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Master's Thesis in Media and Communication Studies

## **Based on a True Story**

An Analysis of The Drama Documentary Genre and The Mediatiation of Events Based on The  
Miniseries *When They See Us*

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## ABSTRACT

Over the years more and more drama documentaries regarding the mediatisation of past events have been released on various platforms such as online streaming services. Mediatisation is the influence the media has on an individual's everyday life either through the influence of a medium or through the act of communication. The drama documentary genre on the other hand is built through the combination of both the drama and the documentary genres. Where the drama aspect, aims to persuade a viewer of the issues being portrayed and the documentary aspect, helps construct a sense of authenticity and truthfulness through different tactics such as the use of original documentary material. The drama documentary genre presents issues of concern in order to provoke debate as well as allow for some individuals to suffer the consequences for their past wrong doings, whereby through this mediatisation, society and human practices can be impacted. Therefore, it is important to look at the theory of mediatisation in combination with the drama documentary genre by focusing on the specific case of *When They See Us*.

Using a case study methodology this thesis shows how the mediatisation of events are dramatized through the use of different narrative and style techniques. In addition to how the drama documentary genre is used in reflecting authenticity as well as discussing the interplay between the story world narrative and specific characters in the miniseries. Consequently, the outcome of the miniseries is looked at by discussing the *Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now* in order to help understand the reflection of authenticity in the miniseries as well as backing it up as a truth teller.

The mediatisation of events through the drama documentary genre in *When They See Us* not only allows for the re-telling of the story of five men who had once been wrongly convicted but has also implemented a role reversal both in the story world as well as in real-life where the five men are now seen for who they truly are: innocent.

Key Words: *Media, Communication, Drama Documentary, Genre, Narrative, Style, Story world, Based on a True Story, Power, Injustice, Justice*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Television as a medium has become more and more important in people's everyday lives. Whether used for watching series, movies or the news, television is able to build a relationship with its viewers by displaying different reactions, emotions and faces as stated by Deborah Jaramillo (in Jacobs and Peacock, 2013). This relationship in turn allows for the viewer to connect to what is being shown on screen. Through the use of characters that may look, talk and behave like certain individuals a sense of reality is created where, for example, the viewer may interpret different performance signs of characters as "signifiers of emotion" as discussed amongst others, by Jeremy Butler (2018:98). In this way the concept of representation can be observed, that, as argued by Stuart Hall et al., can be seen as the "production of meaning through language" (2013:16).

Representation of precise elements are more authentic in certain genres such as; documentaries, true crime or drama documentaries. A drama documentary or docudrama/dramadoc<sup>1</sup> is the combination of both drama and documentary, using both unrehearsed and rehearsed elements, that help the viewer relate to what is being shown on screen. The genre positions the viewer as a spectator, allowing for the observation and assimilation of information (Paget, 1998:62). The drama documentary genre aims at offering the viewer "complete seeing" (Ibid:89), that is only fully achieved if the viewer is emotionally involved in addition to gaining an increased intellectual understanding of the situation the individual is presented with (Ibid). Through this depth of involvement, the viewer is making sense of what is being shown, hereby certifying the representation of elements created through language and signs (Hall et al. 2013:16).

The drama documentary genre offers the viewer "privileged access to information" as noted by Derek Paget (1998:81). This access is provided through the documentary aspect of the genre and the experience of information intake is heightened through the drama element of the genre. Thus, the documentary side of the genre provides the viewer with information and the drama side is how this information is presented through the "simulated reality of acted events" (Ibid:81) that entice the viewer to keep watching. The drama documentary genre offers viewers insight into certain situations. By focusing on ordinary citizens who have stood in the limelight (Ibid:61), Paget found a direct correlation between drama documentaries and discourse, as the genre acts as a form of truth teller (Ibid:1). Drama documentaries act as truth tellers since the genre represents past events, that are created, for example, through pre-production research, and the use of past documentary material. The

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as dramadoc or drama documentary

use of documentary material allows for the sense of authenticity to be created (Ibid:69). As a truth teller, the drama documentary genre has the opportunity to, implement change, through the discourse it creates. Therefore, it is important to look at the impact the story world narrative has on real-life events.

Drama documentaries have become more and more popular, with numerous series in the genre attempting to re-tell events and portray issues to arouse discussion (Paget, 1998:61). Examples of several series and films that fall into this category are; *Chernobyl* (2019), *Conversations with a killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes* (2019), *Unbelievable* (2019), *Three Identical Strangers* (2018), *The People vs. OJ Simpson* (2016) and *When They See Us* (2019). *When They See Us* stands out in comparison to these other examples as the case is fairly recent. It has given rise to a follow up talk show hosted by Oprah Winfrey, in which, Oprah interviews the cast as well as the real-life protagonists of the story. In this sense the talk show highlights the series' authenticity as a truth teller, where the representation of this past case "can provoke [...] and lead to dire consequences for the perpetrator" (Paget, 1998:1). The show also highlights the importance of the impact that the story world narrative can have on real-life events.

I decided to focus on *When They See Us* for my analysis as the issues presented in the miniseries *Chernobyl*, for example, may not be as relatable as those in *When They See Us*. In addition to that the people presented in *When They See Us* are still alive and can still provoke change, in comparison to *Chernobyl*, that focuses on the whole disaster rather than on specific people affected by it. Herewith presenting *When They See Us*.

## **WHEN THEY SEE US**

In April 1989, five young boys of black and Hispanic descent were arrested for the rape and assault of a white female jogger. In 2002, 13 years after their arrest and prosecution, the now five adult men were exonerated of the crimes, as the original perpetrator had confessed to the vicious attack and rape of Trisha Meili. *When They See Us* is a mini dramadoc series released on Netflix on the May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Telling the story of Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana and Korey Wise in addition to shedding light on an angle of the story, that was previously unknown to the public. Through the miniseries, misuse of power and corruption in the American justice system is brought to light, as well as making the viewer aware of what actually went on during police questionings, trials and the time spent in prison.

With these impacts in mind this thesis strives to look at the mediatisation of events in *When They See Us*. Mediatisation according to Andreas Hepp (2020; Couldry and Hepp, 2013) and Stig Hjarvard (2013) is a theory based on the relationship between the medias influence and our everyday lives, whether this being culturally, socially or politically. Hepp continues by highlighting that mediatisation research focuses on how media content transforms society and human practices through the “medias ability to mold and shape them” (2020:4). Whereby Hjarvard points out that only through definite context, and the influence of a definite media over a particular institution can it be shown whether mediatisation has positive or negative consequences (2013:19). Additionally, Hepp underlines how mediatisation has become less about the influence of the medium but rather about the affect of communication (2020:5). Consequently, it is important to look at how the drama documentary genre impacts the mediatisation of events with *When They See Us* as a prime example, that is not only based on a true story but may also have repercussions on real-life events.

## **AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE**

Therefore, in this study I aim to examine how the drama documentary genre is used to reflect a sense of authenticity. In addition, I aim to analyse the interplay between the story world narrative and certain characters in the miniseries. As a result of this research I will be answering the following research questions:

- *How are the events portrayed in When They See Us dramatized?*
- *What is the interplay between the story world narrative and the prosecutors portrayed in this narrative?*
- *How does When They See Us reflect an idea of authenticity through the dramadoc/docudrama genre?*

This thesis is split into different chapters. Chapter two looks at theories used in my analysis as well as placing my research in the context to other recent studies. In Chapter three I discuss the methodology used when conducting my research in addition to setting out the process of how the research was followed through. Chapter four begins with a brief introduction to the television series, discusses the importance of the drama documentary genre, and reviews the main findings of my research. Lastly, in chapter five I conclude my thesis by answering my research questions and by summarizing my findings.



## **2. THE PERSPECTIVES OF LITERATURE**

This thesis is interested in looking at the mediatisation of events concerning the miniseries *When They See Us*. Therefore, it is important to look at the role the drama documentary genre plays in the mediatisation because as stated by Paget two of the genres main concerns are firstly to make individuals aware of certain situations and issues and secondly hope that the awareness arouses discourse (1998:61). Consequently, it is important to further discuss the mediatisation of events, in addition to the drama documentary genre in relation to realism, authenticity, style and power, whereby each section links together as these are all important elements that help construct the drama documentary genre. Thus, this chapter will attempt to do just that, in addition to addressing the placement of this study in comparison to others.

