

Documentaries. More specifically, nature documentaries.

Let's talk about a Disney documentary called *White Wilderness*.

- debuted in 1958
- Produced by Walt Disney Pictures
- Directed by James Algar
- It was filmed on location in Canada over the course of three years
- It won an academy award for best documentary feature
- Super duper hyped up and praised for its work

So *White Wilderness* was an installment in Disney's *True-Life Adventure* series which was their way of getting into the documentary/non-fiction world.

Almost all of these *True-Life Adventure* series were directed by James Algar, who was the animator for the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* in *Fantasia*. Go off, that's a classic.

Now, if we take a look at the first *True Life Adventure* doc that got a lot of attention, called *The Living Desert*, we see the icky side of Disney trying to make money off of animals.

According to a nature filmmaker by the name of Bill Carrick, *The Living Desert* was all. Fake. The filmmakers

constructed little tiny sets and captured these insects and made them act. Without even paying them. Horrible.

Let's talk about White Wilderness. That's why we're here, right?

This movie famously shows the "death march" of a legion of lemmings flinging themselves off a cliff. In his review, critic Howard Thompson called the depiction of this lemming mass suicide "eerie" and "hypnotic." Narrator Winston Hibbler describes the lemmings as "victims of obsession," driven toward the sea (actually a river) before "casting themselves out bodily into space."

So here's what the audience sees in the film:

- A horde of lemmings entering the Arctic sea by jumping off cliffs and scampering across rock-covered beaches to enter the water from the shore, whereupon they swim out to sea and (we're told by the narrator) eventually drown — not quite because they're simply committing suicide, the film states, but because they've supposedly mistaken the vast expanse of the Arctic sea for a lake and assumed there's a reachable shore just across the water.

The narration strongly suggests that the behavior shown in the film is a form of unreasoning, compulsive march to death in which lemmings typically engage.

- *A kind of compulsion seizes each tiny rodent and, carried along by an unreasoning hysteria, each falls into step for a march that will take them to a strange*

destiny. That destiny is to jump into the ocean. They've become victims of an obsession — a one-track thought: 'Move on! Move on!' This is the last chance to turn back, yet over they go, casting themselves out bodily into space ... and so is acted out the legend of mass suicide.

Here's what actually happened:

First:

- The sequence wasn't even filmed in the Arctic, but in Alberta, Canada, where lemmings do not live. Lemmings also don't throw themselves off cliffs — it's a widely believed but misguided myth that the small species is prone to mass suicide, one propagated in large part by White Wilderness.

Second:

- Carrick, who was a cameraman on the production, alleged that the filmmakers paid kids in Manitoba 25 cents to wrangle lemmings and then transport them south for filming.

Third:

- The crew members constructed spinning turntables covered in snow to jostle the lemmings and send them tumbling, and then proceeded to throw them off the cliff. The resulting footage was edited to make the mass animal killing look like natural suicide.

LEMMINGS DONT COMMIT MASS SUICIDE FOR FUNZIES.
The Alaska Department of Fish and Game confirmed this.

They will swim, and maybe drown in an accident, but they don't have a Jim Jones-esque cult where they all agree that they're going to do a non-refundable, non-negotiable cliff jumping scene, like in Twilight: New Moon. Lemmings are smarter than Bella Swan.

So what did we learn from White Wilderness?

Documentaries are capable of lying.

Let's talk about another documentary-esque show that does the same thing.

2013. Shark Week. Discovery Channel.

There's a show called Great White Serial Killer. Sounds like a Ted Bundy Op, but whatever.

Title card:

- A serial killer murders for psychological reasons. A shark kills to eat.

PERIOD.

But this literally proves the title of the show wrong before we even start.

Apparently there is a shark. The shark killed two people, in two separate instances on a beach called surf beach in CA, one in 2010 and one in 2012.

The editing and cinematography in this movie is absolutely batshit insane. They are really trying to capitalize off of the whole true-crime thing ASAP. Our main guy, Brandon McMillon, basically interrogates shark attack experts while maniacally pacing around the dimly lit, horribly overexposed scene. Brandon McMillon is not a shark expert. Brandon McMillon is introduced as a 'local surfer.'

When you do a quick google search, Brandon actually pops up as a CELEBRITY DOG TRAINER, and an emmy winning host on a show called Lucky Dog on CBS. He's not a shark expert. He's not a detective. He's just a guy that likes dogs ??????????????

Brandon then interviews two people, each of them being a friend to one of the victims. It seems like they had really meaningful conversations about this horrible event with these people, but the editing is absolute garbo. Flashes of scary sharks, bloody water, etc. it feels icky and disrespectful to watch.

So this show guesses that this great white is 16 feet or longer. Big boi. But that's all they have. They don't know if its one shark, two sharks, the zodiac killer, ted bundy, or my mom. It could be any one of those things. But they pretend, the entire time, that it's definitely one shark. And that one shark did it on PURPOSE. In their own words "What was the motive?"

I'm gonna just leave that there for a while. Let it soak in. These people are educating our children who like sharks. And now we're assigning extremely human traits to them like they're a subject in a psychology experiment.

Also, you're never going to get A CONFESSION FROM A SHARK.

Our boy Brandon then goes to an island off the coast of New Zealand, known for its great white sharks, and talks to a guy named Peter Scott. This man has worked with sharks for over 8 years. Apparently there was a shark attack on mainland New Zealand, and Brandon takes it upon himself to pin that shark attack on the sharks in the water in front of them, near the island. Peter literally says that it's probably not possible/likely, but they cut the scene about halfway through his sentence. For what. This man literally does not think that there is a serial killer shark swimming around in the waters of New Zealand. But Brandon the dog trainer does! So let's trust him.

So Brandon is back in CA, and somehow gets the police to test a tooth fragment from the first attack for DNA to get more info on the shark. Thankfully, the tooth fragment is too small to get DNA off of. So they say this: "Once again, the killer shark stays one step ahead of this investigation."

THEN, he talks to a shark migration expert, who says that Great Whites have a migration pattern and usually come

back to the same place during their migrations. Mostly, pregnant female sharks.

Throw out the Ted Bundy shark theories. We have a woman killer shark on our hands. A mommy killer shark.

They even talk to a criminologist, who literally says “That’s just a theory.” so it’s going well.

All in all, this documentary is a fucking nightmare. Sharks aren’t serial killers. They are animals. Don't hate sharks or i'll hate you.

That’s it. The end.