and their film indicated that the casualties were Yugoslav and KLA soldiers. This was reported in *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*, contradicting the official line, but was consistently denied even months after the war ended by the British media, who maintained it was civilians who were attacked (Hammond 2000, p. 376). The ‘good vs. evil’ mentality that was fostered by the media in this case, and ultimately by the British government, demonstrates, as Senator Hiram Johnson commented in 1917, ‘The first casualty when war comes, is truth’ (See Knightley 2003, prologue page). Incidentally, Johnson’s sentiment, in a slightly changed grammatical form, is the tag line for *Under Fire*.

Another deterrent to an attached journalism occurred in Rwanda. The world’s media portrayed the Hutus as guilty of genocide, while the Tutsi minority were represented as the victim. After the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front came to power, it took indignant revenge on the Hutu population, while the world’s press stood by. By the time they realised what was happening, it was too late for many refugees (See Hume 1997). The media’s misunderstanding led to the withdrawal of UN troops in April 1994, believing the conflict was over. While considering this, ‘the Western media’s failure to report adequately on the genocide in Rwanda contributed to international indifference and inaction, and hence to the crime itself’ (Joint Evaluation 1996, p. 48,

Quoted in Pottier 2002, p. 56). Rwanda is an example of the implications of the world's media taking sides in conflicts they hardly understand and getting it wrong.

One of the greatest challenges to any reporter striving to remain objective from their subjects is when their personal feelings of morality contradict their professional commitments to remain impartial. In the search for objectivity, journalists are asked to ignore their personal feelings. However, we should remember that Albert Henning, one of the father's of American journalism ethics, argued that we have to do the 'right action toward one's fellows' (Henning 1932, p. 17, Quoted in Christians et al 1993, p. 33). As I have demonstrated in examples above from Kosovo and Rwanda, the media's personalised reporting can have critical results. However, the story of Michael Nicholson, the experienced ITV journalist who adopted a child from the frontline of Sarajevo, celebrated in the film *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997), demonstrated that the abandonment of journalistic ideals can have positive ramifications.

Foreign correspondents who find themselves in the depths of despair can still report the truth without getting overtly emotional, although as Aristotle noted, we can never be free of emotions (Bovee 1999, p. 126). In the war in the former Yugoslavia, *Newsday's* Roy Gutman highlighted a moral wrong while remaining objective, contrary to some of his colleagues in the battlefield. Gutman received a tip-off of the existence of death camps comparable with Auschwitz and, in a series of reports, he managed to get the attention of all the news media and governments alike. However, as Philip Seib (2002) observed, his articles are absent of sensationalism and needless emotion while highlighting a moral wrong (Also see John Simpson's ideas on moral

reporting, quoted in Ophuls 1994). He gathered first hand testimonies from witnesses and balanced the story with comments from the Serbian side, a practice very rare in this conflict. Gutman, as the journalist, did not personally make the case against the Serbs; he 'let the reporting do that' (Seib 2002, p. 55). As he pronounced a year after his articles, 'I've always felt that the best journalism was not always advocacy journalism, but simply the straightforward reporting of extraordinary information that reflects unacceptable behaviour' (Ricchiardi 1993, p. 35). Gutman's articles, complete with others, can provide a fuller picture than the journalism of advocacy, or attachment, can ever hope to achieve. As Pottier (2002) contends, reporters of conflicts can only assess 'a tiny window on reality' (Pottier 2002, p. 54, also Canby 1983, writing about *Under Fire*.)

Another challenge to war reporting comes from the political context that surrounds the conflicts. Journalism of attachment supporters believe that if they can see a moral wrong they should highlight it to their own governments and citizens. Christine Amanpour is another high-profile journalist who argues for partiality after Yugoslavia. She argues in favour of attachment to one side, if it demonstrates a bigger truth and challenges the western governments to do something about an issue, although we should note that journalists can tell the story, but it is essentially up to government to act, and they rarely do in foreign issues (Paterson, S, quoted in Seib 2002, p. 49). Amanpour (1996) states:

Once you treat all the sides the same in a case such as Bosnia, you are drawing a moral equivalence between victim and aggressor. And from there is a short step toward being neutral. And from there it's an even shorter step to becoming an accessory to all manners of evil: in Bosnia's case, genocide. So

objectivity must go hand in hand with morality. (Amanpour 1996, p. 17, also see Randolph 1997, A.5).

But how can journalists, who fly in and out of war zones without any real grasp of the situation, understand the political context in which they operate? As the Rwanda example demonstrates, journalist's assumptions can be wrong, and this can cause further struggles. Mick Hume (1997), in his influential work on journalism of detachment *Whose war is it anyway?*, quotes Christine Amanpour saying: 'I am not a political reporter. I am not a diplomatic reporter. I do wars. I do crises. I don't do politics (Harris, S. 1997, cited by Hume 1997, p. 14). Hume believes such ignorance of the context of journalists emotional reports from the war 'achieves the opposite of what its advocates claim. Far from raising public understanding of the horrors of war, their reports mystify what conflicts are really about' (Hume 1997, p. 15). The reports do not essentially tell the truth, because they eliminate all the information around them that doesn't conform to the journalist's own thinking. While Hume's work often descends into a Marxist tirade, especially against Ed Vulliamy's work at *The Guardian*, he raises several key issues in this debate. If we accommodate some clearly subjective work, and assimilate them with objective reports of journalists on the front line, then we can try to get the full picture. If we simply have several opinionated pieces, then this gives journalists an incredible power without responsibility – a worrying prospect in any democracy.