### **THE MEDIATISATION OF EVENTS**

The mediatisation of events as briefly mentioned in the introduction is a theory based on the relationship between the medias influence and our everyday lives, whether influenced culturally, socially or politically (Hepp, 2020; Couldry and Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2013). Research concerning the mediatisation of events on a general level focuses more the significance of media as a means of communication in addition to looking at the influence on “the social construction of reality” (Hepp, 2020:57).

Communication in media is important as the social world is constructed through communication (Couldry and Hepp, 2017:100), whether this is done through face-to-face communication or visual communication either through movies, series or advertisements for example. As technology is constantly developing communication is combined through mediated and face-to-face interaction (ibid:58), highlighting how mediatisation is something most individuals are familiarised with in their everyday lives (Hepp, 2020:4). The media is helping shape culture and society at a rapid speed, where the digitalization of media allows not only for a bigger audience reach and a wider range of communication but also for the gathering of data (Ibid:5).

Media plays an imperative role in certain individuals’ everyday lives, being the reference point for information, communication, research or leisure (Couldry and Hepp, 2013:193). Through the immense media consumption, individuals’ lives are impacted socially, politically and culturally. As

individuals are becoming more dependent on the mediatisation of events it is important to study these events, particularly since the line between reality and the medias representation of reality is becoming more and more blurred (Hjardvard, 2013:15).

According to Hjardvard the impact the mediatisation of events has on its viewers cannot be foreseen (Ibid:19). Whereby this can be linked to power as not all forms of power implemented are acted upon right away (Foucault, 1982:789), meaning that even if a viewer is shown something shocking that is meant to provoke change it might take a while as discourse needs to be created. However, through the mediatisation of events people are made aware of certain issues and through this communication can implement change (Corner, 2011:17).

Nevertheless, it is important to look at how the drama documentary genre impacts the mediatization of events as the genre is also used as a form of communication, whereby this will be discussed in the following section.

## **THE DRAMA DOCUMENTARY GENRE**

The drama documentary genre is able to provide information to viewers that they may not have been privy to before. It acts as a representative of the past, hereby having the power to implement change that may lead to grim consequences for certain people (Paget, 1998:1).

To fully understand the drama documentary genre, it is important to highlight that this should be seen not as a hybrid of the drama genre and the documentary genre but as its own form (Ibid:3). Hereby the documentary part of the genre has more of a cultural identity (Ibid:1) as this reads as news (Ibid:70). In comparison, the drama part of the genre that is there to persuade the viewer of the issues being presented through realistic performances of the actors (Ibid:34).

According to both Basil Wright (Barsam, 1974:367; In Paget, 1998:123-124) and Wystan Hugh Auden (Mendelson, 1977: 355; In Paget, 1998:125) the term documentary, when it comes to the drama documentary genre, is just a tactic in addressing public information by being true to life. Being true to life links back to the drama aspect of the genre where anything that is performed in a realistic manner can strike the viewer as being true to life (Ibid). Nevertheless, the drama aspect of the drama documentary genre can also be perceived as a challenging element (Paget, 1998:20) as the qualities differ from those of the documentary genre. Hereby ranging from the unrehearsed concept of documentary to the rehearsed concept of drama. Through the rehearsed the viewer is able to identify

with certain characters on screen in comparison to the unrehearsed, where the viewer is addressed as an observer (Ibid:16).

According to Paget the pre-production that goes into creating a drama documentary is particularly imperative as this helps construct the link between the documentary genre and the drama genre (1998:14). Meaning that the more research going into a dramadoc, the more realistic it will be. A study conducted on the movie *Hostages* (1992) highlights the example of how a drama documentary can go wrong through the lack of research conducted during the pre-production. Due to the lack of research, the original hostages felt that since there were no cameras present during the hostage situation, the historical events presented had been dramatized just to allow for a story to be told (Ibid:10). The case study chosen for this thesis on the other hand, highlights the research and work that went into the pre-production by discussing this with the actors as well as the people the case is based on. In turn allowing for the production of footage that is true to life in addition to seeming authentic. Sequentially, through the use of documentary footage, the portrayal of issues and the re-telling of events (Ibid:62) is permitted.

Additionally, Paget highlights that through the documentary aspect of a drama documentary the viewer is promised information that may not have been known to the public before. This information is then constructed through the drama aspect of the genre where the understanding of certain information is formed through the viewers experience (Ibid:81). Hereby the use of past real-life events, in addition to the characters identities help support the film script, which in turn aims at stirring debate about the past occurrences being presented (Ibid:82).

Through the notion of wanting to create discourse the camera offers the viewer complete seeing onto the situation being exposed. The conception of complete seeing can however only be fully achieved if the viewer's emotions are considerably affected in addition to increasing the viewers knowledge of the situation presented (Ibid:89). This is constructed through the different drama and documentary aspects, whereby the focus can range from the mise-en-scène to camera set-ups and lighting to name a few (Ibid:70-71). These are all different elements of style, which is important when wanting to make a series stick out, in addition to helping produce meaning, therefore style will be looked at in the next section.

## **STYLE**

Style, as mentioned, plays an important role in making something like a series stand out. Television relies on style to create meaning, construct narrative and convey information (Butler, 2010).

Therefore, to further understand and develop style it is important that the producers of a series put effort into differentiating themselves when it comes to; mise-en-scène, lighting and editing to name a few (Ibid). Additionally, when it comes to the drama documentary genre, style plays a key role as the mise-en-scène can help dramatize a setting.

According to Butler style for styles sake has no meaning at all, however style can be implemented to function as a symbol, for example, when creating certain meanings that are linked to different characters or narrative (2018:425). Style plays an important role when it comes to the drama documentary genre, as it helps in creating certain aspects related to the genre. Some examples being through the mise-en-scène or by highlighting an actor's character or features by dressing them a certain way. In addition, style can be used to highlight different roles of power depending on where the characters are placed in the scene as well as how they are presented. Therefore, the analysis of style is important as this can portray a certain image or meaning that the viewer should be convinced of (Paget, 1998:34).

According to both Sarah Cardwell and Robin Nelson (in Jaramillo; In Jacobs and Peacock, 2013:68, 70-71) there has been a radical shift in stylization when it comes to television, where the improved imagery of television can be compared to the aesthetics of cinema. This shift however doesn't only affect television but also internet distributed television, as discussed by Ramon Lobato (2019). Lobato (2019:18-19) states, that there have been strong technological advancements concerning television mobility and how television is viewed, whether through websites, apps, different platforms or online streaming services to name a few. Through the mobilization of television there has been an increase in power when it comes to television as a medium. This however will be addressed further on in the literature review.

When analysing the connection between style and meaning there are three different building blocks for the description and criticism of the mise-en-scène (Butler, 2018; Jacobs and Peacock, 2013:1) these being: videography, editing and sound (Butler, 2018:424). The term for this is stylistics, where descriptive stylistics helps describe style before any significance can be made of it (Ibid). The three building blocks are important when emphasizing differentiation between a series or film for example. Hereby the building blocks help in further developing certain meanings (Ibid:427) in order to persuade the viewer of the situation they are being presented with (Paget, 1998:34). Regarding the drama documentary genre for example, the deeper meaning is created through the documentary setting, such as through the use of natural light for example. The drama aspect gains additional

credibility from this (Ibid:71) as the situation the viewer is presented with feels more realistic by using actual locations in addition to different camera set ups (Ibid).

Commercials are the most common form of media that use style to convince an individual of something (Butler, 2018:426). However, different genres use style as well in order to create signs within characters for example, hereby helping the viewer identify with the character. As discussed in the previous paragraph these signs in turn create meaning, whereby this allows for characters personalities to be signified (Ibid:87). Therefore, style impacts even the smallest choice of item that is visible to the viewer. This impact of style links to the viewers knowledge of certain things as not everyone is brought up the same way or may construct the same meaning of a sign. Herewith the power in knowledge is created, which will be discussed further on.

In addition to different camera set ups and lighting, implementing original documentary footage helps in making the drama documentary genre stand out. The use of authentic documentary footage doesn't only add to the style of a series but also helps in increasing a series' sense of authenticity, not only as a truth teller but also by providing the viewer with useful information (Paget, 1998:69). Therefore, it can be said that style doesn't only bring across certain meanings related to characters but also to a narrative. Both John Fiske and Jason Mittell state that narrative is essential, especially when the viewer tries to make sense of something (Fiske, 2001:128). The narrative has the power to convince a viewer to keep watching (Mittell, 2015:55), in turn accentuating the importance of meaning style creates and implements. The narrative provides essential contextualization that is important when concerning a dramadoc (Paget, 1998:69). In addition to helping convey information as well as create meaning in order for the viewer to be persuaded of the issues being presented (Ibid:34). The impact of style has is abundant, as it is able to make the narrative a more realistic one. Therefore, realism will be looked at in the following section as this aspect supports the drama documentary genre.

