


Chapter 7

Goodbye Dear Neighbor: On Documenting Your School as It Unravels

Jaime Iglehart Frasson

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0604-5359>

Iona University, USA

ABSTRACT

*This chapter presents an autoethnographic narrative of The College of Saint Rose’s abrupt 2023–24 closure, as experienced by a film-production professor who simultaneously taught and directed a feature-length documentary on the event. The film’s title, *Goodbye, Dear Neighbor*, echoes the school’s century-old service ideal. The chapter follows five dramatic movements—stasis, inciting incident, rising action, climax, and aftermath—drawing on field notes, interviews, and participant observation. It chronicles faculty and student responses to leaked closure news, job and school searches, transparency, severance, mental health support, and ripple effects on Albany’s Pine Hills neighborhood. It highlights the student-run *Chronicle* newspaper’s reporting, faculty–student alliances, and the author’s emotional negotiation of institutional collapse. Interweaving personal reflection and documentary practice, the chapter explores storytelling as a tool for communal memory amid loss and asks what it means to turn to one’s neighbors—and one’s camera—when “home” is dismantled.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-2063-2.ch007

PROLOGUE

Documentary Modes

When I was hired to teach film production at The College of Saint Rose in the Fall of 2022, I could never have guessed that a year and a half later I would not only be teaching film but would be making a feature-length documentary about the school's closure.

Considering I was a new hire, my first year at the college went along smoothly. Aside from the dwindling numbers of students and unsettling stories from other faculty about past labor struggles at the school, I enjoyed teaching at Saint Rose and began to thrive in the Communications department. I developed new classes, strong connections with students and began an annual student film festival. In retrospect, I should have seen the closure coming, but was too distracted with my excitement over my courses and activities to see it. I was particularly interested in teaching Documentary History and Production – a course I had been longing to instruct ever since I started out in higher ed. I wanted to teach this class because I aimed to “some-day” make a feature length documentary of my own. That “some-day” seemed to be continuously pushed further into the future as the demands of teaching overtook my schedule.

In Fall of 2023, unaware that in two months the school closure would be announced, I led my Documentary History and Production students through a concise survey curated through the lens of the six modes of Documentary (Nichols, 2001). In the first days of the class, I explained to the students that while in everyday discourse “documentary” film is often referred to as a film genre in and of itself, it stands as a film genre in the same way we can describe “narrative film” as a genre. Within “narrative film” exist a multitude of sub-genres such as Horror, Comedy, Sci-Fi, etc. As we read the work of Bill Nichols, we learned there are at least six distinct structures or “modes” of documentary filmmaking which we might also consider as genres (Oberacker, 2009): Poetic, Expository, Observational, Reflexive, Participatory and Performative. These modes shape the way in which “reality” is edited, organized, packaged and delivered to an audience. Therefore, a documentary created in a certain mode can be considered to be part of that mode's tradition or genre.

Over the course of the Fall 2023 semester, our documentary class looked at one film from each mode: Poetic (RaMell Ross' *Hale County, This Morning, This Evening*), Expository (Ava DuVernay's *13th*), Observational (The Maysles Brothers *Grey Gardens*), Reflexive (Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop*), Participatory (Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man*), and, to illustrate the Performative Mode, I chose Michael Moore's 1989 seminal film *Roger & Me*. One of the most popular, famous and hotly contested documentary films of all time, *Roger & Me* documents the clo-

24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/goodbye-dear-neighbor/387744

Related Content

Guiding Light: Former Educators' Contributions to Student Development Through Spiritual Education

Jamil Akhtar (2025). *Former Educators' Roles in Supporting Student Growth and Learning* (pp. 275-306).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/guiding-light/366963

Organizational Strategies for Building Community Among Remote Adjunct Faculty

Kenneth Christopher (2021). *Handbook of Research on Inclusive Development for Remote Adjunct Faculty in Higher Education* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/organizational-strategies-for-building-community-among-remote-adjunct-faculty/263949

Addressing Dropout and Out-of-School Children in Europe: A Systematic Review

Khalida Nasreen and Muhammad Tanveer Afzal (2026). *Exploring Solutions and Opportunities to Address Dropout and Out-of-School Children* (pp. 175-188).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/addressing-dropout-and-out-of-school-children-in-europe/394276

Advancing Climate Health Through Campus Civil Discourse and Course Integration: Using the College Campus as a Catalyst for Promoting Holistic Sustainability

Mark Fincher (2025). *Higher Education's Leadership in Climate Action and Sustainability* (pp. 45-76).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/advancing-climate-health-through-campus-civil-discourse-and-course-integration/382924

Strategic Management of Online Higher Education Institutions

Peterchris Okpala (2025). *Building Organizational Capacity and Strategic Management in Academia* (pp. 553-590).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/strategic-management-of-online-higher-education-institutions/361467