

Beyond the milk carton: strategies for creating and allowing a space for engaging with personal narratives from family members about missing persons.

Lisa Drennan (LNXLIS002)

A minor dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Documentary Arts.

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2016

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Lisa Drennan

Date: 3 April 2016

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| LIST OF FIGURES | 5 |
| CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| CHAPTER 2 – FADING NEWSPAPERS | |
| 2.1 Agenda setting and the politics of news production | |
| 2.2 ‘Framing’ of news stories | |
| 2.3 Old media versus the New | |
| 2.4 Conclusion | |
| CHAPTER 3 – NEW/DIGITAL MEDIA – A NEW AGE OF COMMUNICATION | 16 |
| 3.1 New technologies and interconnectedness | |
| 3.2 Social media as a tool to finding missing people and/or children | |
| 3.3 Conclusion | |
| CHAPTER 4 – MISSING BROADCAST: AN ANALYSIS OF EXISTING TELEVISION CONTENT AND AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION | 21 |
| 4.1 An examination of existing television content on missing persons and/or children | 22 |
| 4.2 Development of original content | 25 |
| 4.2.1 Action Research: Reflecting on the filmmaking process | 26 |
| 4.2.2 Testing the <i>True Detective</i> model | 28 |
| 4.2.3 Testing the <i>Without a Trace</i> model | 31 |
| 4.2.4 Testing the <i>Disappeared</i> model | 36 |
| 4.2.5 Ethics and the documentary form | 40 |
| CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY | 43 |

| | |
|---|----|
| BIBIOGRAPHY | 46 |
| FILMOGRAPHY | 53 |
| APPENDICES | 54 |
| Appendix A - An interview with Latiefa Titus from <i>The Post</i> | 54 |

FIGURES

Chapter 1

- 1.1. Image of Madeleine's parents from newspaper article

Chapter 2

- 4.1. Image from *True Detective* (2014) of a car dialogue scene
- 4.2. Image from *True Detective* (2014) of the sweeping aerial shots
- 4.3. Image from *True Detective* (2014) of the sepia colour palette
- 4.4. Camera set-up 1 – medium shot of police officer 1
- 4.5. Camera set-up 2 – medium shot of police officer 2
- 4.6. Camera set-up 3 – wide shot of police officers 1 + 2
- 4.7. Image of the interview with Mrs. Titus
- 4.8. Image of an emotional part of the interview with Mrs. Titus
- 4.9. Image of the re-enactment where Mrs. Titus confronts her neighbour about Sadieka being missing
- 4.10. Image of the re-enactment where Mrs. Titus phones to police to tell them that Sadieka has in fact been missing for a month already

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At first all I heard was silence: but then it soon became apparent that in fact a cacophony of sounds surrounded Sadioka Titus's disappearance. Police speculations, community gossip, neighbour's proclaiming their innocence, friends lamenting at the unfairness of it all, experts theorising about why a young girl could or would go missing. But one tiny voice was attempting to make itself heard above all the rest. It often wasn't very sure of itself and at other times so very, very sad. I recalled the mother of the missing girl, Latiefa Titus, trying to remember the last time that she had ever seen her daughter. Her eyes were unsure, her mouth simply recounting a story. She was hesitant at first but then warmed up, happy just to talk. She laughed at happy past lost memories, smiled at small triumphs they had experienced together, wept at the injustice of losing her child.

Extract from my production journal (2016: 1)

Organisations like Missing Children South Africa regularly issue statements in the press about the alarming rate of children that go missing in South Africa every year. According to Missing Children South Africa's website, a child goes missing every six hours in South Africa, however of those 1700 that go missing annually, 87% are found within the first week. This points to a high recovery rate, mostly due to thorough police work, the community and initiatives like the Pink Ladies (a community initiative consisting of women that help search for missing children by distributing fliers and the like) but still does nothing to lessen the fact that the remaining 13% are simply never found or are found deceased. These statistics fail to convey the real horror and trauma associated when a family member and loved one goes missing.

The famous case of Madeleine McCann going missing in Praia da Luz, Portugal in 2007 was a testimony to the power of media, with newspapers and tabloids like the Daily Express featuring almost daily headlines. While her parents were eating dinner below within eyeshot of their balcony, Madeleine mysteriously disappeared from their room upstairs. Convinced that their daughter is still alive, Gerry and Kate McCann have spearheaded a worldwide search, and even convinced celebrities such as Richard Branson to appear on television to offer a reward and plead for her safe return.

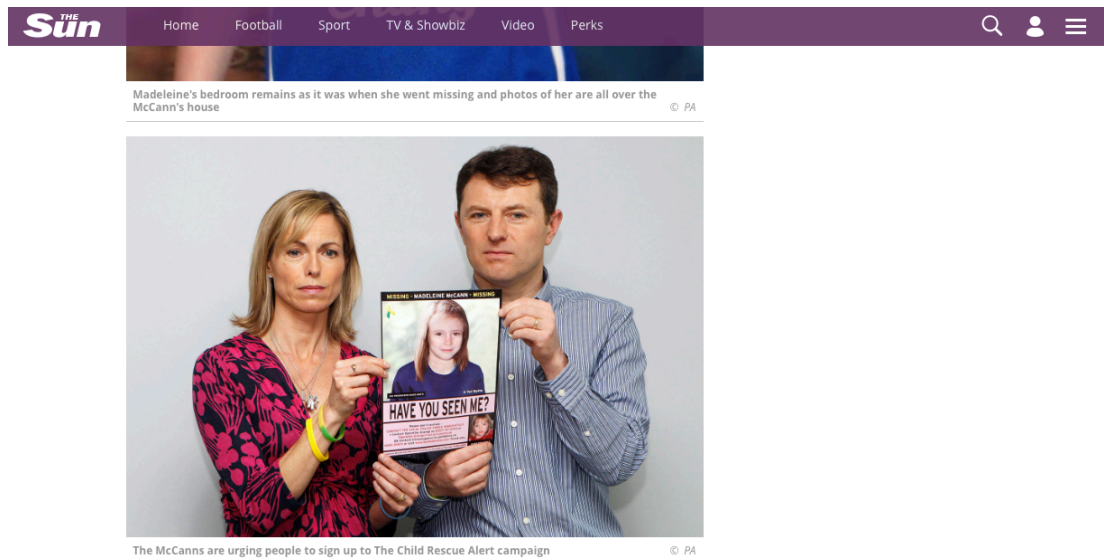


Figure 1.1. Image of Madeleine McCann's parents

Such was the media frenzy surrounding the case that even now, eight years later, UK newspapers and tabloids like the *Daily Express* and *Mirror* feature almost monthly headlines or updates about the case. Indeed The *Mirror UK's* online website published *several* headlines just over the last few months alone: "Madeleine McCann: Kate and Gerry urge public to continue search for missing daughter after damages victory" (Collins, 2015: np), 'Madeleine McCann's parents ready to continue search if police end investigation into her disappearance' (Kandohla, 2015: np), 'Madeleine McCann cops make fresh plea for Portuguese officials to help' (Fricker, 2015: np), 'Madeleine McCann detectives examine man's pictures after Sunday People probe' (Aspinall, 2015: np), 'Gerry and Kate McCann reveal the reasons why they miss Maddie' (Kandohla, 2015: np), and the like. This extensive coverage has afforded incredible exposure for the McCann family. But this case also stood out for another reason: many interviews conducted with the family after her disappearance didn't merely contain the facts surrounding her disappearance, they were also heartfelt narratives about the pain and horror that the family were going through - emotional moments about their life without Madeleine and how they were trying to pick up the pieces. These interviews allowed the parents to publically reflect on their loss. The public were not only made aware of their missing daughter but also of the very real and horrific way her disappearance had punctured their suburban life forever. Perhaps the nature of the media coverage, its depth and emotional slant is what drew the

public's attention to the case and sustained their interest for years after the abduction occurred.

Very few other cases of missing children have garnered the kind of media attention that allows parents of missing children to reflect in such a way. I will attempt to demonstrate in this dissertation that in South Africa at present, most newspapers barely report a child missing; let alone create a space for parents to reflect on their loss (Drennan, 2012). News is often considered to be centred around the interests of the élite (Herman and Chomsky 1988) and often certain demographics like race, gender and ethnicity can influence how 'newsworthy' certain crimes or stories are considered to be (Pritchard and Hughes 1997, Gruenewald, Pizarro and Chermak 2009). Social media is much the same. It is an important tool for getting important information pertaining to a disappearance across but doesn't often allow much room for intimate reflection. The public now have an increasing amount of control over the content that they access. Not only can they 'pull' information that they are interested in to their device of choice (mobile or otherwise), they can also create and publish content of their own or interact with existing content using interactive platforms (Hoffman and Kornweitz, 2011, So 2011, Taske and Forde Plude, 2011). Television plays a vital role by entertaining the viewer with facts and events that engage the audience but not much content can be found that allows the family and friends of the missing person to reflect on their sad and often lonely experience of losing a loved one in such a traumatic way.

