

# ETHICS

The audience expects documentary films to present the truth, not lies or distortion. However, it is not the job of the filmmaker to be neutral or objective, rather it is their job to tell the story truthfully from their point of view. It is important that their prejudices and sympathies are declared up front.

Ethics in documentary filmmaking have been debated over many years and there are many different points of view on the subject however there are some basic guidelines to which documentary filmmakers should pay attention.

## DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS SHOULD:

- Continuously seek the truth.
- Not distort the importance of events within the film.
- Clearly disclose where information has come from and publicly credit all material provided by outsiders.
- Ensure that characters are aware of why they are being filmed in the context of the film.

## DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS SHOULD NOT:

- Present information they know to be untrue.
- Manipulate images or sounds in a way that could mislead the audience.
- Plagiarise (or simply copy) ideas from other filmmakers.
- Present re-enactment footage as actual footage.