## **REALISM**

According to Fiske, realism is the replication of the paramount perception of reality (2001:21). Whereby, one can say that television is a realistic medium as it is able to transmit a socially convincing sense of reality (Ibid). Furthermore, Fiske mentions that television can be viewed as a window onto the world, whereby viewers observe reality from the outside (Ibid). Accordingly, Ian Watt (In Fiske, 2001:22) states that realism can be experienced by human senses, a reality made up of different things, whether it is a specific person or place. Here style plays a role in helping create this person or represent this place through different elements ranging from the mise-en-scène to a character's outfit, hereby impacting anything that helps portray a certain image of something (Butler,

2010:1). Therefore, this portrayal helps in creating a realistic image, that in turn is important as the main aim of the drama element of the dramadoc genre is to persuade the viewer of something through a realistic performance (Paget, 1998:34).

Realism, just like the drama documentary genre represents a particular event or situation that has taken place in a specific point of time and that has impacted certain individuals (Fiske, 2001:22; Paget, 1998:61). When looking at social realism, the narrative of a series for example, is meant to present life through different personal events, each with a beginning, middle and end. These are important to the main protagonist(s) and influence other characters in both consequential and inconsequential ways. Additionally, highlighting the link to the drama documentary genre, whereby the genre uses television realism by presenting certain information through positioning the viewer as someone who is peering onto a situation like by being a fly on the wall (Paget, 1998:31). Furthermore, the insight into certain information allows for the sense of all knowingness.

When looking at the drama documentary genre for example the viewer is given insight to new information concerning a certain event or issue through different style techniques. This information however may not have been public before (Paget, 1998:81), as the dramadoc genre allows the viewer to partake in events that may not have been open to others before such as police interrogations. Hereby creating a sense of all knowingness. The sense of all knowingness helps create a realistic narrative whereby, through this the viewer is stitched into the narrative (Caughie 1981:342; In Fiske, 2001:28) allowing for the viewer to feel like they are a part of what is being portrayed on screen. Again, highlighting the drama documentary genre as this links back to the fly on the wall camera technique, allowing the viewer to feel integrated into the situation that is being shown on screen.

Realism helps in creating a realist image of things. It helps make sense of reality through narrative by encompassing different discourses (Ibid:25). The believability of realism is transmitted through the ideology it embodies (Ibid:36), meaning that whatever is portrayed through realism has been done so to create an image of certain values and beliefs. Highlighting the importance of social realism by presenting a specific event or situation. Hereby realism helps in imitating reality in a way that makes a certain situation effortlessly clear (Ibid:24). In turn allowing for the re-construction and re-presentation of past events. Realism helps address issues that are current but that certain individuals first have to be made aware of. By placing the viewer in line with the characters of a series for example, the sense of all knowingness helps establish a certain dramatic look (Caughie, 1981:342; In Fiske, 2001:28). This dramatic look allows for the viewer to be, as previously mentioned, stitched (Fiske, 2001:28) into the narrative so to say, mostly through the seamless editing of the film or a

series. Through the use of stitching the viewer is given the impression of being placed into a certain situation, as is done in the dramadoc genre. The viewer is pulled into the narrative through the concept of the unrehearsed and rehearsed by being able to identify with the characters portrayed (Paget, 1998:16).

When it comes to realism style, the style of the series should be unmediated and neutral, using commonplace settings for example. These aspects can range from locations in urban to provincial areas. Additionally, focusing on working class characters, that are affected by events concerning social problems in order to signify a complete view of reality (Jordon, 1981:28; In Fiske, 2001:23). In turn, allowing for authentic representation of situations. Style in the drama documentary genre for example is reconstructed during conducting the pre-production research (Paget, 1998:14) as the pre-production research creates the main link between the documentary and a drama documentary genre. It is important that every element helping construct a narrative makes sense and that the relationship between these elements is very clear (Fiske, 2001:24). Style should be as true to the story it represents as possible as realism doesn't only imitate reality but helps the viewer make sense of it (Ibid). Additionally, realism style supports the drama documentary genre in conveying a convincing image of situations as the genre focuses on ordinary people that have stood in the limelight before, that mostly end up being working class citizens.

Even though realism might seem like something natural it helps create discourse as it is a reflection of reality (Fiske, 2001:41). Realism can be associated with the drama documentary genre, that through the representation of the real intends to provoke change and discourse (Paget, 1998:61). Provoking change is important as discourse comes from a social or political identifiable point (Fiske, 2001:42) within societies. Additionally, Fiske states that television has the power to influence social change even though not all viewers may perceive what is shown to them in the same way (Ibid:45). Hereby the use of stitching helps as the viewer is then involved in a certain way with challenging the representation of reality (Ibid) in addition to creating a sense of learning that in turn causes a call to action (Ibid:46). This call to action underlines the power in media which will be discussed further on.

When addressing realism, it helps if the series or film portrays a sense of authenticity through representation. Allowing the viewer to make sense of certain things within what is being shown on screen. The viewer is able to create meaning through the relationship of these different things (Hall, Evans et al., 2013:16-18). These things can range from a location, to a character or song for example. The sense of authenticity plays an important role in films or series that try to convey themselves as a truth teller. According to Annette Hill individuals rank documentaries and the news as two very

trusting types of truth tellers (2007:112). Whereby the truthfulness of something is based on the idea that it did happen (Ibid). Here style plays an important role because as mentioned, style helps in conveying certain meanings in creating the image that convinces the viewer of something being a truth teller. In the drama documentary genre, the integration of original documentary material in combination with the story world narrative helps in achieving the genres sense of authenticity (Paget, 1998:69) in addition to highlighting the genre's paramount perception of reality (Fiske, 2001:21). It is important to achieve a sense of authenticity as certain genres such as the dramadoc genre help mediate issues that should be addressed. Whereby the documentary aspect of the genre backs up the drama qualities by being authentic and a genre that people know as a truth teller (Hill, 2007:112) as mentioned above.

Realism and the sense of authenticity are two elements that help when a certain genre such as a dramadoc has the aim of creating discourse and implementing change. In the drama documentary genre, the drama aspect helps in persuading the viewers of the importance of issues through performance (Paget, 1998:34). The documentary aspect helps in creating a sense of authenticity as this allows for information about a certain issue to be brought to the viewer's attention. Being able to re-construct certain situations could however be extremely misleading, whereby John Corner addresses the issue of having actors portray real-life events (Ibid:62). Even though the events being portrayed are already to a certain extent, known to the public, there may be issues with representation, that may result in not everyone agreeing with what is being represented on screen (Ibid). Nevertheless, both Raymond Williams and Watt find that realism is defined by its content (Fiske, 2001:21). The content subsequently helps implement certain aims of a genre such as creating change, through which the power of the medium is then addressed. This will be discussed further in the next section.

## **POWER**

As mentioned in the previous section certain genres such as the drama documentary genre have the ability to generate discourse about certain issues and implement change. The ability to do so can be seen as a form of power in narrative. According to Torben Dyerberg however the term power is complex and can imply several different meanings (1997:1). This meaning can range from an individual achieving certain goals to the way rules are set and ordered. Power, however, is not only brought about by people but can also be achieved through the influence of media, as power has the ability to accomplish a specific result (Corner, 2011:17). Hepp mentions that when it comes to mediatisation it is important to look at the affect of communication (2020:5).



Television narratives have the power to influence the viewer's experience of what is being watched (Ibid:211). This influence is supported through different elements of a genre such as style and the sense of authenticity of the narrative. When looking at the drama documentary genre, drama is used to persuade the viewer of an issue that is being addressed in the narrative (Paget, 1998:34). Through the characters performance of the replicated reality of events (Ibid:81) the drama documentary should then be able to provoke debate (Ibid:82). Consequently, meanings are created in order to highlight certain issues through the use of signs. A common mistake, however, is that it is assumed that everyone embodies common intellect (Fiske, 2001:40) as meaning is socially determined. The power of knowledge is hereby emphasized as not everyone is impacted by the same issues, signs or characteristics, therefore might not have the same knowledgeable relationships with some things.

The power of the media can be seen as having intentional implications or influence, where certain media has the intention of implementing change (Dyerberg, 1997:30). The drama documentary genre brings certain issues to the viewers' attention that need to be highlighted and discussed. When the media holds power, it is mostly where there is a lack of agreement within certain bodies of power in society (Corner, 2011:14) whereby as mentioned, the media wants to implement change. In drama documentaries a recurring theme is highlighting the conflict of social or political institutions (Barsam, 1974:367; In Paget, 1998:123). Fiske mentions that television as a medium has the power to encourage social change (2001:45) through certain things that individuals are being shown even if these events or situations for example, are not perceived in the same way these individuals can still create some form of impact.