Since the shattering terrorist attacks on the September 11<sup>th</sup> in New York and Washington, the debate of objectivity in reporting has intensified. For the first time since Pearl Harbour, the United States, the dominating superpower of the world, was

attacked on its own soil. As a result, there is now a blurring between terrorism and traditional war reporting. Silvio Waisbord (2002) writes about the new patriotic fervour after 9/11. He observed that journalism was 'more than just an unwilling prisoner or passive supporter, journalism was the mobilisation of national identity' (Waisbord 2002, p. 206). This new 'journalism of crises' 'snubbed the professional requirements of detachment and objectivity and willingly embraced patriotic partisanship' (ibid.). The predominant message of a campaigning media has been down to the censoring by the military and the self-censoring journalists in the pool system (For more information on the pool system, See Morrison and Tumber 1988, O'Kane 2002, Tumber 2005, Tumber and Palmer, 2004, O'Kane 2002). However, it is important to observe that the subsequent invasions by America in Afghanistan and Iraq were severely criticised in some quarters, and did not simply represent the views of the ruling governments (See Jenkins 2001, Tumber and Palmer 2004 and Payne 2005).

Tumber (2002) highlights the main problem that journalists face in this new environment: 'Displaying views that might be sympathetic to the 'other' risks the admonishment or flak of governments and politicians, while displaying support for 'our side' may be acceptable but risks accusations of unprofessionalism' (Tumber 2002, p. 260). He also notes the changing culture of journalism prompted by the attack on the twin towers. He cites a new discussion being forced on the national consciousness, with one of its main points being a debate on accepting a more 'human face' in war reporting (See Hodgson 2001 and Cramer 2005). The terrorist atrocity created an 'urban war correspondent' (See Tumber and Prentoulis 2003, p. 24) with normal reporters, without the experience in dealing with distress and apprehension on



the front line. Franco Frattini from the European Commission has even argued that the media have oversimplified the problem of terrorism, but Simon Jenkins (2005) dismisses this as a campaign against the press (See Jenkins 2005). The current debate has also questioned the safety of war reporters, acknowledging the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder than many in the media now suffer through war fatigue (See Omar 2003), and the specific targeting of journalists in the field, although this dates back to Sarajevo (See Ophuls 1994). While the events of September 11 may be another evolution of journalistic practice, not a catalyst for the abandonment of objectivity, it may also 'accelerate a trend in which attachment and emotion eventually become fully embraced into the culture of journalism' (Tumber and Prentoulis 2003, p. 228). With the world still in the hangover of that tragic day, such a transition remains to be seen.

The journalism of attachment, from the pen of Martin Bell, has opened a wider debate on journalistic objectivity, especially in war reporting. It promotes an idea that journalists should take sides if there is a clear case of morally right and wrong. But should we give up on objectivity and leave it to our journalists to dictate what is right and wrong for us? Undoubtedly, war reporting is unique. Its practitioners face decisions and internal ethical suffering while searching for the right thing to do. As a student of journalism, I cannot fully understand what they go through. Nobody can, unless they have experienced it for themselves. Nevertheless, my studies of journalism has prompted me to believe that objectivity is possible in all situations, but not in the strict outdated form prevalent in the media psyche. In conclusion to the literature review, I believe both the schools of journalism of attachment and detachment have their merits in this debate. However, I think that objectivity, in other

words detachment, still remains the tool for finding out the truth. While Martin Bell (1998) and his fellow advocates have raised several key points in support of an emotional form of journalism, excellent objective stories, like those of Gutman and others, ensures that evil is exposed, not by the journalist's own sentiments, but by the deliberation of the facts. Examples in Rwanda and Kosovo have shown how journalist's assumptions of the political contexts from which they report can have grave consequences, and Hume and Lloyd's writing has also demonstrated the worrying possibilities of attachment. Our newsmen and women must remain diligent in these times to report the stories objectively, while not losing sight of the truth. With the primary research of the dissertation examining the filmic representation of objectivity in *Under Fire* and *Salvador*, I will now explain in the methodology how I plan to achieve this.

"Whose side are you on?"

Representations of journalism of attachment and detachment in  
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## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**1) How was the journalistic ideal of objectivity evaluated  
in my selected films?**

**2) How do my selected films examine the relationship  
between the journalists' professional commitments and  
personal moralities?**

**3) How does the political context represented in the  
selected films influence the journalists' actions?**

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Rationale and Questions of Representation*

The debate of whether a journalist should remain an impartial detached observer of an event rather than a subjective partial participant is one of the pertinent questions of journalism. In many cases the question has a simple answer - the journalists should remain an observer to enable them to get to the truth. But can this professional ideal be practiced in the unique sphere of war? War correspondents, even in this 'global village', find themselves thousands of miles away from their news editors. Should they make choices on the ground and take sides rather than simply stick by their commitment to objectivity? Journalists have abandoned objectivity in many past wars, while Martin Bell and others have questioned it in many recent ones.

Hollywood has also questioned the ideal that is at the heart of the journalism psyche.