Through an examination of various media to ascertain what information they do and do not contain about missing children, I will attempt to establish the frequency the press report about missing children and the nature of the coverage i.e. is it to bring attention to the missing child and merely elicit information about the disappearance or does it create a space for the parents and family to publically address the disappearance of their child. Therefore the aim of this dissertation is twofold, firstly to explore various media's coverage of missing children to probe whether they currently include the reflections and personal narratives of family members and loved ones and secondly, if found lacking, then to propose possible strategies for creating space for such content in the media. By employing qualitative methodology approaches such as

narrative inquiry and action research, I will then be able to use the various cycles of my action research as way to reflect on my research and in turn refine and develop the best platform to allow parents space to adequately reflect and grieve. By following a version of Lewin's action research spiral (1946, 38), I will be able to test my hypothesis against different genres of film before arriving at the most effective result. After each cycle, I could gain a better understanding of my own process and growth as a filmmaker while documenting the evolution of my film. In addition, the aim of my film will be to test various approaches to form and aesthetics in order to 1) engender genuine rapport with the interviewee (protagonist) so that s/he could feel free to reflect and grieve while 2) revitalising the conversation about the topic of missing persons in general and one missing person specifically by 3) engaging the audience through the use of popular television conventions. To achieve this, I will use four different television genres to test my hypothesis against: a premium fictional series, a police procedural drama, a non-fiction television series and finally, a documentary format before concluding which approach works best.

The following chapter as a point of departure will initiate this study by investigating whether South African printed media also contain ongoing reports about missing children on a regular basis, the exact nature of these reports and furthermore, the motivations behind providing more coverage for certain stories and less for others.

CHAPTER 2: FADING NEWSPAPERS

In South Africa alone, 1700 persons and/or children are reported missing annually (Missing Children South Africa, 2015:np). Family abductions, muti murders, sexual predators, runaways and human trafficking are just some of the reasons that may account for some of these disappearances (Rheeder, 2014: np). Organisations such as Missing Children South Africa are attempting to provide the public with as much information as possible but the Madeleine McCann case has clearly proven the incredible power of the media in reporting about missing children.

In a study conducted in 2012 (Drennan 2012), it was found that out of sixty-three articles relating to missing children published in two newspapers in the Western Cape over the period 2009-2012, 37.5% of articles in *The Cape Argus* asked for public assistance and only 5% were accompanied by a photograph. *The Cape Times* fared slightly better with 52% requesting public assistance but only 4% were accompanied by a photograph. No articles contained any lengthy interview with parents or loved ones pertaining to the disappearance of the child/person. It seems contradictory that although alarming statistics from Missing Children South Africa permeate the media (in the form of campaigns), newspapers don't seem to raise this matter to an adequately prominent level to mobilise popular support or action.

2.1 Agenda setting and the politics of news production

The possible reason for may lie in the agendas and politics of news production. Print media specifically can be viewed as a powerful 'agenda-setting' device (Galtung and Ruge, 1981). According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), the wealthy and powerful control the media so essentially the news is concerned with the interests of the élite. In their seminal work about how news is selected, Galtung and Ruge (1981: 56) argue that news is 'élite-centred' as the actions of the élite are far more significant than those of the proletariat, thus making whatever the élite do more interesting and newsworthy by comparison. Shaw (1984: 171) believes that the attitude about under-reporting crime in minority or poor communities has more to do with cynicism on the

part of news organisations than anything else, as he states that “[v]iolence is often so common in minority [or poor] communities that it loses some of its news value”.

Herman and Chomsky (1988: 37) further maintain that a distinction exists in which people are seen to be either *worthy* or *unworthy* victims by news organisations and the public. This is also known as ‘dichotomization’ (Goodwin, 1994: 103). In Goodwin’s view *unworthy* victims can be described as victims in enemy states or war torn areas who are mistreated or abused whereas the same treatment meted out to Americans or Europeans on home soil, simply is more newsworthy, thus rendering them *worthy*. A good example of *unworthy* victims would be the tens of thousands that have been killed in US attacks on Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria over the last ten years whereas *worthy* victims would be the Americans killed in September 11 attacks on American soil. This theory seems to be written from a Euro-American perspective and applies firstly to countries like the USA that have been waging an on-going war against terrorism, especially in the Middle East (Iraq and Syria). But the premise of *worthy vs. unworthy* victims is applicable in other countries and in relation to situations other than war. It is pertinent to socio-economic power and the interests of the élite and so it is applied in this study to understand why newspapers are more likely to report about affluent missing persons than poor ones.

Various criminology scholars (Pritchard and Hughes 1997, Chermak 1998) have attempted to analyse patterns in crime reporting to ascertain why some stories are reported on and some are not. Pritchard and Hughes (1997: 49) put forward a theory that the level of status and/or cultural deviance plays a dominant role and through a comprehensive study conducted of homicides in Milwaukee, WI, found that the “newsworthiness of a homicide is enhanced when whites are suspects or victims, males are suspects, and victims are females, children, or senior citizens”. Whereas Gruenewald, Pizarro and Chermak (2009: 271) found in another study that race and ethnicity play an important role, as “homicide occurrences involving Hispanic offenders and White, Black, and Hispanic victims were considered significantly more newsworthy than the more common Black-on-Black homicide”. This is particularly useful in understanding the amount and duration of media attention surrounding Madeleine McCann’s disappearance as she was white and had financial backing in the

form of educated parents who were doctors and managed to engage rich and powerful people to take up her cause (Greenslade, 2008: np). Thus the story was high on the agenda for many months as “the suggestion is that while the media do not tell us what to think, they may tell us what to think about” (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsley and Richardson, 2005: 12). The on-going coverage in the newspapers surrounding the case signified that the story was important and worthy of their attention.

2.2 ‘Framing’ of news stories

The media also influence the way the story is perceived through the way the story is ‘framed’ or presented; this includes which elements are included, excluded, emphasised and elaborated on (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). Tuchman (1980: 1) gives an interesting analogy of how ‘framing’ of news can be understood:

...like any frame that delineates a world, the news frame may be considered problematic. The view through the window depends upon whether the window is large or small, has many panes or few, whether the glass is opaque or clear, whether the window faces a street or backyard. The unfolding scene also depends upon where one stands, far or near, craning one’s neck to the side, or gazing straight ahead, eyes parallel to the wall in which the window is encased.

Therefore news framing is seemingly quite a subjective process as “[f]raming is a seminal concept that describes the interpretative activities on both the message encoding and decoding sides” (Huang, 2009: 47). Far from simply being the modern day, urban version of the town crier (Tuchman, 1980), news has since become a means for certain individuals or rather news organisations, to push across a certain agenda, for “[b]y seeking to disseminate information that people want, need, and should know, news organizations both circulate and shape knowledge” (Tuchman, 1980: 2).

Another important argument put forth is that the public depend on the media, newspapers specifically, to shape its own perceptions and opinions on subjects like crime (Roshier, 1981). So if a story is deemed important enough to be printed by a newspaper, then it is sending an important message to the public that the nature of the crime is serious and attention needs to be taken. If we examine it in terms of

missing children for instance, if multiple national newspapers run stories about children going missing and numerous follow-up articles on a weekly or daily basis, immediately it would be on the radar for most South Africans, possibly leading to more speculation about the causes of the problem. Infrequent reports, on the contrary, may lead to the public being completely unaware of the frequency of these disappearances, and so making them deem the problem unimportant. Roshier's view (1981: 40) that "the selective portrayal of crime in the media plays an important part in shaping public definitions of the 'crime problem' and hence also its own 'official' definition" supports this. Forst and Blomquist (1991, cited in Chermak 1994: 563) argue that the power of written media is so great because by written media exponentially raising concern about certain issues, this in turn influenced policy makers to make changes to the system. Taking all the above points into consideration, it is important to note that a) newspapers have a responsibility in shaping public opinion, b) are selective in what they report on and how they report on it and c) if harnessed correctly could play a meaningful role in making the public more aware of missing persons, and thereby potentially putting it on the agenda for policy makers as well.

2.3 Old media versus the New

Newspapers are now considered by some to be archaic as the immediacy that breaking news often demands has been taken up by other platforms such as social media, which can give minute-to-minute updates of events as they occur. Media Richness Theory (Daft and Lengel, 1986) is based on the premise that "the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61). Considering that different media differ in the quality and accuracy of information that they are able to transmit, often within a certain time frame, it stands to reason that the media that can relay the greatest amount of curated and unbiased information within the shortest time, will be most effective. The recent phenomenon of the Oscar Pistorius court case is a prime example of the power of social media, as the public were kept informed of court proceedings in real time as the case unfolded. According to Data Drive Insights, "the trial is the biggest social media event in South Africa's history, producing an estimated 3.5 million tweets since Reeva Steenkamp's murder in February 2013" (Macha 2014, np). In this instance Twitter

took on the role of news breaker, keeping the public informed with up to the minute vital pieces of information as the case unfolded as well as numerous retweets by the curious public who were keen to dissect and speculate. Many dedicated Twitter accounts were set up by journalists for the sole purpose of keeping the world informed. Phelan (2011: 45) provides a very succinct description of the chasm that is now starting to exist between Old and New media:

The old media contained everything good and bad, from the best to the worst, like a great city. The World Wide Web is the greatest city in history and is home to a global mass culture...It is also the key to all the great libraries of the world and to the latest authoritative reports and studies in every subject: a formidable tool for populist mobilization and a venue for global scientific collaboration.