The political and social impacts created through the power of discourse formed through the dramadoc genre is shaped by a persuasive narrative. A persuasive narrative in a drama documentary is, as previously noted, created through the drama aspect of the genre as this is used to persuade the viewer of certain issues. The power of debate created through a persuasive narrative can in turn be referred to as 'good' media power according to Jürgen Habermas (1989; In Corner, 2011:18). Good media power is when the media contributes to shaping society by providing insight into situations. The information brought to light is done so through narratives in combination with generating feelings for example, whereby Corner refers to this as a form of 'soft' power (2011:14).

Power links closely with social and political relations that are confined to governmental bodies (Dyerberg, 1997:21). The different roles of power rarely respond to interests outside of the power holders' own practice (Ibid), highlighting the tightknit relationship certain hierarchies of power have. The overdetermination of some positions go hand in hand with the circular structure of power as this

helps construct authorities, that in turn represent power (Ibid:124) whereby the authority itself is inherent in power. The power authorities have in controlling certain individuals, (Fairclough, 2015:75; Foucault, 1982) is still present in today's society. Different genres like documentaries or drama documentaries are useful in shedding light on such situations. Realism in certain genres gives the viewer an insider perspective on certain circumstances such as corruption within hierarchies of power. The viewer is presented with the way things are, either through current affairs being shown in the news or through film and series that look at past events and highlight certain issues that are still current in today's society.

Corruption plays a vast role in power hierarchies; therefore, corruption will be briefly discussed as those in power misuse it to get what they want. Highlighting the importance of drama documentaries for example, as they focus on past events or people by reviewing what they have done (Paget, 1998:61) and can hereby make viewers aware of this and implement change through discourse.

### ***CORRUPTION***

Corruption should be looked at as a versatile phenomenon, that exhibits diverse practises and purposes (Heywood, 2015; in Brooks, 2019:20) ranging from a single event to a way of living (Ibid) for some individuals. Corruption as well as the criminal justice system for example, are the outcome of the different environments, that are a part of taking history and social development into consideration (Brooks, 2019:21). Hereby the power of the media previously discussed can be implemented by making individuals aware of how systems are corrupt by portraying these issues in past events, as done so through the drama documentary genre for example.

Graham Brooks mentions two types of corruption, the first being unethical corruption, concerning something that might be seen as a mistake like withholding certain information during a hearing, that might be able to clear a suspect of a crime (2019:2). The second form of corruption is the corruption of procedure. This form of corruption is when certain rules are in place, that however, are not followed. Ranging from when someone is arrested with limited evidence, whilst being mistreated during the act, to not being read their individual rights as well as certain deputies failing to follow the set rules in place (Ibid). Both these forms of corruption can build up to something worse and the justice system in place that is meant to protect individuals then does the exact opposite. An example being the victimization of an individual instead of giving that individual a right to justice (Ibid).

Nick Kochan et al. (2011) discuss how corruption is the core of governmental problems. Here democratic nations seem to acknowledge different practices of corruption (Brown and Frank 2006;

Michelle 2010; Rodriguez 2010; Tonry 2010, 2011; Tyler 2014; Spohn 2015; Gottschalk 2015; In Brooks, 2019), such as the relationship that is constructed when concerning bribery as bribery involves two or more people. The relationship between two people constructed through bribery can also be considered a transaction between someone trying to sell something and someone trying to buy this something. Someone of a higher power can use this form of transaction for their personal advantage (Kochan et al., 2011:19; Brooks, 2019:11). Underlining how corruption begins at the top of the system, with poor leadership, that is then passed down the hierarchy. According to Brooks (2019) corruption strongly affects the criminal justice system, whereby the tactic of accepting bribes as a form of payment for something else is seen as something ordinary. Power implemented through someone in the justice system for example, holds a certain form of legitimacy to making it easier in controlling a certain problem or situation (Foucault, 1977). This state of hegemony shows that truth in structures is fabricated through different roles of power within a system (Gramsci, 1971).

Since corruption is led by people with power, the impact this power has in order to create change or to influence someone is boundless. The most obvious cases of power are when one person gets another person to do something, either through the power of influence or the power of domination that in turn defines a relationship (Dyerberg, 1997:31; Foucault, 1982:786). For example, using the form of transaction in getting someone to admit to a crime they did not commit. Power relationships, however, should not be confused with everyday interactions of communication (Foucault, 1982:786), as these purely function in transmitting information created through signs and language. The affect power has on an individual may only be seen once they act on it. Meaning that the influence of power on an individual takes time, as there is no immediate change and the impact of power might first be implemented in the future (Ibid:789). This impact of power also concerns the media as the media cannot create change from one day to the next. Certain genres like the dramadoc genre first need to create discourse among their viewers, that leads to the viewers to try to implement change through their own power of communication.

Power plays an important role in society, whereby power is not only implemented on individuals through different roles in hierarchies but also through the media. The power in media is constructed through different meanings and values, that rely on awareness and knowledge (Corner, 2011:15). However, not every individual comprehends these in the same way. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the power of the media is being used to represent certain issues like corruption in the justice system in order to make the public aware of these issues (Ibid). Hereby the media uses its power to implement knowledge in individuals that in turn create discourse and through this implement change.

## IN COMPARISON TO OTHERS

Several studies have been conducted that focus on narrative and style (Butler 2018, Jacobs & Peacock 2013, Mittell 2004, 2015, 2017) in television. However, these studies focus for the most part theoretical frameworks and “coded meanings” (Jacobs & Peacock, 2013) rather than what impact style can have on narrative (Butler, 2010; Mittell, 2015). This thesis however aims at focusing on the mediatisation of events, narrative storytelling, sense of authenticity and most importantly the drama documentary genre also known as docudrama or dramadoc. This study pays close attention to the drama documentary genre, as not many studies were found that focus on the dramadoc genre in particular when it comes to the interplay of the genre on the real-life events. It is important to do so because, according to Paget there is a direct correlation between drama-documentaries and discourse as the genre acts as a form of truth teller (1998:1).

Some studies conducted on the drama documentary genre so far focus more on the audience’s and public’s understanding (Reid, 2012; Meyers 2018) in addition to looking at the issues, context and coherency (Kilborn, 1994; Chapham 2007; Bonner and Grant-Frost, 2019) when it comes to the genre. A general study of the genre and its characteristics (Paget, 1998) was found, whereby the focus of movie *Hostages* (1992) “could not be called a ‘documentary’” per se (Ibid:14). Paget goes into further detail by mentioning that the hostages themselves wrote a letter to the production company stating that they were worried about the representation of the situation as the facts could only be known by those involved (Ibid:11). Nevertheless, Paget accentuates that the main point of the movie was to impact the political realm whereby the aim was to portray events to the viewers that originally were not known to the public, emphasizing one of the main aims of the drama documentary genre (Ibid:61).

When comparing *When They See Us* to other drama documentary series like *Chernobyl*, *Unbelievable* or *the people vs. OJ Simpson* it is important to highlight that *When They See Us* is the only one that has a follow up talk show. Hereby backing up and constructing the miniseries sense of authenticity as not only the cast but the five original men who the miniseries is based on are interviewed. The sense of authenticity is highlighted by discussing the exonerated five’s reaction to seeing the miniseries for the first time as well as questioning the cast about the pre-production. Hereby highlighting one of the main elements of the drama documentary genre as mentioned by Paget, the research that goes into the pre-production is the main link in making something a drama documentary (1998:14).

It is important to mention that all the protagonists *When They See Us* is based on are still alive and through the miniseries, they are made to be seen, as the dramadoc acts as a truth teller. The miniseries provokes discourse and has impacted certain consequences (Ibid:1) when it comes to the bad guys being presented. Through the experience, the five wrongly convicted men have started fighting for what is right and what they believe in as well as supporting different causes that help minorities who are in similar situations.

Therefore, to further understand the drama documentary genre it was found that *When They See Us* is an important case to study as the miniseries helps in portraying issues that people may not be aware of even though they are still very present. In addition to allowing Korey, Yusef, Antron, Kevin and Raymond to tell their side of the story, hereby focusing on people that may not be known anymore but once were (Ibid:61).