There are thousands of films (See Ness, 1997) that represent journalists in different lights, ranging from unethical hacks in *Ace in the Hole* to journalists acting at the zenith of their civic responsibilities in *All the President's Men*. *Under Fire* is perhaps the one film that illustrates the debate of objectivity and foreign correspondents best. The lead protagonist, Russell Price (See Appendix A), has to make a choice whether to abandon his professional impartiality and detachment to help the Sandinista cause in Nicaragua, which he has become sympathetic to, or remain impartial to the conflict. *Salvador* follows the struggle of Richard Boyle (See Appendix B) in the ravaged country of El Salvador, which he has grown to love. These two films offer a wide debate on a journalist's attachment and detachment in war zones and, for this reason, I have chosen them for my primary research on this subject.

Before I look at the specific literature available on journalism films, I would like to note some general points on filmic representation. When considering representations in films, we need to always remember that films, even if they are based on true events, such as *Salvador*, are an interpretation of an event (See Deacon et. al 1998, 197 – 200). Thus the films, be it features or documentaries, convey ‘realism’, and not a realistic account of a story (For more reading on ‘realism’ in documentary filmmaking See Nichols 1991, Lay 2002 and Winston 2000). As a group of academics note, ‘no aspect of film merely reveals or depicts reality. Rather, films construct a phenomenal world and position the audience to experience and live the world in certain ways’ (Ryan and Kellner 2004 p. 218). The various discourses in films provide a form of social practice representing reality to us (See Fairclough 2001). Some films reality will have a basis in fact, but we must remember that it is a representation of an event.

The academic study of the representation of journalism in films is one of the most undeveloped fields in media studies. The limited writing available on journalism films has made me question if we are looking at these issues in the right way.

Hollywood continues to use journalists because ‘journalism is a melodramatic interplay between good and evil’ (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 206) Richard R. Ness’ *From Headline Hunter to Superman: A Journalism Filmography* (1997) only offers a brief synopsis of thousands of journalism films detailed, as does Larry Langman’s (1998) work, while Matthew Ehrlich’s *Journalism in the Movies* (2004), which has quickly become the seminal text in the field, does not cover the question of objectivity. The same can be said for *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture* web project by

Joe Saltzman and the Norman Lear Centre at the Annenberg School of Communication in Los Angeles, California, which has an excellent range of articles pioneering in the field of journalistic representation (See IJPC 2006). Howard Good and Michael J. Dillon (2002) wrote an interesting chapter on *Under Fire*, but the work concentrates on photojournalism and the ethical considerations from the great minds of various philosophers, from John Stuart Mill to Immanuel Kant. *Salvador* has only enjoyed some general film studies chapters (See Kagan 1995) while Howard Good will soon be publishing a chapter on the questions of journalism of objectivity in *Welcome to Sarajevo* (See Good 2006). Despite such existing work, the study of journalism of attachment and detachment has not been fully explored. Overall the filmic representation of journalists, with the exception of films like *Under Fire* and *Citizen Kane*, 'reinforce journalists' roles as finders and tellers of truth.' (Ehrlich 2004, p. 176)

My writing in this dissertation will attempt to approach the question of the representation of journalists in films that deal with the issue of objectivity in a more relevant way, and this is considered in my research questions. First of all, I will study the representation of objectivity in *Under Fire* and *Salvador*, and the various constraints on it. Another theme that has been raised in both the films and existing literature is the difficulty in remaining impartial, embracing the professional ideals of journalism while ignoring whatever personal concerns the journalists may have. This may be easy enough in the cosy newspaper and broadcast offices around the world, but I will examine if it is possible to maintain when journalists are exposed to harrowing images and stories of human suffering. Finally, I will investigate how the represented political contexts influenced the journalists' judgements, and this can be

related to the considerations of men and women reporting in the real world. By examining these themes, I can relate the representation of the journalists and of journalism of attachment and detachment in *Under Fire* and *Salvador* to the existing discourses on the subject that I explore in the literature review.

### ***Qualitative Research Method***

I decided at a very early stage that my primary research would be qualitative. The study of film in a quantitative method would bear some interesting results on a subject like the representation of alcohol use in journalism films. By undertaking qualitative research on this issue, the researcher could count the drinking scenes, how much is drunk and where it is consumed. However, such a study would not comprehend the actual practices of journalism and how, in the eyes of some academics and filmmakers, a newsroom culture where alcoholism is prevalent persists. For my study of journalism of attachment and detachment, I need to use qualitative research, as it stresses understanding and allows me to research the debate in a more concentrated way. As Stake notes ‘quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control; qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists’ (Stake 1995, p. 37). Qualitative research methods will provide a way of exploring, in depth, why the journalists act like they do in *Under Fire* and *Salvador*.

## ***Method***

I examined several films that raised the issues and concerns of war reporting, ranging from *The Killing Fields* and *The Year of Living Dangerously* to *The Quiet American*, *Welcome to Sarajevo* and *No Man's Land*. I noted the key scenes that occurred in each film and the main themes raised. During my literature research, I became aware of the predominant issues that were faced by war correspondents. By taking this knowledge into consideration, I had a good idea when watching the films what the main issues were and, subsequently, what the key scenes were in the films. After I had completed this process, I watched the films again and studied whether there were any additional themes and scenes that I may have missed while concentrating on the initial ideas. When I had these notes in place, the three main themes of my study emerged and the two films I would study – *Under Fire* and *Salvador*. It is important to note that the main themes emerged from the films. I did not start with a remit to find certain issues. The central themes of the films became apparent after the literature review and several viewings of the features, and they became the natural choice for the study of objectivity of journalists in war zones. I will layout the themes in order of the research questions and note how each of the films has represented them. Now that I have examined how I will try to do it, the themes of *Under Fire* and *Salvador* are ready to be researched.