However as archaic and outdated as print media can be seen in comparison to an online platform like Twitter, it still has a purpose and it certainly has an audience. *The Cape Argus* has a daily circulation of 76,000 copies amongst 374,000 readers, therefore making it the biggest selling daily newspaper in Cape Town. (SuperBrands, 2014: np). This along with *The Cape Times*, *The Burger* and several community newspapers, mean that thousands of households are still reading print media every day and could provide a valuable platform and vital exposure for information and photographs of missing persons. When questioned how often, in her opinion, newspapers pick up on stories of missing children, Nicky Rheeder, National Co-ordinator for Missing Children South Africa, answered that it was generally about once a month. She did, however, admit that “it was sometimes unpredictable as some stories spread like wildfire, in all the papers, online, radio and TV and then we just do interviews until we’re blue but these cases are more the exception” (Rheeder, 2014: np). However she was also quick to add that although more exposure would surely help their cause, she was in fact relieved that newspapers didn’t pick up on every single missing child case as “[t]here are 1700 children that go missing in a year and that’s just children ... that is three cases a day being seen in the newspaper. If you saw three missing people in the newspaper every single day, you wouldn’t even look at their faces anymore. It’s too much. It desensitizes people to the issue” (Rheeder, 2014: np). I would argue that there must be a happy medium that will ensure adequate coverage without overexposure.

2.4 Conclusion

It is clear that the newsroom is permeated with politics (Galtung and Ruge, 1981) and can be seen to be centred around the interests of the élite (Herman and Chomsky 1988). Furthermore various scholars like Gruenewald, Pizarro and Chermak (2009) and Pritchard and Hughes (1997) maintain that race, ethnicity and gender are important considerations in whether a crime is deemed 'newsworthy' enough. Herman and Chomsky (1988) believe that victims are categorised as either *worthy* or *unworthy* and that this categorisation influences how they are portrayed in the media.

Although certain high profile cases seem to garner a lot of media attention internationally, a study of both daily newspapers in Cape Town (Drennan 2012), found that neither featured any follow-up article which contained any further details of the case or in-depth interviews with parents or loved ones pertaining to the disappearance of the child. This is the particular area of media coverage that is the central concern of this study. So, as it is not prevalent in newsprint in South Africa, it is necessary to examine other forms of media, including social media, to ascertain whether they are more likely or able to include the personal narratives and reflections of the loved ones of missing persons.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA – A NEW AGE OF COMMUNICATION

Where the public relied on information to be ‘pushed’ to them by broadcasters, publishers and agenda-setters in the past, they now have an increasing amount of control over the content that they access. Not only can they ‘pull’ information that they are interested in to their device of choice (mobile or otherwise), they can also create and publish content of their own or interact with existing content using interactive platforms. So, users have more control over what content they consume and how they consume it. Today the public can access information faster (e.g. news can be posted to social media as it happens) and can have dynamic interactions with it by posting comments or interacting with other comments posted. The benefit of this in the search of missing persons is that (1) information can be distributed faster and more widely, (2) readers can respond to it immediately and (3) all information collected in this way is available to the whole community of users. In this chapter the current uses, benefits and drawbacks of social media in the search for missing persons and/or children are outlined and suggestions for future applications of such platforms are introduced.

3.1 New technologies and interconnectedness

With the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) and User Generated Content (UGC), “[t]he social landscape of the world is shifting into a different culture through the explosion of digital gadgets and platforms propelling networking sites” (So, 2011: 30). Along with these new technologies come new habits and patterns of use. No longer content with the daily diet of what news agencies deem “newsworthy” for the public, *the public* now want the agency to actively search for news that interests *them*. Instead of a newspaper presenting content ranging from sports to news to leisure, people now only search and actively engage with what interests them, in this way “[t]he public sphere has become fragmented [as] new media users can actively adjust their media diet to their personal interests, potentially narrowing down the range of specialized topics they chose to be engaged with in the

first place” (Hoffman and Kornweitz, 2011: 8). Furthermore whereas in the past, people merely had editorial sections of newspapers to vent their emotions or comment, ICTs and UGC actively encourage and actually thrive on continual feedback and comments from the public, because “[c]itizens are able to publish their views immediately”(Hoffman and Kornweitz, 2011: 8). Comment sections abound in all online newspaper articles as well as Facebook pages devoted to causes, companies or individuals.

This interconnectedness has changed the basis of our interactions as “social networking sites have become the market places of our generation ... where we meet digitally to discuss politics, rally for a common cause and gossip about our neighbours” (Taske and Forde Plude, 2011: 38). Social media has become extremely useful in rallying people around a specific cause, the uses of Twitter during the Iranian election of 2009 and the Arab Spring of 2010-2012, “have now become textbook example[s] of the power of social media, seemingly heralding a new age of fast, cheap and easy Internet revolutions which will sweep the world and eradicate powerless authoritarian figures” (Hoffmann and Kornweitz, 2011: 9). The power of social media doesn’t just hold true for politics. Many organisations, especially non-profits, are now realising how it can be used to get information out quickly. Indeed Nicky Rheeder, national co-ordinator of Missing Children SA, asserts that “[nowadays] social media plays a vital role in helping us to find missing children/persons as that is how we get the information out there as fast and widespread as we do”(Rheeder, 2015: np).

3.2 Social media as a tool to finding missing people and/or children

Missing Children South Africa is not the only organisation that has realised the potential of online media to locate and track missing children and persons, the USA has long been the forerunner with new systems such as SecuraChild, developed by GPS makers SecuraTrac, which “use[s] social-media networks, including Facebook and Twitter, to send out blast emails and text messages whenever a child is reported missing through the site” (O’ Connor, 2011: np). Securatrac, CEO Chris Holdert goes on to say that “social media is critical ... Facebook and Twitter are well understood by people of all ages and professions. We are using it to promote awareness of the

missing child and it would be silly of us not to.” The successful AMBER Alert System has also become digital as now millions of cell phone users can receive AMBER alerts automatically through the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) program. If cell phone users in the US have a WEA-enabled phone, they are automatically registered to receive three alerts: President, Imminent Threat and AMBER alert. In addition, The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has also developed an application that allows users to add an Amber Alert “ticker” to their website or phone which then allows them to receive any Amber notifications about missing children. According to the NCMEC, social media has helped to track and locate 98.5% of AMBER alerts since 2005. Of the 1,451 AMBER notifications put out from 2005 to 2009, 1,430 children have been located (O’Connor, 2011: np). It is clear from the data gathered about the efficacy of the use of social media in the search for missing children in the USA that social media is playing a large part in the recovery of missing children.

In the United Kingdom and Canada, plans are underway to use digital means to assist law enforcement with the recovery of missing children and persons. When April Jones was abducted in Wales on 1 October 2014, the charity Missing People used its digital billboards across the country for the first time to draw attention to her disappearance. In addition, thousands of people joined a Facebook page, which had over 8000 likes by the afternoon of the following day. Others, including high profile people such as Stephen Fry, tweeted using the hash tag #findapril. In Toronto, Canada, software called Milk Carton 2.0 has been developed by Grey Canada, which allows the Missing Children Society of Canada to post AMBER alerts to social media accounts of participants who give authorisation. The alerts will only be posted when a child in their region goes missing although users can select an option for all regions in Canada, not just provinces. If sent to all of Grey Canada’s current users, it is believed to have the potential to reach more than one million people. (Toronto Metro, 2014: np).

Although social media such as Facebook and Twitter have grown in complexity and reach and can be incredible tools used to locate missing children and persons, their use in this regard is not without complications and challenges. Mark Houghton-Brown, chief executive of UK-based charity Missing People says, for example, that “[m]isinformation is a real problem – we know of some high-profile child abduction

inquiries which have been clouded with misinformation...[t]hat's why we encourage people to pursue the right channels"(Channel 4, 2012, np). Hoaxes and false reports do occur, so people are encouraged to only believe reports that come through verifiable channels like AMBER alert in the US, Missing People in the UK and Missing Children SA in South Africa. Tony Loftis, a father whose thirteen year old daughter ran away, also admitted that having his barely teen daughter's name out there forever on social media associated with an older sexual predator, is far from ideal but the fact that she was eventually found, unharmed, outweighed all the negatives associated with social media.

The efficacy of social media in helping to locate missing people and children can hardly be disputed, yet access to the Internet in first world countries like the USA, UK and Canada differs greatly from that of developing countries like South Africa. According to FBI spokesman, Jason Pack, "51 percent of American 12 year-olds and older have a Facebook page. That's more than the population of entire countries!" (O'Connor 2014, np). According to Internet Live Stats, in the USA 279,834,232 people out of a population of 322,583,006 are internet users; whereas in South Africa only 24,909,854 out of a population of 53,139,528 use the internet. This demonstrates an 86.75% penetration in the population of the USA versus 46.88% in South Africa. Furthermore, according to the South Africa Info website (South African Info, 2013: np), "just over a quarter (25.5%) of South African households have internet access, placing the country 5th in Africa and 44th among developing countries for household internet access". However, for mobile broadband - which allows people to access the web via smartphones, tablets and Wi-Fi-connected laptops - subscriptions in South Africa are growing at a rate of 30% per year but statistics indicate that South Africa still only has 13,000,000 Facebook users (Internet World Stats, 2015, np). Since most social media campaigns related to missing persons are conducted through Facebook, a large percentage of the population will have no access to this information, be it through limited internet access in their home or the fact that they do not own a phone that can access the internet, as presently in South Africa statistics indicate that only 20,000,000 of the population are smartphone users (Business Tech, 2014, np).

3.3 Conclusion

So, although countries like the USA, UK and Canada are making great strides using social media to locate and bring home missing children, South Africa is lagging somewhat behind as access to the internet and mobile devices are not yet on par with most first world countries. Although social media allows a flow of information that is immediate, the information is still mostly centred around quick mobilisation of the public to find the missing person in the shortest time possible and doesn't allow a space for family members to reflect or share their experiences. Apart from print media and social media, television broadcast is a major source of information and entertainment to South Africans, and so is the next area of enquiry.