### **3. MIRRORING SOCIETY**

The main methodology used for gathering data on this case, with the aim of answering the research questions stated, followed Bent Flyvbjerg's (2001:135) phronetic approach, whereby the research benefits from concentrating on a specific case study. A phronetic approach allows for the study of values (Ibid:57) focusing on reflecting and illuminating issues and threats in order to outline how things may be done in another way (Ibid:140). Social studies do not just mirror society but are also society's "nose, eyes and ears" (Ibid:60). Therefore, one of the reasons why I chose *When They See Us* as the specific case on which to concentrate is that it portrays issues in society from the past that are still unresolved today. Flyvbjerg discusses the use of value claims and validity that need to be taken into consideration when choosing a case. *When They See Us* has since its release contributed to and caused several discussions concerning the corruption in the justice system that is highlighted throughout the miniseries, hereby increasing its value (Ibid:81). Furthermore, *When They See Us* is a drama documentary, that consists of truth claims and the sense of authenticity, whereby truth claims are created through the validity and the sense of authenticity of the story. In turn increasing the value of a case study. Hereby *When They See Us* can be deemed a phenomenon when considering the impact, the narrative has had on real-life events either by contributing to or creating discourse concerning the issues the case addresses.

Flyvbjerg argues that a case study generates exactly the kind of "context-dependent knowledge" (Ibid:71), that one needs as a method of learning. *When They See Us* represents a case study that is

extremely close to a real-life situation as it re-presents the story of the exonerated five. Flyvbjerg notes that a case depicting real-life situations enables a “nuanced view of reality” (Ibid:72), that, in turn, helps build an individual’s learning process by establishing new skills that can be further implemented in the research (Ibid). Therefore, *When They See Us* allows not only for the insight into new information on the event presented as a whole but also on the interplay between the drama documentary genre and real-life events in addition to helping in develop my research analysis skills.

When deciding what case to focus on for this research I concentrated on an information-oriented selection, that is, a case selected due to the presumption of information content (Ibid:79). *When They See Us* was most suitable as the miniseries can also be considered an extreme case, as it is very defined and specific. In addition, *When They See Us* has a follow up Oprah Winfrey special, through which, I was able to study the interplay of the drama documentary genre and real-life events. A couple of other examples of the drama documentary genre as previously mentioned are, *Chernobyl (2019)* or *Unbelievable (2019)* whereby these examples were found unsuitable for my analysis because they have not created the same amount of discourse as *When They See Us* has. Therefore, I could assume that the implications of these series on real-life events was not as consequential as those addressed in *When They See Us*. By focusing on an information-oriented selection, through an extreme case, I was able to select a case that would be most suitable for my intended analysis. In turn, allowing for the information gathered to be used to its maximum advantage (Ibid), permitting for the study of specific aims by answering the research questions.

*When They See Us* in combination with the Oprah Winfrey special enables the study of the impact of the drama documentary genre on the mediatisation of events, considering that the case portrays a real-life situation (Ibid:82). Flyvbjerg states that by focusing on a case study containing narrative that addresses certain complexities, a deeper problem can be exposed (Ibid:84). The deeper problem *When They See Us* addresses through the drama documentary genre is brought to light through the vigorous analysis of the miniseries style and narrative, that will be discussed in the next section.

## **RESEARCHING THE PROBLEM**

According to Flyvbjerg Phronetic research focuses on the dynamic question “How?” In addition to the more structural “Why?” (2001:136). Hereby helping to investigate the impact of a social phenomenon by trying to explain and understand how and why. Further Flyvbjerg states that the combination of asking “How?” in addition to conducting a narrative analysis is closely connected. Narrative is an essential component when it comes to looking at experience (Ibid:136-137). Thus,

phronetic research aims at clarifying problems and threats, by making clear “who’s doing what to whom” (Ibid:140).

Therefore, it is important to implement a narrative and style analysis for the research conducted, since a narrative analysis goes hand in hand with finding out “how”, highlighting experiences as well as underlining factors of change. The narrative analysis I conducted is based on Jason Mittell’s narrative complexity (2015). It was the starting point for the analysis conducted on *When They See Us*, as the analysis looks at Mittell’s four main elements of serial narratives; story world, characters, events and temporality (2015:22). The element of time plays an important role in the miniseries as this is mostly story time, going through a chronological timeline by presenting one event at a time except for a few scenes that use complex time through flashbacks. The use of time in *When They See Us* is combined with a diegesis narrative and a non-diegetic narrative used to help highlight and convey more information to the viewer. The second form of narration *When They See Us* uses is when the viewer is shown what actually happened to Trisha Meili as Mathias Reyes, the perpetrator, explains his step-by-step plan of attack. Additionally, the use of non-diegetic narration is also a characteristic of the drama documentary genre, as it is used from time to time in order to convey all the information needed, in a limited amount of time (Paget, 1998:69).

Just as with choosing the case through an information-oriented selection, I used the same method to choose the specific scenes to analyse. I combined this tactic with Mittell’s zooming out strategy (2015:74) and the concept of Kernels and Satellites (Ibid:23-24). These combined tools allowed me to select the scenes for my analysis. The scenes I chose were a combination of both Kernels and Satellites, whereby the Kernels play a bigger role by moving the narrative forward (Ibid:24) and the Satellites add to “texture, tone and character richness” (Ibid). These ways of selecting scenes provided me with a wide range of data to analyse, wherein the information I needed most was available to me, as all these types of scenes helped in answering the research questions.

The documentary elements of the drama documentary genre impact the mise-en-scène, whether through low key lighting or by hiring a cast that resembles the original individuals on whom the drama documentary is based (Paget,1998:75). The drama elements focus on continuity, camera angles and constructing relationships among characters through a dramatic narrative (Ibid:79). It is also important to analyse the style of *When They See Us* as style contribute to the depiction of the deeper problem the miniseries is presenting. Style in this analysis is like drama is to the dramadoc genre, a “promise of understanding through ‘second order’ experience” (Ibid:81).

In this thesis the style is based on Butler's *Television Style* (2010). My analysis of *When They See Us* focuses on the series' descriptive and analytic stylistics. These are highlighted through camera angles, lighting, mise-en-scène, and any other elements that contribute to a differentiation of style that helps *When They See Us* stand out in comparison to other drama documentaries. In the first step, following Butler's descriptive stylistics I described what I, as a viewer was being shown through still images (Ibid:7). In turn this initiated the interpretation of the image and helped in furthering the analysis (Ibid:9). The analytical stylistics, allowed me to look at how style is used in constructing certain functions of meaning

Moreover, I considered David Bordwell's (in Butler, 2010:11) four functions of film style; denote, express, symbolize and decorate. First the overall settings and characters are described, second, I looked at what these specifically might express, by focusing on what emotional values may be portrayed through certain style aspects. For example, the use of natural lighting contributes to certain feelings in scenes in the first episode, used mostly to emphasize the boys fear. The third function to symbolize, was to find a deeper meaning to what is shown on screen. This effect, of the deeper meaning can be rendered through the placement of characters, for example, by having the detective lean in on the boys in questioning conveys the sense of power the authority figures have over the boys<sup>2</sup>. I found that the last function, to decorate, was not of much help in furthering my analysis.

Through the combined analysis of *When They See Us* and the Oprah Winfrey special, I was able to gather the information needed in order to answer my research questions. The step-by-step process to how the research was conducted will be discussed in the following section.

## **CONSTRUCTING THE MEANING**

Since this study looks at *When They See Us* as well as *Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now*, the process was split into two parts, of which the first one focuses on *When They See Us* in five steps and, the second, on the Oprah Winfrey special in two steps.

The analysis of *When They See Us*, was a five-step process whereby the first step was watching the dramadoc miniseries multiple times. This allowed me to become aware of the storyline extremely well in addition to becoming familiar with each character and their roles. This step enabled me to formulate the overall goal of the thesis, which was to look for something that made this miniseries stand out compared to others and what impact it has on the real world.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1.1



The second step<sup>3</sup> was to choose the scenes I would analyse in order to achieve the aims of my thesis. In the third step<sup>4</sup> the scenes chosen were re-watched multiple times, pausing and rewinding every so often in order to take notes on every detail, as well as taking screen shots of every shot in the scene. This phase offered full insight into the scenes chosen for conducting the analysis. The fourth step, before starting the analysis, was going through all the chosen scenes again. I sorted through the scenes in an attempt to narrow down my choice. Nevertheless, I found that the majority of the scenes chosen were important for the analysis. It is important to note that I added more scenes once I started my analysis because I kept re-watching the series and found even more relevant scenes on the themes I had chosen to focus on.