"Whose side are you on?"

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## **PRIMARY RESEARCH**

### **1) How was the journalistic ideal of objectivity evaluated in my selected films?**

#### *Under Fire*

*Under Fire* is the one of the best filmic representations on the notion of journalistic objectivity, although, it is important to note, that the film is entirely fictional – an example of what could happen to a war correspondent. The film's plot surrounds the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Russell Price (See Appendix A), and his fellow reporters are initially detached from the conflict they witness. In a conversation with the local Priest, Price is questioned on his loyalties.

*Priest:* Whose side are you on?

*Price:* I don't take sides, I take pictures

Media academics and idealists would have rejoiced at this evaluation of objectivity in the film, but Price's convictions have not been tested. The journalist befriends Pedro, a local rebel who dreams of playing baseball in America. In one scene, where Price is taking pictures of the fighting, he meets the American mercenary Oates, who the journalist knows from previous conflicts. Price doesn't alert the rebels to Oates'

presence and the soldier kills Pedro. At this point, Price questions his objectivity with Claire Stryder, a fellow journalist:

*Price:* I know who shot Pedro...I didn't want to interfere.

*Claire:* It wasn't an easy choice.

*Price:* I think I made the wrong one.

At this pivotal moment in the representation of objectivity in the film, Price gets a break. He is informed that he can meet Commandante Raphael, the illusive leader of the Sandinistas, the man who the journalist has wanted to photograph since he arrived in Nicaragua. When he arrives at the rebel camp with Claire, Price realises that Raphael is dead. The rebels ask Price to fake a picture of their fallen leader, which could provide them a victory and an end to the war. They believe the American administration under President Carter will not send more aid to President Somoza, the oppressive Nicaraguan leader, when they realise Raphael is still at large. As one Sandinista pronounces 'this has nothing to do with journalism'. Price and Claire discuss their dilemma:

*Claire:* Sure would be a prizewinner, wouldn't it?

*Price:* I've won enough prizes

*Claire:* But not a war

Price, who has become sympathetic to the Sandinistas struggle, chooses to stage the picture. The staging of photographs has long been a concern of journalistic objectivity (For more on photojournalism, See Warburton 1998). Even the great

Robert Capa's 'Moment of Death' photographs from the Spanish Civil War have been accused of being staged (See Knightley in Ophuls 1994). Price abandons his objectivity to help the Nicaraguan people, but his actions come at a great cost. While the country might be saved from the oppressive President Somoza, Price's friend Alex is executed by the government force while many of the rebels also die. *Under Fire*'s evaluation of objectivity is important to note in the current debate on journalism of attachment and detachment. It represents the journalist acting on a higher moral cause, to try and save lives, at the expense of his commitment to impartiality. However, the film also represents that his abandonment comes at a great sacrifice, both personally and professionally. *Under Fire* warns that while objectivity may not always be appropriate in the war zones of the world, its abandonment can have grave consequences.

### *Salvador*

*Salvador* is Oliver Stone's harrowing tale of the destruction of the Central American state in a 1980's world where the American administration is paranoid about communist uprisings around the world. The film represents objectivity in an interesting way, by not demonstrating the changes in the journalist's work, but the difference in his personal choices. Richard Boyle (See Appendix B) appears in *Salvador* as a wreck. His only motivation for his photojournalism is the money it will provide for him to drink, fornicate and waste his life away. However, the real Boyle argues that getting the truth out was his main motivation, and if he wanted money, he would have worked for the networks (See Kiselyak 2001). He is contrasted sharply with John Cassady, another photojournalist who, while taking photos of dead bodies at El Playon dump, proclaims 'You gotta get close to get the truth. You get too close,

you die.’ Like Price in *Under Fire*, Boyle is an experienced journalist of many wars. However, the American intervention in El Salvador provokes the journalist, with the US government aiding the oppressive Salvadorian leadership in an effort to curb the supposed Communist uprising. Boyle starts to question his objectivity as he sees the suffering around him, especially on Maria, his Salvadorian girlfriend. But Boyle is a flawed character in many ways. He agrees to share his photographs of the rebels with Morgan, a CIA agent, so he can get some more opportunities of work and a *segula*, a Salvadorian birth certificate, for his girlfriend. For a majority of the film, Boyle does not appear to be on any side apart from his own. This is vividly illustrated with Cassidy, when the two are literally in the middle of the battle taking photographs. In *Salvador*, the audience is not given much opportunity to see how Boyle’s objectivity wavers in his journalism, through his copy or his photographs. Indeed, this could be understood as the journalist remaining impartial in the conflict. However, throughout the work, Boyle attempts to help some of Salvadorian people against government aggression. It is important to remember that the helping of people from any one side is just as much a challenge to the principle of objectivity as subjective news reports. Boyle gets involved in trying to help one side of the conflict, and this challenges his impartiality. One scene in the film even suggests that journalists are always taking sides. In a conversation between Ambassador Kelly, the American diplomat, and Boyle, Kelly ask about the journalist’s articles on the Khmer Rouge, who brought Cambodia to its knees after masquerading as the country’s saviour to the western press.