CHAPTER 4: MISSING BROADCAST: AN ANALYSIS OF EXISTING TELEVISION CONTENT AND AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

From the preceding chapters it is clear that in terms of print media in South Africa at present, most newspapers do not regularly contain articles pertaining to missing children and if they do, the articles are rarely accompanied by a photograph or seen to warrant a follow-up article. Newspapers have agendas and newsgathering is a subjective process. Social media has been demonstrated to be an important tool for distributing important information quickly but doesn't often allow much room for intimate reflection. A significant percentage of people in developing countries, especially in rural areas, still have little or no access to the internet so this renders Twitter and Facebook campaigns relating to missing persons and/or children basically defunct in these parts of the country.

In this chapter television programming (fiction and non-fiction) will be explored as a possible platform for communicating information about missing persons and/or children and for allowing a space for loved ones to reflect on their experiences. It will be considered particularly in terms of its suitability as a medium that allows the space and time to become involved with a story and also feel an emotional connection with the character (fiction) or subject (non-fiction). Television and feature films have the potential to allow the viewer to become completely immersed in a specific storyline or subject, and even if the premise is completely non-fictional, "[i]t provides ways of elaborating a sense of character ... through the techniques of lighting, composition, and editing, among others, that can be applied to non-actors as readily as actors (Nichols, 2001: 91). My hypothesis is that it is possible to use fiction aesthetics and/or devices to make a non-fiction fiction film about missing children and still maintain adequate space for intimate reflective on the part of the subject. By combining narrative inquiry and action research, I will test my hypothesis against different forms of television.

4.1 An examination of existing television content on missing persons and/or children

As a foundation for the discussion that will follow, an examination of all the television programming (specifically series and not stand alone fiction or documentary films) available in South Africa from Monday to Sunday on SABC 1, SABC 2, SABC 3, eTV and MNET was conducted in August 2014. The SABC and eTV channels were selected based on what the majority of South Africans had access to for free (with payment of an annual license fee). MNET was included as certain areas in South Africa that are rural and remote have very bad reception and thus the only way to watch TV is to purchase a satellite dish accompanied with the cheapest bouquet that DSTV has to offer, which includes SABC 1, 2, 3, eTV and MNET for R120 per month.

It was found that no programming existed at that point (specifically series), which featured content specifically focused on missing persons and/or children. The only television show that featured related matter was the fictional American television series *Missing*. The plot of *Missing* centres on a former CIA agent whose son goes missing whilst studying in Rome. In terms of non-fiction television shows specifically aimed at exposure for real missing persons and/or children or a space which allowed intimate reflection from family members or loved ones, nothing could be found. It should be acknowledged that many police and legal procedurals and other television shows include episodes in which a missing person is the victim of the crime under investigation, but no other show that has missing persons as its overarching theme were found at the time the survey was completed.

Even if such content was not being broadcast on South African television, preliminary research showed that several fictional and non-fictional television shows existed that focused on missing persons and/or children.

The most notable fictional shows include:

- *Missing Persons* (1993- 1995)

An American show set in Chicago which features two/three missing cases per episode that are investigated by a fictitious missing persons unit.

- *Without a Trace* (2002-2009)

An American show set in New York, which centres around investigating cases in the

Missing Person Squad of the FBI.

- *1-800-Missing* (2003-2006)

An American show set in Washington, D.C about two FBI agents looking for missing persons.

- *Vanished* (2006)

An American show which investigates the disappearance of a prominent Georgian senator's wife.

- *The Missing* (2014-present)

A British show, which explores the aftermath of a child's abduction whilst on a family holiday in France.

Although these fictional shows are entertaining and give the viewer some idea of what occurs when someone goes missing, they do little to reflect the exact nature of the trauma that the family goes through when a loved one disappears. Fictional storytelling is primarily focused on entertainment and even through the storyline might have twists and be somewhat complex, everything always works out in the end as “[n]arrative [storytelling] perfects the sense of an ending by returning to problems or dilemmas posed at the beginning and resolving them” (Nichols, 2001: 91).

Real life is certainly not so predictable and the endings not always ideal and so I would argue that non-fiction programming is more suitable for the topic of missing persons and/or children, especially if the goal is to raise awareness of the issue, play a preventative role and aid in real investigations. Non-fiction television programming also provides a space for reflection and subject matter dealing with very emotive issues.

The examination showed that there are copious amounts of non-fictional or rather documentary television shows that deal with the specific subject of missing persons, but they all seem to follow a very similar, formulaic approach. Through the use of family interviews, archival footage, police evidence and dramatic re-enactments, they attempt to reconstruct the last few days and hours that the person was seen alive and further use this information to speculate as to what may have happened to the person. Although an excellent tool to raise awareness and possibly jog the memory of people who might have inadvertently seen that person or child in the last few hours before

their disappearance, the general tone of the shows is not very emotional and thus do not allow much space for the family to reflect or simply share. The most prominent examples of non-fiction television shows about missing persons found through the survey include:

- *Find our Missing* (2012-2013)

An American show, which features people of colour, young and old, that had gone missing over the last few years throughout the USA.

- *Disappeared* (2009-present)

An American documentary television series, which investigates the last few hours or days of people's lives who have gone missing unexpectedly throughout the USA.

- *Missing* (2003-present)

An American show, which is nationally-syndicated and that aims to increase public awareness and provides facts concerning various cases of persons and/or children that have gone missing throughout the USA.

- *Last seen Alive* (2014-present)

An American show, which documents the experiences of investigators following leads and interviewing potential witnesses in the race against time to track down missing people all over the USA.

- *The First 48; Missing persons* (2011-2013)

An American series, which examines real-life, cases in the Chicago Missing Persons Unit and is based on the premise that the first 48 hours are crucial to finding out vital information relating to the circumstances around the disappearance.

- *The FBI Files* - selected episodes (1997-2006)

An American show that describes actual FBI, cases, some of which concern missing persons and/or children.

From the above it is clear that although a great deal of content does in fact exist concerning missing persons and/or children, the existing television formats (fiction and non-fiction) are perhaps not ideal for intimate reflection and sharing emotional responses. Real reflection needs the time and space to develop and cannot always easily fit into a predetermined television time slot. I therefore argue that it is important to generate programming that does allow for this, and this is the challenge I set myself for the film that this study accompanies.

4.2 Development of original content

I set out to design a format for a non-fiction film that provides vital information that might bring cold cases to the fore while allowing the family of the missing person to intimately reflect on their journey, emotions and experiences. Documentary film, in particular the filmmaker, can be an incredible tool in this regard as filmmaker Froemke (2002:30) explains: “that’s the whole key to getting the magic material—we’re great ears—we’re great therapists in a way. We’re listening to these subjects who have never been listened to before”. A reoccurring theme from personal interviews conducted with the national co-ordinator of Missing Children SA and parents of missing children was that often the family of the missing child are just looking for a space to be able to talk freely and vent their frustrations and pain to a sympathetic ear; someone that is still interested in what happened to their loved one, even if it has been many years since their disappearance.

Though the brief for my film was to make a non-fiction film and the documentary format could allow for a space in which my subject(s) could reflect, I was watching several new American premium fictional television series and was impressed by the quality and quantity of television available at that time. I wondered if I could instead transfer that model to make a television pilot. Premium television refers to a series produced by subscription-based television stations like HBO, STARZ, SHOWTIME and CINEMAX, many of which feature well-known big screen actors and are produced or directed by feature filmmakers. These networks can be subscribed to individually and have less regulatory censorship than public service and free to air stations as they cater to a specific audience (Pisharody, 2013: 5). Most new critically acclaimed and award-winning television series like *Breaking Bad* (2008), *House of Cards* (2013), *True*

Detective (2014), *The Knick* (2014) and the like, are broadcast on premium channels. The high production value, great storylines and high profile actors who star in these series have lead critics to call this “the golden age of television” (Brennan, 2015: np).

I wondered if I could transfer the non-fiction model to a television pilot model instead. This inspired me to test the following hypothesis: would it be possible to create an unscripted, non-fiction film but that was shot and edited in the style of premium fiction? The initial idea was to marry the exciting narrative structure of series with non-fictional content, thereby creating a new format that incorporated all the best conventions of fiction (three-act structure, character arcs, suspense, drama) with equally exciting hallmarks of non-fiction (heartfelt emotion, authentic characters and real conflict). This is hardly a novel concept as great contemporary documentary films such as *The Imposter* (2012) and television series like *The Jinx* (2015) seem to merge or rather blur the distinctions between fiction and non-fiction form. By using action research, I set out to examine whether a non-fiction film can be made that creates a safe, comfortable space for the subjects to reflect whilst at the same employing fiction film techniques such as a three-act structure, characters arcs, drama and suspense. The aim of my project was to study existing forms of visual communication about missing persons and to test various approaches to form and aesthetic in order to 1) create a popular media space for probing the stories and experiences of loved ones in depth, 2) engender genuine rapport with the interviewee (protagonist) so that he/she could feel free to reflect and grieve while 3) revitalising the conversation about the topic of missing persons in general and about a particular missing person specifically by 4) engaging the audience through the use of popular television conventions.