Lastly in step five, I analysed the selected scenes, I started off by creating excel sheets, where I typed up my handwritten notes in order to gain a better overview of the data I had collected. This procedure allowed me to sort my chosen scenes into episode groupings, which made it easier when looking for specific details whilst writing. When analysing the data these were split into two main categories; text/sound and visual. Next I conducted analyses of the narrative and style, focusing on the mise-en-scène, characters and text spoken in each scene. The themes that stood out through this analysis were noted.

Based on the above analysis, I focused on the following themes: innocence, guilt, power, politics, injustice and role reversals. These themes impact one another and help in constructing evidence of corruption in the justice system. Additionally, these themes provide information that generated discourse, that, in turn created an impact on the real-life people portrayed in *When They See Us*, helping look at how the dramadoc genre impacts the mediatisation of events.

For the second analysis<sup>6</sup>, on *Oprah Winfrey presents: When They See Us Now*, I carried out a two-step analysis process. The first step consisted of watching the show several times and taking notes on the script, re-watching, and playing it over and over again to make sure that nothing was missed when writing down who said what. This step was extremely important since it helps to back up the analysis conducted on the miniseries in addition to its classification as documentary drama. The second step was to analyse the script, going over it multiple times and underlining anything that might be useful in backing up specific data gathered from the analysis of the chosen scenes from *When They See Us*.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1.2

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 1.3

<sup>5</sup> Appendix 1.4

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 1.5

The interplay between narratives and real-life events is reinforced through the Oprah Winfrey special. Therefore, I found it important to analyse *When They See Us* in combination with *Oprah Winfrey presents: When They See Us Now* because the outcome of the series is discussed on the show as well as the pre-production research that went into filming the miniseries. Through the discussion on the show the sense of authenticity and truth claims in *When They See Us* are brought to the viewers' attention.

The next chapter of the thesis sets out the detailed analysis that will discuss the main findings of my study in addition to discussing the drama documentary genre.

#### **4. BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

*When They See Us* is based on a true story, following the wrongful conviction and exoneration of five teenagers, who were accused of brutally raping and beating a woman in Central Park, New York City in April 1989. *When They See Us* is directed by Ava DuVernay and was released worldwide on Netflix on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Since the release, the series has created public uproar and has become a “catalyst for conversation” (Oprah Winfrey Presents: *When They See Us Now*, 2019).

The four-episode drama documentary miniseries is introduced to the viewer through a black background that, lets the viewer know that the story begins in Harlem on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989. Through the use of old-school hip-hop music in the background, whilst fading into the first scene the introduction of the first character in the miniseries begins. The combination of old-school hip-hop as well as the location presented at the start of the series helps in typifying the five main characters of the series in addition to allowing the viewer to get a feel for the time period of when the story takes place.

The first episode not only introduces each of the five main characters individually through something they enjoy, but also shows their downfall. Robert McKee (in Mittell, 2017:20) points out that through the individual introductions of each character by highlighting something the character loves or enjoys doing helps portray the characters as real people. The episode presents its viewers to Antron McCray, followed by Kevin Richardson, Korey Wise, Raymond Santana and Yusef Salaam<sup>7</sup>. Butler (2018:59) notes that through the use of multiple protagonists, the narrative moves between different characters,

<sup>7</sup> Hereafter referred to by their first names

as seen in *When They See Us* where the narrative is transferred between the different characters. This technique allows for several different plot lines, and the shift of character focus from one episode to the next. By the end of the first episode, the protagonists have gone through hours of questioning and have been arrested.

The following three episodes highlight the shift of character focus, allowing each protagonist to tell his side of the story. The episodes emphasise courtroom scenes, the manipulation/lack of facts, discussions and juvie/prison visits to name a few. The last two episodes portray the life after juvie for four of the five characters. The fifth character, Korey, is the main protagonist of the fourth and longest episode. Korey is 16 at the time of his arrest and is old enough for prison. Through the previous episodes we learn that although Korey is not the most intelligent, he is one of the kindest, most innocent of the five boys. The fourth episode gives voice to Korey and what he has had to endure whilst being in prison, allowing for his story to be told. The episode ends with showing how each character finds out about their exoneration whilst playing a voice-over of Helene Nomsa Brath<sup>8</sup> who is speaking at a welcoming event for the exonerated five. Concluding with the song Moon River playing in the background is a summary of what each of the exonerated five is currently doing, whilst images of each character in the miniseries and the real-life person affected are shown on the final screen.

In the first three episodes, the story world of *When They See Us* is straightforward. The episodes offer no flashbacks, skipping of events or repetition of events from different perspectives. In the fourth episode however, story time is combined with a complex narrative, which is highlighted when Korey is stuck in solitary, thinking about the past and what has gotten him to where he is now. This technique helps in conveying Korey's innocence as well as introducing the audience to a part of Korey's life that one might not have known of otherwise. In the next section, the drama documentary genre that *When They See Us* falls into will be discussed, looking at the importance of truthfulness and sense of authenticity in a series such as *When They See Us*.

## **THE DRAMA DOCUMENTARY AS A GENRE**

The genre of *When They See Us* plays a major role in this miniseries. The fact that *When They See Us* is a dramadoc encourages the viewer to care so much more when watching than if it were fiction. The series aims at making a difference, by making people think about how they behave in the real world and by creating a shift in conversation (Oprah Winfrey Presents: *When They See Us Now*, 2019). It

<sup>8</sup> Hereafter referred to as Nomsa Brath

is important to look at and understand the genre as the effect it has on the series allows it to result in changes in the real world. At the time of the case, the five boys and their families were dehumanised, with the label “Central Park Five” thrust upon them. Through the series they are given a voice and introduced as themselves, therefore becoming visible to viewers as well as educating the public on what happened in 1989.

Through the combination of drama and documentary the viewer is not only placed as someone who needs to be addressed, as mentioned by Paget (1998), but also as someone who can be “sucked into the frame” (Ibid:16) through identifying with certain characters. This impact is achieved through the individual introductions of the characters, not only allowing for the character to come to life but also for the viewer to build a connection with the characters and help identify with them. An important factor playing into *When They See Us* being a drama documentary is the amount of research that has been conducted during pre-production. The pre-production research is heavily discussed in *Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now* (2019), where Oprah Winfrey questions each actor about the role he played in the miniseries. Asante Blackk, who plays Kevin as a child, talks about how the “biggest preparation was just talking to them themselves [...] getting a sense of who they were” (Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now, 2019). Jovan Adapo, playing Antron as a grown-up, also says that getting a chance to meet Antron to “try to get him to open up [...] and [...] really figure out [...] the core of his story” (Ibid) was extremely important in helping him, become familiar with Antron’s character. Both statements underline how much time and effort went into the pre-production research, especially as the core aspect of the research was for the actors to meet the real-life men on whom the series is based, allowing the actors to integrate themselves and become one with the persons’ they are meant to portray on screen.

It is important to note that a drama documentary should be understood not as a ‘hybrid’ of documentaries and dramas but as its own form (Paget, 1998:3). Drama documentaries use a chain of events based on real historical instances to underline a film script that consciously provokes discourse about the significance of a specific incident (Ibid:82). Through the use of different narrative and style techniques this is exactly what *When They See Us* does, starting with how Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin came to be falsely convicted, whilst continuously moving on through the film narrative, one event at a time. Since its release the miniseries, has provoked discussions concerning change in the justice system and politics in general. The significance of politics is highlighted through the role Donald Trump played at the time of the boys’ arrests in April 1989 for example.

The combined use of drama and documentary genres and narrative, whereby the drama narrative essentially focuses on relationships among characters and the documentary narrative, concentrates on the relationship of events (Paget, 1998:79), enables the viewer to be privy to certain information. This may be information, that may not have been available to public before the miniseries. In *When They See Us* the viewer is presented with the story of the exonerated five, hereby allowing new insight and information into the situation as the viewer is shown the full story from the viewpoint of the five wrongly convicted men, that was not all known to the public before. This new insight is highlighted through the camera's ability of "complete seeing" (Ibid:89). An example being the fly on the wall technique, that allows the viewer to gain intimate insight into what is happening, affecting not only the viewer's emotions but also the viewer's general understanding, as stated by Paget (Ibid). This camera technique can be seen multiple times throughout the miniseries, starting at the beginning in the different scenes where the five boys are questioned for example. To be able to back up all the information in the drama documentary genre there has to be a certain truth to the information that the viewer is given. Therefore, the importance of truthfulness in a drama documentary and how this plays a role in *When They See Us* will be looked at next.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRUTHFULNESS**

Annette Hill talks about truthfulness as a "defining characteristic of factual television" (2007:112), that presents viewers with real events and experiences. Both Hill (2007) and W. H. Auden (Paget, 1998:125; Mendelson, 1977:355) agree that these events can be produced in various modes and locations as long as the outcome is "true to life" (Paget, 1998:25) and based on something that "really did happen" (Hill, 2007:112). Basil Wright refers to documentaries as being "public information" (Paget, 1998:124; Barsam, 1974:367) hereby helping to establish the truthfulness of documentaries. Hereby *When They See Us* plays an important role in making people aware of certain aspects of the case, because even though documentaries are based on public information some people may not have been aware of all of the information.