*Ambassador Kelly:* Were you one of the people there writing them up as the good guys for a while?

*Richard Boyle:* Yes, sir I'm afraid I was wrong on that one. But a lot of people were.

Another interesting point on objectivity raised in the film surrounds the star network reporter Pauline Axelrod. Axelrod represents all the lazy journalists who accept the official version of an event and file their reports from their hotel roof. Her objective, straight approach in *Salvador* reveals her total misunderstanding of the events.

*Salvador* provides an indictment of this journalism, and demonstrates that we know very little background and context to foreign events because the journalists themselves don't understand. On its representation of impartiality, *Salvador* celebrates Boyle for his efforts in trying to save Maria and her child. However, the evaluation of objectivity in the film is very much a secondary theme to how the political context affects the journalist, a theme that I will examine later.

### *Conclusions*

The evaluation of objectivity in *Under Fire* and *Salvador* raises some interesting questions on the suitability of such a commitment in war reporting. In *Under Fire*, Price becomes sympathetic to the Sandinistas cause and abandons his objectivity for an opportunity to end the conflict. When he chooses to manipulate a picture of a fallen Raphael, it is initially celebrated as a triumph of the human spirit. However, the film concludes that objectivity should be maintained because the implications of Price's abandonment are severe, with the loss of his friend Alex Grazier and many rebel Nicaraguans who he has fallen for. In *Salvador*, Boyle is worn down by the

intervention from the American military in El Salvador, but he never really demonstrates abandonment to objectivity in his work. However, he tries to help some of the people, and while his efforts and journalistic partiality are celebrated, he ultimately fails. The film also makes an interesting point on the 'hotel roof' journalists. *Salvador*, in some respects, asks how much we really know about the conflicts covered by the world's media, because the journalists themselves have a limited understanding. Pauline Axelrod is represented as missing the point of the conflict, because she simply accepts the official reports and events, missing the truth of the government corruption and its persecution of the Salvadorian people.

## **2) How do my selected films examine the relationship between the journalists' professional commitments and personal moralities?**

### *Under Fire*

One of the prevailing concerns of foreign war correspondents through the ages is how they separate themselves from the brutality around them (See Bovee 1999). How can they, as human beings, stand by and watch while people are injured and killed in front of them? The professional ideal of objectivity dictates that journalists should remain detached from the people they cover, to report the truth from the front lines but, as *Under Fire* demonstrates, journalists can have difficulties in remaining impartial while having sympathies for their subjects (See Bernstein 1983). Price and Claire are represented at the start of the film as photojournalists who do not let their personal principles get in the way of their professional responsibilities. Early scenes in the film demonstrate this, with the journalists having the opportunity to warn a Sandinista rebel. Price and Claire are in a position where they can see the government troops waiting to ambush a rebel soldier who is patrolling down the road. They do not attempt to warn him, and he is shot dead by the government forces.

However, as I have already mentioned, the struggle of the Sandinista people and their nomadic, innocent existence affects the journalists in a profound way. Price reasons that his personal morality becomes too powerful to ignore as a result of fatigue from war. When Alex asks him why he faked the photo, abandoning all sense of objective and detached reporting, he says 'I think I finally saw one to many bodies'. Price and Claire are blinded by their personal affection for the peasant people and they do not

realise the bigger picture. Marcel Jazy, a CIA operative operating in Nicaragua disguised as a French businessman, is connected to all sides of the conflict. He manages to get Price and Claire into the peasant camp, where they realise the fate of Commandante Raphael. However, Jazy uses the journalists, and steals the photographs Price takes of the rebels in their camp. The government then use them to identify and kill the leaders of the revolution. The journalists were tricked, because they let their personal sentiments get in the way.

Modern conflicts, from the civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador to the Yugoslavian war, have tested journalists' objectivity to the limit, because they often feel morally obliged to help the poor civilians of the regions – the people who suffer most from the fighting. Brutality towards these people, often with western military aid, prompts the journalists to believe there is a right and wrong side in every war. Even though the journalists are experienced, Price and Claire fall for the Sandinista people. They ignore the Marxist-Leninist ideology and rebellious nature of the Sandinistas (See Good and Dillon 2002). Price and Claire are shocked by the brutal behaviour of the National Guard under the command of President Somoza. Their personal moralities outweigh their professional commitments and, as a result, they try to help the Sandinista people, but their actions have wider implications, both professionally and personally.