4.2.1 Action Research: Reflecting on the filmmaking process

Action research and narrative inquiry were selected as the methodologies for the second part of this chapter as they would allow me to probe my experiences and reflect on them: in this way I could gain a better understanding of my own process and growth as a filmmaker while documenting the evolution of my film. Narrative inquiry can be seen to be particularly suited to such reflection as “the participants in such inquiry construct and reconstruct narrative plots to gain a deeper understanding

of their experience” (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991:42). This was made possible by keeping careful notes throughout the production. My notes later functioned as an outline that allowed me to structure my thoughts about my work and experiences and later helped me to identify broader themes in the process. I was able to look back at all the stages and reflect on the entirety of the process and my decisions as a filmmaker. This was particularly helpful as “narratives can be a powerful force in heightening [one’s] awareness of [one’s] own professional reasoning” (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991:41). Once I had refined my notes, written mostly in a journalistic style, I was able to edit them extensively. I was then able to add nuance and details as I delved deeper and more memories were triggered. The result of this reflective process is what I include in the following sections of this chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the disappearance of Madeleine McCann in Praia da Luz in 2007, made worldwide headlines but as her parents were both doctors, they had the use of many resources, as well as the finances to make their voices heard and spearhead a search for her that spanned many years. Many other parents are not so fortunate. I felt strongly that the case I choose as the subject for my film should centre on someone from an under-resourced community in South Africa that wouldn’t have contacts amongst high-ranking officials, a job that affords them time off to search for their child or search the Internet for hours looking for a lead. I found the case of Sadieka Titus when I was perusing the Missing Children South Africa database one day. Preliminary research for Chapter 1 and 3 of this study meant that I had to extensively search for any follow-up information on all the names that I encountered, to ascertain whether any other information, particularly of a personal nature, existed on the Internet. I found an article in a local community newspaper in which Sadieka’s mother, Latiefa Titus, spoke about her daughter’s disappearance and how she would never stop searching for her. This was, however, the only article of such a nature that I encountered in my research. This article is what inspired me to aim my research towards developing a space where parents could reflect on their loss in a similar way. Mrs Titus seemed like a suitable subject for my film as her candid interview in the article (see Appendix B) indicated that she would be open to speak and reflect publically on her daughter’s disappearance and her own feelings of loss.

Action research enabled me to further test my hypothesis of how much the lines between fiction and non-fiction could be blurred while maintaining a space for the family of the missing person and/or child to share and reflect. By following a version of Lewin's action research spiral (1946, 38), I was able to test my hypothesis against different genres of film before arriving at the most effective result, as '[a]ction research entails a spiral process of constructing a research question or hypothesis, testing it in practice, learning from that experience and then adjusting the hypothesis for re-testing and so forth" (Maasdorp, 2016:3).

4.2.2 Testing the *True Detective* format

At the end of 2014 I started examining exciting new premium fictional series like *True Detective* (2014) and *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013) looking for conventions that might be applied to my story, character and settings. From the beginning, *True Detective* resonated with me the most, as the subject matter was dark, the landscape desolate and the characters full of hopelessness and despair. My origin meeting with Sadieka's mother and experiencing her surroundings in Hanover Park, impressed upon me the hopelessness of her situation yet the story that she told me was powerful and I wanted the medium to do it justice. Creating a fiction inspired treatment for a true story excited me as television series like *True Detective* have begun "signalling a radical shift in our understanding of what television as a storytelling medium can do" (Atad, 2004: no page).

The *True Detective* inspired stylistic devices I hoped to transpose to my film included:

- The dialogue flow between characters devised to carry the narrative and convey information, rather than an interview situation where a seen or unseen person asks questions (*see* Figure 1.2)
- The sweeping aerial shots (*see* Figure 1.3);
- The distinctive lighting (*see* Figure 1.4); and
- The atmospheric mood that was created through the use of evocative music.



Figure 4.1. Image from True Detective (2014) of a car dialogue scene



Figure 4.2. Image from True Detective (2014) of the sweeping aerial shots



Figure 4.3. Image from True Detective (2014) of the sepia colour palette

I believed that this would enable me to produce a film that would be engaging and arresting, but that could also give crucial exposure to cold cases like Sadieka's

disappearance, in an attempt to renew interest in the outcome of those cases.

However, once I started filming in Hanover Park and especially once I started interviewing Mrs Titus, it became clear that certain elements that I had hoped to reference were just not present in her story:

- The fast-paced dialogue and gothic feel of *True Detective* were hard to emulate once Mrs Titus began telling her story as real-life, unrehearsed dialogue is not as articulate and does not flow as easily;
- Having to direct drones, multiple big cameras and having lighting set-ups everywhere would have taken away from the intimate feel of the location and would have an adverse effect on my ability to have a conversation with Mrs Titus and connect with her;
- I learned that having a score composed for a film was prohibitively expensive and so I decided to use pre-existing library music. But this limited my ability to use music to create atmosphere;
- My budget constraints simply did not allow me to properly emulate a premium top-tier US television series that has a budget of millions of dollars.

At this point in early 2015 in my action research I found through observation and reflection that the *True Detective* aesthetic and the tone and content of my film were just not compatible. I would have to amend my hypothesis and test it in a new cycle of research. I had found that I would have to move away from trying to emulate a series with a big budget and a big crew in order to allow a space where the subject would feel comfortable enough to open up. The smaller the production the more conducive the space would be to allowing a reflective experience for the subject. The story had also begun to take on more of an American police procedural drama series feel as Sadieka's mother had suggested at several points in her interview that her daughter had disappeared under suspicious circumstances. I began to consider whether trying to merge my storyline with that of a police procedural series like *CSI* (2000-2005) or *Without a Trace* (2002-2009) might prove to be more effective.

4.2.3 Testing the *Without a Trace* format

Upon critical reflection of my first step, I realised that no matter how much I had wanted to reproduce something visually stylistic and moody, a police procedural drama seemed to be much more practical to try and emulate. This led me to select *Without a Trace* as the next model to emulate because it was a police procedural drama where each episode followed the search for a missing person. Mrs Titus had insinuated that Sadieka had disappeared under suspicious circumstances so I could model my film on a police investigation, using police accounts of what had happened, evidence found and witness testimonies.

The stylistic devices that I identified in *Without a Trace* that I hoped to incorporate into my film included:

- A dialogue flow between characters designed to carry the narrative and convey information, rather than an interview situation where a seen or unseen third person asks questions;
- A three-act structure;
- A clear protagonist and antagonist;
- Suspense and drama; and
- A plot twist at the end.

In order for it to closely resemble a fictional series, I would have to follow these conventions when producing my documentary. Initially it seemed as if all the necessary elements were already present in Sadieka's story: a riveting story with an incredible twist (Mrs Titus felt that her neighbour had been involved with her daughter's disappearance), police discussing the investigation, various revelations that could act as climaxes and the mother could be edited in such a way to display a very clear character arc. After further careful research into the exact structure of police procedural drama series, it became clear that they are very formulaic in their approach, making use of very conventional narrative structures, in fact a large portion of the content centres around the investigation and this was not the focus of my production.

The challenge with shooting non-fiction to look like a fictional series is that in dramatic narrative, a single camera is used but the action is repeated over and over and filmed from different angles, which are then intercut to form a “conversation” between characters. I decided the best way to mimic a single camera dialogue setup in a real life situation would be to set up three cameras shooting similar angles to those that you would see in a television drama (wide shot, medium shot and close up). I decided to test this approach when filming two police officers discussing Sadieka’s case. The instructions given to them were simple: they were not allowed to look directly at the cameras or at me, even if I interjected from the side-lines with an additional question that I wanted addressed and they should have a real, unscripted conversation.



Figure 4.4. Camera set-up 1 – medium shot of police officer 1



Figure 4.5. Camera set-up 2 – medium shot of police officer 2



Figure 4.6. Camera set-up 3 – wide shot of police officers 1 + 2

My intention was that, once edited, it would look like the two officers were having a normal conversation about Sadieka’s case. The next challenge at this point was the main interview with Mrs Titus. Most non-fiction filmmakers film the pivotal interview only once, as some emotive interviews can lose their poignancy if repeated over and over. If I wanted to create an interview atmosphere that would make the mother feel comfortable and allow me to build a rapport with her, I would have to limit the amount of crew and cameras present, as well as create an atmosphere where it felt like she was having a private conversation with me. The set-up used for the police interview/conversation described above would therefore not work in this context because I didn’t want to rehearse the interview beforehand, interject when I needed a question rephrased in another way or have multiple cameras filming at once. I was not prepared to sacrifice the rapport with the mother, nor the quality of the content it would allow me to gather during the interview. Indeed the interview that the mother later delivered was extremely emotional and very heart-felt; at times she broke down completely and needed a few moments to compose herself again. I had directed the police shoot to an extent in that we had gone through the questions beforehand at length, I regularly interjected when I needed them to add content or elaborate and we redid several questions when I felt like they didn’t answer the question in a way that it could be seamlessly edited together. The mother’s shoot was completely different and I realised the need to simply sit back and let the story unfold. This is very reminiscent of documentary filmmaking as “[t]he very essence of the filming is not controlling, but uncontrolled, a lack of control on the part of the filmmaker (Maysles as quoted in

Stubbs, 2002: 7).



Figure 4.7. Image of the interview with Mrs Titus



Figure 4.8. Image of an emotional part of the interview with Mrs Titus

Two of the hallmarks of fictional television productions, including procedurals, are character and story. The discussion above of the various interview set-ups I tested during my action research in the course of my documentary production speaks to character. Once I had completed the central interviews for the film, I shifted my attention to story, by examining the three-act structure that is characteristic of the police procedural drama.