Hence the importance truthfulness plays in drama documentaries, as Paget states, there is a direct correlation when it comes to a drama documentary and public debates (1998:1). This correlation is mostly due to one of the main points addressed by a drama documentary, that is to focus on 'ordinary citizens', who have previously been on the news in relation to a past event (Ibid:61). By telling the story of Korey, Antron, Kevin, Yusef and Raymond, *When They See Us* uses these 'ordinary citizens' who have once already stood in the limelight to arouse discourse and debate that, in turn, can have an impact on the real-life (Ibid:1) even though it is an event from the past that is being presented.

Truthfulness is supported through what is visible to the audience, as cameras when filming portray certain images that the viewer is meant to see, hereby creating truth claims. For example, all scenes concerning Raymond, Yusef, Kevin, Antron and Korey in questioning or in prison, were private and inaccessible. However, through the drama documentary the viewer is privy to what went on inside the walls of prison, granting the viewer access to information that was not available to the public at the time.

Drama documentaries according to Paget are “becoming more filmic and less verbal” (1998:28), relying more on documentary values and functions. This is not fully the case in *When They See Us*, as the miniseries is meant to give Korey, Antron, Yusef, Kevin and Raymond and their story a voice to be heard and therefore uses a diegetic narrative most of the time. Non-diegetic voice-overs, a documentary value, however, are used several times in *When They See Us* hereby allowing for the narration of specific sequences where the narrator is not visible (Ibid:68) as well as providing more information to the viewer (Ibid:69). Additionally, the historic value, when it comes to documentaries, also has an impact on the perception of being a “truth teller” (Paget, 1998:1). To highlight this effect and provide further insight into the story Paget suggests that the documentaries sense of authenticity can be underlined through the use of actual documentary material (Ibid:69) from the time of the event. The following section will thus discuss the importance of authenticity of a drama documentary.

### **THE ROLE OF AUTHENTICITY**

The idea of the sense of authenticity plays an important role when it comes to a drama documentary. Starting off with the cast, by having actors who resembles the original exonerated five in *When They See Us* affects the mise-en-scène and a program’s sense of authenticity as well as helping viewers to identify with characters (Paget, 1998:119). As indicated earlier, the research that gathers information on the characters and story also contributes to the sense of authenticity of the series, making it as truthful as possible.

When portraying violence through a drama documentary, the moral value behind actors depicting real-life occurrences is often discussed because of what Corner calls ‘manipulation’ issues (Paget, 1998:62). The issue refers to false representation that might occur despite the fact that the material integrated in a drama documentary is already “familiar to its audience” (Ibid.). Even though violence is not a theme that will be looked at in this analysis it is important to mention as it plays a role in conveying the image of what Yusef, Raymond, Antron, Kevin and especially Korey went through whilst being questioned by higher authorities and whilst in prison, hereby allowing the viewer insight into certain issues, that through the series have become part of a larger discussion, allowing for certain changes to be made.

The use of actual documentary material throughout the drama documentary not only helps in conveying information, but the sense of authentication of the drama documentary is also achieved (Paget, 1998:69). The most important example is when the miniseries addresses an advertisement<sup>9</sup>, directed at bringing back the death penalty that Donald Trump put out during the case trials. This advertisement is pictured through original television footage being played in the miniseries. By implementing this advertisement, the emotional outrage Yusef's and Korey's mothers' have in response to the advertisement helps create drama. This outrage in combination with the overall style and narrative adds credibility from the documentary side of the drama documentary as it has "set the scene" (Ibid:71). This in turn is important as the term documentary links to the representation and authentication of a drama documentary, that should most importantly be "true-to life" (Ibid:125) as drama documentaries are "simply a method of approach" when it comes to public information as suggested by Basil Wright (Paget, 1998:123-124; Barsam, 1974:367).

*When They See Us* reaffirms these characteristics of the drama documentary throughout. Not only does it use truth claims and create a sense of authenticity, that help in supporting the genre itself but also through plenty of background research and most importantly the impact the series has had on the viewers and the changes that are being implemented as a result.

The following section will look at the narrative and style analysis of *When They See Us* by discussing the themes of innocence, guilt, politics, power, corruption in the justice system and conclude with a discussion of role reversals.

## **NARRATIVE AND STYLE**

### **THE PORTRAYAL OF INNOCENCE**

*Come on Ray. I mean no one will believe a kid like you would just stand there. You gotta put yourself in there.* - Detective

Throughout the four episodes of *When They See Us* the innocence of the five youths, Raymond, Yusef, Antron, Kevin and Korey is highlighted through different narrative and style techniques. By telling the boys' side of the story, the characters are humanised and in turn, the portrayal of their innocence is conveyed. Therefore, it is important to look at how the characters' innocence is built up throughout the miniseries in addition to how innocence is conveyed to the viewer.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix 2

In episodes one and two, the innocence of each character is first and foremost portrayed through their youth. Since Raymond, Yusef, Antron, Kevin and Korey are all still young teenagers, aged between 14 and 16 at the time of their arrests, they are extremely scared and vulnerable, which is portrayed through emotions, lack of knowledge and trust of authority. In turn these characteristics are displayed through different performance signs as described by Butler (2018:98) such as through signifiers of emotions, that help create the image of innocence. In episodes three and four, the characters' transition from young teenage boys to grown men where their youth no longer can appeal to the viewer and help portray their innocence. However, this loss is supplemented through the use of complex time concerning flashbacks as well as the story time and the narrative continuing on naturally. Hereby the case and various facts are addressed once more, and the portrayal of innocence is brought forward.

When looking at the first two episodes of *When They See Us*, innocence is portrayed as mentioned through the characters' youth. Innocence is also highlighted through the use of words that are used to describe Yusef, Raymond, Korey, Kevin, and Antron. The terms "kids", "child" and most importantly "boys" are used when discussing the group of five. These terms help create the image of someone young and innocent, especially when concerning someone who is helpless and scared. The terms used to describe the group can be seen as signs, as discussed by Richard Dyer (1998; in Butler, 2018:87); these signs can help in constructing and communicating the group's innocence to the viewer.

The group's youth isn't only highlighted through the way the boys are addressed but also by their looks and posture. These too are part of creating certain performance signs (Butler, 2018:87), that help signify the character to the viewer. By taking a closer look at the scene<sup>10</sup> in which Raymond is questioned, the viewer can see how scared and distraught Raymond looks. Raymond's eyes, puffy from crying, convey the mishandling and pressure he has been under. Raymond's fearfulness is reflected off of his father's face when he walks into the questioning room. Through the authority figures, that create fear in the situation and in Raymond, viewers are able to see Raymond's youthfulness, which is also highlighted through his relationship with his father, that shows a worried parent trying to protect his son. This scene creates a sense of realism as it represents a certain event that has had an impact (Fiske, 2001:22) on Raymond.

One of the main scenes, portraying Yusef's, Antron's, Kevin's and Raymond's innocence through body language, speech, mise-en-scène, and looks, is the penultimate scene of the first episode. Here



the group of four is placed together in a holding cell, Korey at the time of the arrest is 16 and therefore too old to be placed in holding with them. The *mise-en-scène* is very sterile, the exact opposite of homey. There is not much in the room; a window, some outlets and three benches, allowing the viewer's focus to be purely on the four boys', who are placed in four different areas of the room<sup>11</sup>. Kevin the youngest, is sitting on a bench at the back of the room; Antron is leaning against the wall, Raymond is standing towards the back of the room and Yusef is staring out a fenced window that leads into a hallway. The combination of mostly medium and close-up shots allows for the viewers to see the facial expressions of each character, which is important when the boys discuss the situation they are in as this helps show their emotions.