### *Salvador*

Richard Boyle, like Price, starts the film in a cynical detachment to the people who are suffering from the war. He tells his reluctant companion Dr Rock 'You're gonna love it here, Doc. You can drive drunk and get anyone killed for 50 bucks.' He is



simply looking for work in the war zone, and believes that the fighting between the Salvadorian government and the rebels is about to boil over. As I have already mentioned, the main theme of the film is the plight of the Salvadorian people, and not the concern of the objectivity of the film's journalists. As a result, Boyle spends a majority of the film not sure what to do, and stays in the middle of the conflict, while always looking out for his girlfriend. However, when the fighting intensifies, so does Boyle's personal objective to get Maria and her family to safety. Throughout the film, Boyle acts as a protector for Maria and her family from the government. He goes to jail to try to secure the release of her brother Carlos and Dr Rock, but he fails to free Carlos, who is later executed. Boyle also diffuses a tense situation in a bar when Maria's younger friends make fun off Major Max, the oppressive Salvadorian politician and gang master, in front of some of his supporters. Boyle uses his fast-talking wit to get Maria, Doc, and the boys out of the situation alive.

Boyle's personal feelings for Maria and many other peasants who are suffering as a result of the government persecution becomes overbearing. He appeals to American officials, pleading 'all you're doing is bringing misery to these people'. He abandons any sense of impartiality, and campaigns for their safe release by seeking a segula for Maria, giving her ticket out of the country. However, the characters complexities are again shown as this point. While he seeks to help some rebels, he supplies information of the capabilities of their force to the American military. It should be noted though that the information is useless to the Americans. Boyle helps Maria and they get out of the country together, only to be stopped by American immigration officials, proving the futility of the journalist's efforts. In *Salvador*, Boyle's personal morality becomes overwhelming. He becomes very dissident towards the American

foreign policy in the Central American state and even though he loves his country and what it stands for, he realises that it is harming the people that he cares for. As he result, he tries to save them, but fails. Although it will be ignorant to suggest that foreign war correspondents don't help people in war zones where and when they can, Boyle's campaigning for the safety of Maria and her family is a demonstration of his personal feeling overcoming his professional commitment to staying impartial to all sides of the conflict.

### ***Conclusions***

To practice journalism, we are asked to leave our personal lives at the door when we turn up to work. While such a practice is common and workable in many newspaper and broadcast offices, it is a questionable professional norm for the reporters who operate in the harrowing theatres of the world's war zones. The representations of the journalists in *Under Fire* and *Salvador* demonstrate this point. How can journalists stand by and watch the slaughter of innocent people in the name of a professional ideal? In *Under Fire*, the implications of the abandoning objectivity and adopting this practice is ominous for many people. Price and Claire become sympathetic to the Nicaraguan people, and it is their sentiments for these people that blind them to the bigger picture. In this case, Marcel Jazy's espionage and the resulting death of many of the Sandinistas means the journalists should have remained impartial. In *Salvador*, Boyle fails to secure the safety of his loved ones. He campaigns for his girlfriend Maria's safety throughout the film. He tries to help her family in different situations, but the journalist can do nothing about the turmoil in El Salvador and what happens to its people.

With these varying representations on this theme, *Under Fire* and *Salvador* demonstrate the diverse concerns of journalists' personal feelings in conflict areas. While it may be morally wrong to stand and watch people suffer in front of us, as journalists we should also consider not throwing away so easily the professional norms that have sustained us through centuries.

### **3) How does the political context represented in the selected films influence the journalists' actions?**

#### ***Under Fire***

While journalism of attachment advocates argue for a more informed reporting by taking sides, journalism of detachment supporters argue that journalists are simply not in the position to understand the complexities of the various situations they find themselves in (See Lloyd 1997, 2004, Harris 1997, Hume 1997, Pedelty 1995). Before I contribute to the debate on how *Under Fire* and *Salvador's* represented political contexts influence the actions of its journalists, I will reiterate that these representations are indeed filmic representations, and should never be regarded as fact. Indeed, films are always mediation between the production values, from the scriptwriting to the various performances by the actors. Films try to tell stories realistically, but are always a represented realism – and never entirely true (See Deacon et al 1998, pp. 197 – 200). In *Under Fire*, the story is entirely fictional and its political context is a represented form of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Price and Claire try to help the rebel cause by faking the picture. But the journalists don't understand the implications their actions will have. Their ignorance to the political situation in *Under Fire* is represented early in the picture when Alex tells his fellow journalists that he is 'tired of memorizing the President of the Republic of Maldives' and how the conflict in Nicaragua 'is a neat little war and a nice hotel'. With only a minimal understanding of the countries they cover, the journalists should remain impartial in their reports. *Under Fire* also raises the point of the ignorance of the editors and journalists back home in the newspaper offices. In one early scene, Alex argues with an editor at the New York headquarters of the importance of the story in Nicaragua, much to the editor's disagreement. The publics of the Western

powers, in this case represented by Americans, are not aware of the suffering in the world they dominate, thanks largely to inept media coverage. The journalists, who think they understand the situation, are the source of this ignorance.

After Alex is killed by a government soldier, alerting the American public to an unknown conflict that has claimed the life of an anchorman they all recognised, a local Nicaraguan woman contends 'maybe we should have killed an American journalist 50 years ago'. In the end, the lack of understanding into the world in which they report, Price and Claire say they would do it all again, but a question mark is raised as to whether they will continue to be journalists. They both realise that faking the photograph, attaching themselves to the rebels, has not just caused further bloodshed in a conflict they thought they understood, but it has also caused the death of the friend and colleague Alex. In some ways, the film acts as a warning to foreign journalists who willingly shelve their professional ideal of objectivity and impartiality in the attempt to achieve a greater good, which, in this case, succeeds, but at a terrible cost.