The three-act structure conventionally contains two clear climaxes over the course of the story and a clear plot twist towards the end. During the first phase of editing this structure was used as a model and every attempt was made to try and get the

mother's story to conform to it. The mother's interview was heartfelt and emotional and it didn't feel right to be so contrived with her storyline just to fit into existing conventions. At this point the rapport that I had created and the safe space for the mother ran counter to my ambitions to create a conventional three-act structure in the edit because real reflection takes time whereas a forty-eight min procedural drama requires that plot developments follow each other quickly and at set intervals. No matter how much time I devoted to editing the mother's interview, it proved impossible to force it to fit into the police procedural narrative structure. The lesson I learned through this round of action research was that the personal reflection I aimed to capture through an intimate interview proved incompatible with the police procedural form whose conventions I wanted to apply to the documentary context.

Dramatic narrative also has a very clear protagonist and antagonist so it became very clear that in order to conform to this structure, we would in effect have to *create* these two binary opposites in the edit. Although there were many options as to who the protagonist and antagonist could be: the police constable, an alderman from the Democratic Alliance or Mrs Titus could, through varying how they were presented in the edit, be made to take on either role. Real life cannot so easily be simplified into a binary of *good* and *bad* and I realized at a pivotal point in the edit that in order to represent the events and people authentically and truthfully as I understood them from my research, I would not be able to apply a fiction three-act structure formula to my film. In the final version of the film, for instance, there are moments where the audience could intensely dislike Mrs Titus but also moments where they could feel empathy for her and even identify with her. The same applies to the police; at times they come across as very harsh and cynical but at other times sympathetic and concerned. Thus the complexity of real life doesn't always allow one to compartmentalise people so easily. Ethics clearly started coming into play here. I began questioning whether it would be ethical for me, as a filmmaker who had earned an interviewee's trust, to portray her in a particular way simply to make my film more engaging for an audience. In her own work, famed documentary filmmaker Susan Froemke observed that "what can really trip you up is going down with some agenda and thinking you're going to do this kind of a film and not seeing what is really there and letting all that reality happen. What really is happening truthfully is always more

interesting than what you might manipulate” (Stubbs, 2002: 30).

So thus after testing my revised hypothesis against reality, it was clear that the following fiction conventions could not be used:

- Although the police interview could be edited seamlessly to create the impression of a conversation or dialogue I was looking for, the mother’s story conformed more to a typical documentary style interview form;
- It was not possible to fit the mother’s story into a contrived three-act structure;
- It is hard and ethically questionable to make real people fit into pre-existing character stereotypes. Real people are complex and multi-layered and can’t simply be represented as protagonists or antagonists;
- Fitting a story into your own agenda just to create a plot twist at the end brings up many questions about unethical filmmaking practices.

It was clear that although certain conventions of the police procedural could be used, certain others would not be suitable at all for my purpose. The cyclic nature of the action research helped me to refine my research by determining what was effective and what to eliminate in the next cycle as “[t]he increased understanding which emerges from the critical reflection is then put to good use in designing the later steps” (Dick, 2000: np). It had emerged from this cycle that I needed to retain the one person documentary style interview and that the three-act procedural drama structure was not ideal for the content of my film. The next logical model to test would be non-fiction police dramas such as *Disappeared* (2009) as they dealt with authentic, heartfelt narratives about real people going missing and were not designed to fit into a conventional fictionalised three-act structure.

4.2.3 Testing the *Disappeared* format

Still intent on not producing a documentary but rather generating an appropriate format for a non-fiction television series about missing persons, the next step I devised for my action research was looking at the non-fiction television series *Disappeared* (2009), as it features real content and real people as opposed to scripted narratives and actors portraying characters. Each episode of *Disappeared* deals with a

argument the filmmaker wants to make” (Maasdorp, 2012: 94). This is referred to as continuity editing. The mother’s story recaps the days post Sadieka’s disappearance and it was a concern as to what b-roll could be used to cover these edits as she only had one photo of her daughter and no personal belongings that we could film.

The new model allowed for re-enactments but budgetary constraints meant that it was not possible to film re-enactments with actors, costumes and props. Mrs Titus agreed to take part in recreations of certain scenarios that we could use to cover the holes in the narrative. It is certainly not the conventional model in television non-fiction to have the main characters act as themselves and there is always an inherent danger that reconstructions may equate to ‘fictionalizing’ (Ward 2000, 45), however there is an argument to be made that “*all* documentary (and, indeed all social interaction) involves people ‘acting’ in some sense of the term” (Ward 2005: 36). At this point it seemed to make the most sense for Mrs Titus to act in the scenes herself as she had actually experienced the events unfold and her willingness to take part could be seen as “an explicit attempt by the subject ... of the film to reflect upon and appraise the situation” (Ward, 2005: 58).



Figure 1.10. Image of the re-enactment where Mrs Titus (centre) confronts her neighbour about Sadieka being missing

different person's disappearance and does so using a set formula. What I found from viewing multiple episodes is that it is divided into three distinct parts. Part 1 gives a detailed summary of the person's life prior to their disappearance, including interviews with family members and friends. Part 2 details events leading up to the disappearance and relies heavily on re-enactments and testimonies from eyewitnesses or people the missing person was in contact with on the day that they went missing. Part 2 usually ends with the climatic reveal of when and how the person went missing. Part 3 then picks up on the investigation and events that unfolded post disappearance. It may feature talking head interviews of family, friends and experts speculating as to what might have happened. The parts are roughly seven, twelve and six minutes respectively. This deviates from a traditional three-act structure in that the *Disappeared* narrative structure is influenced by the ad breaks it needs to accommodate. There is a mini-cliff-hanger before each ad break to draw viewers back afterwards, and a short recap after each break to get viewers back into the story.

Taking the above points as a guide, I then attempted to incorporate the following non-fiction series elements into my film:

- The *Disappeared* narrative formula that I identified above;
- Re-enactments;
- Personal, emotional accounts from family members and friends;
- Managing to hold the attention of the audience and only making the big reveal about the person going missing at the end of Part 2.

Emulating the conventions of a factual series also conveniently solved quite a big problem that I had encountered in my own film. The mother's initial interview was over two hours long so a careful selection of the most informative and impactful parts had to be made. This resulted in the whole sequence being riddled with jump cuts (ellipses or visible breaks in continuity). Jump cuts are not used in conventionally documentary as they can be jarring to the audience and disrupt the flow of the story, so a way had to be found to cover them all. B-roll is a filmmaking term that refers to additional footage that is intercut with the main shot, usually to illustrate or represent visually what the subject is talking about. B-roll also "creates a seamless flow in the visuals and hides the fact that interviews are cut up and stitched together to form the



Figure 1.11. Image of the re-enactment where Mrs Titus phones to police to tell them that Sadieka has in fact been missing for a month already

Once edited into the film, the re-enactments worked well but I had to be more economical with the mother's story in order to create a space for other voices to be heard in the second part of the film. Although upon viewing back the film as an entirety, it felt that it had lost an intrinsic part without the mother's full story. It lacked flow and some details were not very clear. It seemed once again that in order to conform to the *Disappeared* narrative formula, I had to omit some details, once again at the expense of Mrs Titus' story.

Eventually I found that rather than try and conform to a set of conventions that would ultimately do an injustice to Sadieka and her mother's story, I should let the story take precedence and allow it to unfold in the most organic way possible. Indeed the story that Mrs Titus told about Sadieka and her disappearance had all the crucial elements to engage an audience already, without needing to be overly manipulated. I had become so intent on distancing myself from the mother and the poignant story that she told in order to fit it into a narrow convention that I had lost all empathy and sense of purpose for the original subject matter and what I really wanted to convey with my film from the beginning. I had set out to make this film expressly because I had wondered what an emotional impact losing a child would have on a mother or family's life. This film had ceased to be an investigation or speculation about a missing girl and became more about a mother's personal reflection and journey surrounding

this heart-breaking event.

To design the fourth and final cycle of action research I was able to capitalise on the following findings and conclusions that emerged from the previous cycles of research:

- I would have to forego the conventional fiction television three-act structure and the non-fiction television narrative formulas in favour of a more fluid and flexible structure that would emerge from the interviews, particularly the one with the mother;
- Re-enactments worked well and helped propel the story forward;
- Including personal accounts from family members and friends added authentic emotion to the film;
- A documentary-style single person interview was the most effective in allowing the mother an intimate, safe place to tell her emotional story;
- By eschewing existing structures and formulas I could tell the story in a way that I believe is more authentic, ethical and true to the facts that I uncovered during my research.

Reflecting back on my latest cycle of research made me realise that the documentary form lends itself best to foregrounding personal reflection. The nature of the single person interview allows the subject to explain and reflect at length on the subject matter. It also encourages the audience to connect emotionally to the story and in Nichols view:

[documentary] depends on finding people, or social actors, who reveal themselves in front of a camera with an openness and lack of self-consciousness similar to what we find in trained professionals. And documentary seeks to impart to viewers a feeling of emotional involvement or engagement with the people and issues portrayed (2001:94).

4.2.5 Ethics and the documentary form

Throughout the various stages of action research, I found that my film was in fact closer to a documentary film than I had initially intended it to be. By using documentary conventions, my initial aim was starting to be realised. I had provided a

safe space and a platform for the mother of the missing girl, Latiefa Titus, to open up and personally reflect on her loss and journey thus far. But documentary filmmaking is not without its own set of challenges. Impartiality on the part of the filmmaker is hard to maintain or rather it becomes extremely difficult as a filmmaker to separate your voice from that of the film or subject matter. In Nichols's view (2001: 49) "[t]he voice of documentary is most often the voice of oratory. It is the voice of a filmmaker setting out to take a position regarding an aspect of the historical world and to convince us of its merits". Although at times it would have been extremely easy to paint the mother as a villain, thereby conveniently creating conflict and drama within my film, it is often far too simplistic to reduce the story to a case of bad parenting or a negligent mother. Real life often doesn't consist of binary opposites but rather past experiences that have shaped many of the (good and bad) decisions that we make in later life. Rather than simply reduce Mrs Titus to a stereotype of "typical" Hanover Park parenting behaviour, I wanted the viewer to see her, *really* see her, for what else she represented: namely a mother who had lost her child in a way that allowed no closure. However, now an ethical question arose: what if the only way to do this was to omit some questionable statements that Mrs Titus had made, including that she had kicked Sadieka out of her house repeatedly and that they often didn't speak to each other for days, even months at a time? Or a statement from the police that they considered Sadieka a known drug addict around Hanover Park and believe that she is in fact not missing, but rather a runaway and at this stage, very likely prostituting herself elsewhere in Cape Town? Do any of these "facts" diminish the power or hopelessness of her story or experiences? Do any of these "facts" make her story any less real or traumatic? The same problem emerged with the police. At times they came across as hardworking, frustrated with the system and keen to help the community but at other times those same virtues made them appear extremely unsympathetic and even incompetent. Yet again, the same occurred with the alderman from the Democratic Alliance: should he be cast as the unsympathetic white man from the affluent suburbs who has little or no patience with reoccurring so-called "bad parenting" or a beacon of light that really wants to reduce crime statistics in a realistic way and eradicate corruption? It soon became clear that there are always two sides to a person and indeed a story and I would have to tread carefully when choosing which side to reveal. These questions became real moral dilemmas as "[t]he [filmmaker]

often looks to the present but may draw heavily on the past to prove worthiness or unworthiness. Character can be made, or unmade, by a variety of means; fairness and impartiality are not always honored” (Nichols 2001: 72). These are challenges that a filmmaker often has to grapple with. A documentary does not exist in a vacuum and unfortunately “[s]tories are never lifted from life intact and we can never know something separate from our way of thinking (Spence and Navarro 2011: 11).

Four cycles of action research helped me to understand and determine what form would be best in order to create a space that would allow for intimate reflection from family members of missing persons. In round one I determined that a small crew was crucial to building a rapport with my subject and allowing an intimate space where she felt safe and comfortable to open up to me. In round two I found that the documentary interview, not the drama dialogue, worked best with the content that I had and that my story could not fit into a conventional television three-act structure. Round three helped me to realise that I had to completely forego a non-fiction narrative structure, but that re-enactments and personal accounts from family members could help propel the story forward and that the documentary form would in fact best match my initial concept.

Ultimately it is up to the filmmaker to produce the product that best reflects his or her understanding of the events and characters as well as the choices he/she has to make. My initial aim was to produce a film that allowed for personal reflection and by following a documentary form that incorporates inspiration from fiction and non-fiction television forms, the story was allowed to unfold organically, thereby creating a space for Latiefa Titus to reflect on her personal experiences, both positive and negative.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY

Despite the alarming regularity with which adults and children go missing in South Africa every year, approximately 1700 per annum, most local newspapers rarely feature an initial article, let alone a follow-up or interview with the parents or loved ones (Drennan, 2012). There are various reasons for this, including that news is often considered to be centred around the interests of the élite (Herman and Chomsky 1988) and often certain demographics like race, gender and ethnicity can influence how 'newsworthy' certain crimes or stories are considered to be (Pritchard and Hughes 1997, Gruenewald, Pizarro and Chermak 2009). Furthermore Herman and Chomsky (1988) maintain that victims are categorised into either *worthy* or *unworthy* status (partly due to socio-economic circumstances) and this in turn can influence how they are represented in the media. Therefore the news gathering and 'framing' process is seemingly quite subjective as breaking 'news' has become a means for certain individuals or rather news organisations, to push across a certain agenda (Tuchman, 1980, Huang, 2009).

However the much-publicised case of Madeleine McCann going missing in Portugal in 2007 showed how much power the media still yields and how much awareness *can* be created if the media choose to cast light on a particular case. In this case the girl in question came from a wealthy, educated family who had ample resources and finances at their disposal to keep interest in the story going for months and even years after the disappearance. But this case was also significant for another reason: there were numerous personal interviews with her parents, which allowed them to share intimately about how they felt. These interviews created a space for the parents to reflect on their loss in a public way.

Social media has been demonstrated to be an important tool for distributing important information quickly and mobilising responses from the public relating to cases of missing persons, but no intimate narratives from parents were found on this platform. Although countries like the USA, UK and Canada are making great strides using social media to locate and bring home missing children, South Africa is lagging

somewhat behind as access to the internet and mobile devices are not yet on par with most first world countries. Although social media allows a flow of information that is immediate, the information is still mostly centred around quick mobilisation of the public to find the missing person in the shortest time possible and doesn't allow a space for family members to reflect or share their experiences.

Television contains a great deal of fiction and non-fictional programming that deals with the subject matter of missing persons, yet the existing television formats are not ideal for intimate reflection and sharing emotional responses.

After examining news media, social media and television (fiction and non-fiction) it was found that none of the above platforms created a fitting space in which family could intimately reflect. By using narrative inquiry and action research while producing my own film about a missing person, I was able to test various fiction and non-fiction programming models. Through a process of trial and error, I found that a documentary form that incorporates inspiration from fiction and non-fiction forms was the most fitting platform to create an intimate space for reflection and sharing. I tested four formats, and was able to retain some inspiration from each, while discarding what did not serve my primary goal of creating space for reflection for family members of missing persons. From premium television I realised I would have to move away from trying to emulate a series with a big budget and a big crew in order to allow a space where the subject would feel comfortable enough to open up but I retained the visual aesthetic that denotes hopelessness and despair. The three-act structure prevalent in police procedurals and the narrative structure in non-fiction series lead me to the conclusion that I needed a more fluid and flexible structure in order to tell the story in the most organic way. Furthermore a documentary-style single person interview was the most effective in allowing the mother an intimate, safe place to tell her emotional story and re-enactments were crucial in propelling the story forward.

Finally I returned to the devices and approaches of documentary film and found that I could tell the story in a way that I believe is more authentic, ethical and true to the facts that I uncovered during my research. By combining these various elements I

believe that I was able to make a film that is ethical, sensitive and respectful of my subject; to focus renewed attention on a cold case, while creating space for intimate reflection, something no other medium or platform I studied was able to do.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aspinall, A (2015). Madeleine McCann detectives examine man's pictures after Sunday People probe. *The Mirror UK* October 24, 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/madeleine-mccann-detectives-examine-former-6699750>. [Accessed 26/11/2015].

Atad, C (2014). *How True Detective and The Knick are ushering in the new era of television*. [Online]. Available: http://www.pajiba.com/think_pieces/how-true-detective-and-the-knick-are-ushering-in-the-next-tv-revolution.php. [Accessed 20/02/2016].

Brennan, M. (2015). *The future of television? HBO's big push to become the only channel you'll ever need*. [Online]. Available: <http://theweek.com/articles/568542/future-television-hbos-big-push-become-only-channel-youll-ever-need>. [Accessed 14/02/2016].

Brighton, P. and Foy, D. (2007). *News Values*. London: Sage.

Booyens, M (2014). Personal interview 10/10/2014.

BusinessTech (2014). *The number of smartphone users in SA*. [Online]. Available: <http://businesstech.co.za/news/mobile/59175/the-number-of-smartphone-users-in-sa/>. [Accessed 23/02/2016].

Cape Argus. [Online]. Available: <http://www.superbrands.com/za/pdfs/CAPEARGUS.pdf>. [Accessed 21/06/2014].

Channel 4. (2012). *Can social media help find missing people?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.channel4.com/news/can-social-media-help-find-missing-people>. [Accessed 12/01/2015].

Chermak, S. (1994). Body Count News: How crime is presented in the news media. *Justice Quarterly* 11(4), 561-582.

Chermak, S. (1998). Predicting Crime Story Salience: The effects of crime, victim and defendant characteristics. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 26(1), 61-70.

Collins, D (2015). Madeleine McCann: Kate and Gerry urge public to continue search for missing daughter after damages victory. *The Mirror UK* April 28, 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/madeleine-mccann-kate-gerry-urge-5599047>. [Accessed 16/07/2015].

Daft, R.L and Lengel, R.H. (1986). Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness and Structural Design. *Management Science* 32 (5), 554-571.

Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P and Murdock, G. (1999). *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*. London: Arnold.

Dick, B. (2000) *A beginner's guide to action research* [Online]. Available: http://www.uq.net.au/action_research/arp/guide.html. [Accessed 02/02/2016].

Drennan, L.M. (2012). Comparing the coverage of missing children in two local newspapers (The Cape Argus and The Cape Times) over the time period 2009-2012 - A closer look at how the content is framed and characterized. (Unpublished Masters assignment). Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town.

Drennan, L.M (2016). Production Journal.

Franklin, B., Hamer, M., Hanna, M., Kinsley, M and Richardson, J.E. (2005). *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies*. London: Sage.

Fricker, M (2015). Madeleine McCann cops make fresh plea for Portuguese officials to help. *The Mirror UK* September 4, 2015. [Online]. Available:

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/madeleine-mccann-cops-make-fresh-6385380>. [Accessed 16/010/2015].

Froemke, S. (2002). 'Celebrating the Craft' in L Stubbs (ed). *Documentary Filmmakers Speak*. New York: Allworth Press.

Galtung, J and Ruge, M. (1981). 'Structuring and selecting the news' in S Cohen and J Young (eds) *The Manufacture of News – Deviance, Problems and the Mass Media*. London: Sage.