### *Salvador*

Oliver Stone has often rooted the personal stories of his characters with the wider political contexts of the stories, although the director calls himself 'a dramatist before a political filmmaker' (Quoted in Kagan 1995, p. 7). Whether it is in America's participation in the Vietnam War in *Platoon* or the survival of two policemen in his working production *World Trade Centre*, Stone examines America, with all its greatness and flaws. In *Salvador*, he examines the struggle of Salvadorian people in the backdrop of American military intervention. The story of Richard Boyle in

*Salvador* is based on real events, so with this in mind, Stone captures the gritty nature of reporting from the front lines unlike the Hollywood fiction of *Under Fire*. Boyle's objectivity starts to slip when he realises the results of American foreign policy. In one pivotal scene with Embassy official Jack Morgan and US Army Colonel Bentley Hyde Snr., Boyle, almost as a microphone for Stone's own convictions, questions what America is doing in the Central American country.

*Boyle:* All I know is that some campesino who can't read or write or feed his family, has to watch his kid die of malnutrition. Do you think he gives a shit about Marxism or capitalism?

*Colonel:* It was that kind of crap thinking that lost us Vietnam, this guilt shit. You liberal assholes. What do you think the KGB's doing, huh?

*Boyle:* Is that why you're here? Some kind of post-Vietnam experience, like you need a rerun?...I don't want to see another Vietnam...I believe in America. I believe that we stand for something. For a constitution. For human rights, not just for a few people but for everybody on this planet. Jack, you gotta think of the people first. In the name of human decency, something we Americans are supposed to believe in. You've got to try to make something of a just society here.

While this may be a filmmaker's political testament, it is a question that should be addressed in the journalism of attachment and detachment debate. Boyle becomes disenchanted with the American administration and its support of the tyrannical Salvadorian administration. Boyle loves his country, and he is an idealistic American. He believes that America's place, as the dominant world order, should be used to help

developing countries like El Salvador, and not contribute to its destruction. His sentiments are so strong that Boyle realises that he wants to help his loved ones out of the mess that the US has helped to create, and he can't do this through his journalism. But he can't help Maria and her family get out of the country as, in a bitter twist of irony, the land of hope and dreams turns her down at the border because she is not a legal immigrant. As *Salvador* represents, journalists should believe that in some cases, wars do not present a right and wrong side – just misery.

### ***Conclusions***

*Under Fire* and *Salvador* are two films where the representation of journalists is rooted in countries which are experiencing political turmoil in the world climate of capitalism against communism. Journalism, as a profession, asks people, who are not experts, to objectively report the events and news that they witness. This norm is appropriate in war reporting, where the journalists strive to understand the background of the conflict. However, as my selected films demonstrate, this is not always so easy. War correspondents fly in and out of obscure political theatres to report on the latest attack by a rebel force, or the oppression by a government army. In *Under Fire*, Price and Claire don't understand the full extent of the political sphere they are operating in. They only see a tiny window on the conflict, which will and does inevitably lead to a misunderstanding of the whole picture. Academics and journalism practitioners who support a view of detachment argue that a series of small objective windows of the war will allow the audience to observe the full picture, rather than a group of journalist's subjective versions of it. In *Salvador*, Boyle, as a faithful American, is devastated by the intervention in El Salvador because he can see what it is doing to the innocent victims of the Central American state. He tries to help

those he loves, but he fails, and the suffering continues. The constraints placed on reporters by outside forces, from a government's misled intervention to a lack of the western world's attention on a situation, is another concern that journalists who wish to remain detached will have to contend with.



"Whose side are you on?"

Representations of journalism of attachment and detachment in  
the movies

**CONCLUSIONS**

The arguments of the journalism of attachment and detachment schools have brought into question objectivity as a journalistic norm, especially in war reporting. Martin Bell came up with the idea of a moral journalism instead of a clinical detachment of an event. Bell and other journalists questioned the notion of objectivity after the war in Bosnia. In this conflict, the Serbian forces targeted civilians and journalists on the ground, leading many in the media to question their balanced reporting. Bell and others believed that they should file partial, subjective reports of what they witnessed. While the journalism of attachment ethos may be noble, many other academics and journalists, such as John Lloyd and Mick Hume, have highlighted the problems of such a commitment to subjective war reporting. While the journalists may be seeking to report a greater truth, their subjective delivery of it will make them into celebrities of the news and make them more important than the story itself. There is also the question of political context in war reporting. Reporters from many countries jump in and out of conflict arenas and are expected to deliver detailed accounts of what is happening. But how much do these journalists actually know of the complexities that surround the conflict? Journalists who don't fully understand the context of war shouldn't make highly subjective statements about it, as it could affect the policy of foreign governments and powerbrokers. A good example of this was demonstrated in Rwanda, where the journalists got it wrong, leading to UN troop withdrawals that allowed the bloodshed to continue. Another concern surrounds journalist's personal

moralties against their professional commitments. In the journalism profession, we are asked to leave our convictions, discriminations and emotions at the door. This is a central practice in journalism throughout the western world. But how workable is it in war zones, when journalists are exposed to the horrors of conflicts? Some examples of journalists abandoning their detached reporting have been celebrated. Michael Nicholson's rescue of a child from an orphanage in Sarajevo, the subject of *Welcome to Sarajevo*, is regarded as an act of high moral fortitude. But journalists should not always embrace their personal sentiments, as the examples in Cambodia, Kosovo and Rwanda can demonstrate what can happen if those feelings are blinding them to the real truth. Roy Gutman, in his award-winning reports from the front line, demonstrates that journalists, adding their objective reports to the bigger picture, can report wrongdoing and find the truth.