Goodwin, J. (1994). What's right (and wrong) about left media criticism? Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model. *Sociological Forum* 9 (1), 101-111.

Greenslade, R (2008). Why is missing Shannon not getting the same coverage as Madeleine? The Guardian March 5, 2008. [Online]. Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2008/mar/05/whyismissingshannonnotget>. [Accessed 07/011/2015].

Gruenewald, J., Pizarro, J and Chermak, S.M. (2009). Race, Gender, and the Newsworthiness of Homicide Incidents. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 37, 262–272.

Herman, S and Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent – The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon.

Hoffman, J and Kornweitz, A. (2011). New media revolution? *Media Development* 1, 7-11.

Huang, H. (2009). Frame-Rich, Frame-Poor: An investigation of the contingent effects of media frame diversity and individual differences on audience frame diversity. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 22(1), 47-73.

Internet Live Stats (2015). [Online]. Available: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>. [Accessed 04/02/2016].

Internet World Stats (2015). [Online]. Available:
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>. [Accessed 02/02/2016].

Johnson-Cartee, K.S. (2005). *News Narratives and News Framing*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishes.

Kandohla, T (2015). Madeleine McCann's parents ready to continue search if police end investigation into her disappearance. *The Mirror UK* September 2, 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/madeleine-mccanns-parents-ready-continue-6370581>. [Accessed 16/07/2015].

Kandohla, T (2015). Gerry and Kate McCann reveal the reasons why they miss Maddie. *The Mirror UK* November 6, 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/gerry-kate-mccann-reveal-reasons-6785371>. [Accessed 22/11/2015].

Kaplan, A.M and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons* 53, 59-68.

Lazzeri, A (2016). Kate MaCann: The twins know all about her disappearance and they want Maddie back. *The Sun* February 16, 2016. [Online]. Available: <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/6937251/The-twins-are-doing-really-well-but-they-want-their-sister-back-Kate-McCann-opens-up-about-Maddies-siblings.html>. [Accessed 25/03/2016].

Lendman, S. (2007). *Worthy and Unworthy Victims*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/worthy-and-unworthy-victims/5545>. [Accessed 16/02/2016].

Lewin, Kurt (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues* 2:4, 34-46.

Macha, N. (2014). *Oscar Pistorius' Verdict Ends the Biggest Social Media Event in South*

African History. [Online]. Available:
<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/09/12/south-africa-oscar-pistorius-verdict/#>.
[Accessed 23/01/2016].

Maasdorp, L (2012). *Cutting Real – Self-reflexive editing devices in a selection of contemporary South African documentary films*. (Doctoral thesis). Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, University of Stellenbosch.

Maasdorp, L (2016). *Learning, growing and making documentary films in a diverse setting - Collaboration and reflection in a community engagement video training programme in South Africa*. (Unpublished article). Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town.

Mail and Guardian (2012). [Online]. Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-02-03-struggling-cape-argus-looks-for-a-gap>. [Accessed 28/05/2013].

Metro News (2014). *Using social media to help find missing kids*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2014/03/11/using-social-media-to-help-find-missing-kids.html>. [Accessed 07/10/2015].

Missing Children S.A (2012). [Online]. Available: <http://www.missingchildren.org.za>. [Accessed 24/04/2013].

Muzuk, M. Communication Official from Ocean View Police Station. (2012). Personal interview 28/05/2012.

Nichols, B. (2001). *Introduction to Documentary*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

O' Connor, M. (2011). *Social-Networking Tools Help Find Missing Children*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2011/03/30/social-networking-tools-help-missing-children/>. [Accessed 23/11/2015].

Pisharody, A. (2013). *The Future of Television: Will broadcast and cable television*

networks survive the emergence of online streaming? (Unpublished honours thesis). School of Business, New York University. [Online]. Available: http://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/con_042968.pdf. [Accessed 18/02/2016].

Phelan, J.M. (2011). Igniting the 'social' in networks. *Media Development* 1, 42-45.
Prinsloo, J. (1996). Where are the women? *Agenda* 31, 40-49.

Pritchard, D and Hughes, K.D. (1997). Patterns of Deviance in Crime News. *Journal of Communication* 47(3), 49-67.

Renov, M. (2004). *The Subject of Documentary*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rheeder, N (2014). Personal interview 03/11/2014.

Roshier, B. (1981). 'The selection of crime news by the press' in S Cohen and J Young (eds). *The Manufacture of News – Deviance, Problems and the Mass Media*. London: Sage.

Shaw, D. (1984). *Press Watch*. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company.

So, M. (2011). Social media and migrant workers in Taiwan. *Media Development* 1, 30-32.

South Africa Info (2013). *SA 5th in Africa for internet access*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.southafrica.info/about/media/broadband-260913.htm#.VJ6TILiAA>. [Accessed 22/03/2016].

Sparks-Langer, G and Colton, A. (1991). Synthesis of Research on Teacher's Reflective Thinking. *Educational Leadership* [March], 37-44.

Spence, L and Navarro, V. (2011). *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Stubbs, L. (2002). *Documentary Filmmakers Speak*. New York: Allworth Press.

Taske, C and Plude, F.F. (2011). Experiencing social media across generations. *Media Development* 1, 38-41.

Titus, L (2014). Personal interview 10/10/2014.

Thompson, I. (2012). Head Librarian of Media Studies at UCT Library. Personal interview 15/05/2012.

Tuchman, G. (1980). *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Ward, P (2005). *Documentary – the margins of reality*. London: Wallflower Press.

Zgoba, K. (2004). The Amber Alert: the appropriate solution to preventing child abduction? *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law* 32, 71-88.

FILMOGRAPHY

True Detective, 2012. Cary Joji Fukunaga, USA, 54-65 min.

Somebody that I used to know, 2016. Lisa Drennan, South Africa, 24 min.

APPENDIX A – An interview with Latiefa Titus from *The Post* (14/11/2013)

PEOPLE'S POST | LANSDOWNNE
Thursday, 14 November 2013
NEWS 5

HANOVER PARK: PARENT'S CONSTANT SEARCH FOR HER MISSING DAUGHTER

A mother's unwavering hope

CHRISTELLE WIESE
@WieseChristelle

In the nine months since her daughter went missing, Latiefa Titus has slowly been wasting away, worry taking its toll on her mind and body.

She often goes for days without eating, surviving on coffee and cigarettes.

At night she stands at her home's darkened windows, eyes constantly searching for her beloved Sadieka, while her days are spent roaming the streets in search of a sign that could bring her some peace.

Sadieka (16) is one of three young people currently on the missing persons list at Philippi Police Station, the other two being a 16-year-old boy and a 23-year-old woman.

Philippi police spokesperson Lieutenant Lance Goliath urges parents to be extra vigilant with the festive season looming.

"During the holidays, children aren't at school and parents often get so caught up in social activities that they don't immediately realise that a child is missing," he says.

"There is also a common misconception that you have to wait 12 hours before reporting someone as missing. This isn't true. As soon as you realise someone, especially a child, is missing, report it to the police with a recent photo and a description of what they were wearing. We will immediately start circulating the photo and information to officers and other stations."

Sadieka was last seen in Hanover Park on 24 February. "We all went to a family funeral together that afternoon," her mother recalls, tears spilling from sunken eyes.

"She was living with our neighbours at the time, but I spoke to her that afternoon. I never knew it would be the last time."

Sadieka was reportedly seen with two boys just down the road from her home later that night, but since then all supposed sightings have led to crushing disappointment.

Latiefa, a street cleaner, spends her days trying to get some information on her daughter's whereabouts.

"I have looked everywhere. From Wynberg and Hout Bay to Athlone and Gatesville, I have checked with hospitals, morgues, prisons and on farms."

The desperate mother recently printed another batch of flyers urging the community to assist her in finding her daughter.

"Her dad's boss even offered a reward for information that could lead to us finding her. But now everyone just wants money from me without having any real information."

Goliath says when children under the age of 14 are reported missing, child welfare is called in to assist police.

When a child is older than 14, as in Sadieka's case, the Department of Social Services is involved.

"We have circulated Sadieka's photo to other stations, hospitals, psychiatric institutions and morgues without any success," he says, adding that the K9 Search and Rescue Unit was taken to a Lansdowne location in search of Sadieka again last week. The search proved fruitless.

He adds that the police work closely with organisations like the Pink Ladies and Missing Persons South Africa, who make extensive use of Facebook and other social media platforms when searching for a missing person. "They do remarkable work in these cases," he says, adding that no matter how dire the circumstances, they never give up hope.

Latiefa remains optimistic.

"I will never give up hope of finding my daughter – even if all I find is her body," Latiefa says.

"But Sadieka, if you are reading this, I just want you to come home. Wherever you are, whatever happened, please try to come home."

Phone Constable Bradley Roberts with the Missing Persons Unit on 082 379 0247 or (021) 690 1500.



DESPERATE: Latiefa Titus says she will never give up hope of finding her missing teenage daughter Sadieka.
PHOTO: CHRISTELLE WIESE

SALON SANZ

Shop 3, Vangate Mall, Vanguard
Ph: 021 633 0504

Pensioners Specials:
Monday - Thursday
Wash, cut and blow R50

Running promotions on Cacau
Brazilian Keratin valid till 05/12/13

Prices From **R499** depends length of hair

Weekdays Specials: Mondays - Thursday
valid till 05/12/13

Wash and blowdry **from R100**

Wash, cut and blowdry **from R130** Free Hat Iron

Stations:
Ladine, Jaxxo, Paul Mitchell, Schwartzkopf, Indola, GHD