The debate has moved on since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11th, 2001. Since that fateful day, academics and journalists have noted the concerns for journalist's mental and physical safety in war zones, while a new patriotic fervour in war reporting has also increased, especially in America following the attacks, as well as the increased control on journalists through censorship by the military and self-censorship. As the years from the 'war on terror' progress, it will be interesting to see what trends develop.

In this dissertation's methodology, I examined how limited the writing on the filmic representation on journalism, and the even smaller palette of films that deal with journalistic objectivity. I decided to look at two of these films, *Under Fire* and *Salvador*. I determined three themes that I would study in my primary research: how

the objectivity in journalism was illustrated, how the relationship between the journalists' personal morality and professional commitments was considered, and how the represented political contexts affected the journalists' actions.

So what did I discover in my primary research? In *Under Fire*, I examined how journalist Russell Price abandoned his objectivity for a greater good – to stop the war in Nicaragua and help the Sandinista rebels rid the country of the corrupt Somoza. Price, and his companion Claire, staged a photograph of the fallen Raphael, the former leader of the rebels, in an effort to end the hostility. However, the consequences of the Price's abandonment of objectivity lead to the death of colleague Alex Grazier and to the death of many of the rebels whom the journalists had become sensitive to. The personal sentiments of Price and Claire became overbearing on their professional obligations, and their struggle to remain detached resulted in grave consequences for their friends. The represented political contexts also affected the journalists into their actions. While not understanding the conflict's complexities, the journalists believed their actions could stop further intervention from the American military. Their lack of understanding was augmented by Marcel Jazy's betrayal. Price and Claire didn't understand what was happening, and their attachment to the Sandinista cause demonstrated what could happen when journalists get it wrong in countries that they barely understand.

In *Salvador*, Oliver Stone examines the implications of American intervention into the Central American state of El Salvador through the eyes of Richard Boyle. Based on real events, the film is more an examination of injustice in the troubled country, but its points on journalistic impartiality are important. Boyle becomes attached to the

plight of the Salvadorian people, in particular to his girlfriend Maria and her children. He eventually realises that he has to help Maria and her children, and abandons his detachment to the people of the conflict. It is important to note that Boyle's subjectivity in his work is not evident, but his attachment to one side of the conflict certainly is. The reason for his attachment to the peasant people of El Salvador is down to his personal sentiments. Boyle's professional concern for his journalism takes a secondary role. While Oliver Stone's own feeling of American intervention in countries experiencing political turmoil is evident, Richard Boyle is certainly affected by the represented political context. He campaigns to the American officials to improve the lives of the suffering people. He loves America, but can see what is happening under her great name and is ashamed. His strong feelings for the Salvadorian people and the rebel force affect his judgement, but he realises towards the end that both sides are as bad as each other when he witnesses the execution of government soldiers. Ultimately, Boyle's heroics to try and save Maria and her children are in vain, when she is sent to Guatemala after American immigration officials stop their entry into the US.

*Under Fire* and *Salvador* hold some significant messages in the journalism of attachment and detachment debate. Coupled with the work I examined in the literature review, my summaries of the films conclude that the journalistic ideal of objectivity is very difficult to achieve in the war zones of the worlds, and this looks set to continue in the post-9/11 world of terrorism. But we should not throw away the commitment to objectivity that is at the very heart of ethical journalistic practice. Nor should we stand back and watch evil prevail. We should follow the example of journalists who objectively deliver reports through hard work and perseverance, and

let their audience and elected governments decide what should be done. However, researchers who don't face the experiences and concerns of war correspondents on the front line cannot possibly understand what goes through their minds. As a student of journalism, living comfortably in Scotland, how can I fully understand what war correspondents go through, and how they think about objectivity? The answer is I can't, but I feel I am in a position to warn against a world where our only contact to the complex situations of wars is a band of subjective journalists, with their own personal feelings and possibly limited understanding of the conflict. We need to be informed of the truth so we can bring our governments and elites to account in democratic debate with other citizens – with journalism at the centre of this discourse.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A

#### *Cast Of Under Fire*

Director	Roger Spottiswoode
Writers	Clayton Frohman Ron Shelton
Russell Price	Nick Nolte
Alex Grazier	Gene Hackman
Claire Stryder	Joanna Cassidy
Oates	Ed Harris
Pedro	Eloy Casados
President Somoza	Rene Enriquez
Marcel Jazy	Jean-Louis Trintignant
Raphael	Jorge Zepeda

### Appendix B

#### *Cast of Salvador*

Director	Oliver Stone
Writers	Oliver Stone Richard Boyle
Richard Boyle	James Woods
Ambassador Kelly	Michael Murphy
Jack Morgan	Colby Chester
Maria	Elpedia Carrillo
Dr Rock	James Belushi
Carlos	Martin Fuentes
Major Max	Tony Plana
Pauline Axelrod	Valerie Wildman
John Cassady	John Savage
Colonel Bentley	Will MacMillan