The scene starts out with all boys staying away from one another, Kevin<sup>12</sup> looks exhausted and has a black eye from when he got punched by a police officer at the time of his arrest. He is wearing a red t-shirt, blue jeans and a blue jacket. Antron, stares straight ahead and keeps to himself, he looks disappointed and upset. He is wearing a blue bomber jacket with a big logo on the front, blue jeans and a basic white shirt. Raymond is also wearing blue jeans, a burgundy top and a long dark coat, he also looks exhausted. Yusef compared to the others looks fresh, wearing only a burgundy jumper, a striped shirt and high pants. All of these outfits are very simple, there is nothing special about them, it is noticeable that they are young and don't come from the wealthiest of families. The clothes look rugged signifying the misuse they have been through, as well as their emotional state<sup>13</sup>, at wits end, completely exhausted. Through the fly on the wall camera shots one can see that by the end of the scene all four boys are sitting down, slouching, here the body language signifies the exhaustion they feel and how scared they are. However, by placing the boys together<sup>14</sup> there is now a sense of unity as they have realised, they are all in the same situation.

Throughout episode two the boys' innocence is mirrored through facts and lack of continuity within facts. By highlighting that there is no evidence as one of the boys' attorney mentions, "During this NYPD investigation [...] they scoured Central Park [...] and they did not find one thing"<sup>15</sup>, their innocence is proven. Elizabeth Lederer, highlights this during a discussion she has with Linda Fairstein, both of which are prosecutors placed on the case, stating that "five defendants clean, their DNA isn't there, it's not anywhere" (Ibid), the facial expressions of Elizabeth throughout the scene also show guilt and realization, that Linda will do anything in her power to lock these boys up. This

<sup>11</sup> Appendix 3.2

<sup>12</sup> Appendix 3.3

<sup>13</sup> Appendix 3.4

<sup>14</sup> Appendix 3.5

<sup>15</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe: 23:16 - 28:08

is an important turning point in the series, that will be looked at later on in the analysis.

In the last two episodes of the miniseries the focus is on the life in prison for the boys and their life outside of prison, on Korey solely in solitude and on the full turn of events where the truth of the situation finally comes out, hereby accentuating the boys innocence.

By focusing exclusively on Korey, the viewer gains more insight into who he is as a character as he has not been very emphasised in the previous episodes. Through the use of complex time the viewer is kept in Korey's current situation, in solitary confinement, however, is brought back to earlier episodes through the use of voice-over memory flashbacks. Underlining that Korey is in the situation he is in because he is a good friend to Yusef. The use of complex time also highlights illusions and memories of his older transsexual brother. Korey brings up a memory where he asks his brother why people keep staring at him, depicting Korey's pureness of heart and through this his innocence. Through the image of Korey<sup>16</sup> lying in the foetus position whilst thinking of the past, the viewer is made aware of his youth, misuse and scariness of the situation. This is done through the camera's bird eye view, allowing the viewer to get a feel of the situation Korey is in, all alone in an empty dark cell, curled up emphasising that he is still young and weak as it brings about the image of a baby in a womb. The solitary confinement cell can be seen as the "womb" in the situation Korey is in, hereby protecting Korey from the corrupt prison system on the outside, as he had previously been mistreated by prison guards as well as numerous prison inmates. Therefore, solitary confinement gives Korey a safe space to be in, which offers full protection and allows him to somewhat be his youthful self, this however, will be looked at further in a later section.

Lastly the groups innocence is fully highlighted through the confession of the original perpetrator, this is done by showing the step-by-step process of what the perpetrator goes through once confessing. Starting out with proofing his confession, taking his DNA sample and lastly the viewer is given a description of the full event of what happened in Central Park in April 1989. This whole ceremony of steps allows the viewer to see how things should have been taken care of when Yusef, Korey, Raymond, Antron and Kevin were arrested, instead the boys got hustled, interrogated, and stipulated into giving a false confession because promises of their release were made. All this conveys the message of how young, gullible and scared these five boys were, trusting authorities with false promises in the hope of getting home to their families. The urgency of getting home and being with their parent(s) is highlighted multiple times throughout the episodes, especially at the start whilst

being interrogated, as well as whenever there are visiting hours at the prisons, along with the release of the five boys, which highlights that all they want to do is be with their parent(s). This situation shows that the five boys are just children, who want and need their parent(s) in a time of need and discomfort, just like any young, innocent child in that situation would have.

By focusing on the characters' innocence their 'ordinariness' is brought to light, this being an important characteristic of the drama documentary genre (Paget, 1998:61). Herewith, *When They See Us* underlines characteristics of the five protagonists that weren't visible to the public before the miniseries, allowing the viewer to build a connection to the characters' as well as creating their own image of each protagonist. In doing so an important aspect of the drama documentary genre is highlighted, this being that the miniseries represents the real in order to provoke change (Ibid:1). By conveying the image of the boys' innocence, the viewer is made aware of what has been going on, that however will be discussed further on in the analysis. Butler (2018:425) talks about how meaning is produced through style. The style described in this section all adds up to create the meaning of innocence, whether it's through the clothes the boys are wearing, or the natural lighting used in order to create a menacing, unwelcoming atmosphere in order to make the viewer see how helpless the boys feel. Through the study of innocence in *When They See Us*, the viewer is made aware that there wasn't a presumption of innocence during this case even though there should be one when it comes to the U.S. law. *When They See Us* fully allows the viewer to see that the characters are actually innocent but proven guilty through ascribed guilt. Consequently, through the confession of the actual perpetrator, a chain of actions is unleashed, that leads to a big change of events and the transferral of guilt. The next section of the analysis will be looking at the theme of guilt and how it is portrayed.

## **THE PORTRAYAL OF GUILT**

*The only verdict in this case is the verdict of not guilty on all counts.* - Michael Joseph, Defence Attorney

Guilt in the miniseries *When They See Us* doesn't only affect the five main protagonists of the story but almost every character, the parents, the siblings, prosecutors, attorneys, detectives and police officers. Not all of these characters will however be analysed as the focus will be on the main protagonists and the prosecutors. Guilt is a complex theme in *When They See Us* as there is the feeling of guilt felt by most characters as mentioned and is shown through the narrative and through facial expressions and actions. There is the ascribed guilt of Korey, Antron, Yusef, Kevin and Raymond, and lastly the overall portrayal of guilt through various characters' actions, that mostly concerns the justice system and individuals such as Linda and Elizabeth.

Linda clearly feels guilt about the many unsolved cases concerning rape victims, that is why she pursues the case of the five boys. Linda has convinced herself that these five boys are the perpetrators and that once they are put into prison her conscience is cleared from all the other unsolved cases. This is shown through two scenes<sup>17</sup>, by using a medium shot in the first scene the viewer is able to see not only Linda's face but body language, as she uses her hands to emphasise the point she is making. Linda's facial expression is one of pure concern, with her voice cracking for a second when addressing the "epidemic" of rapes New York City is suffering from. The seriousness of the situation is underlined through the use of background music, that begins at the start of Linda's monologue on rapes. In the second scene, there is a combined use of medium and close-up shots to focus on Linda's facial expressions as well as using music to emphasise the harshness of the situation. All of these elements combined create the image of guilt that Linda feels when it comes to rape victims and unsolved cases. These elements also add to the dramatic look, whereby the viewer is placed in the scene with the characters to achieve this (Caughie, 1981; In Fiske, 2001:28). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Linda only emphasises rape and its seriousness when she wants something to go her way. Through pursuing this case, Linda is portrayed as the "bad guy" and as guilty, because her actions have put five innocent boys into prison. Linda is shown as eager to win the case no matter what, rather than actually pursuing justice, and finding the actual perpetrator since the facts clearly show that none of the boys were actually at the crime scene. These characteristics in turn show the viewer a corrupt justice system, that will be addressed further on in the analysis.

Linda's guilt overlaps slightly with Elizabeth's, as Linda convinces Elizabeth to do certain things. When Elizabeth discusses the lack of DNA with Linda, she states that they were "crossing a line" affecting "these boys"<sup>18</sup>. This scene<sup>19</sup>, highlights Elizabeth's guilty conscience through a combination of medium and close-up shots. The medium shots have Elizabeth in focus, placed in front of a plain background, with slightly blurred objects in the foreground, producing a certain shield effect, protecting her from what Linda is talking about and showing that she is still in a position of control. The close-ups on the other hand are used to really highlight the guilt Elizabeth feels, making her look vulnerable and upset. The close-ups begin as soon as Linda starts talking about Trisha Meili and the music starts playing in the background. Even though Elizabeth has a guilty conscience, she is also portrayed as guilty because she is the one who goes into court and has to convince the jury of the boys' guilt. Elizabeth's ultimate portrayal of being guilty is demonstrated through Corey's actions.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix 4.1

<sup>18</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 29:53 - 32:24

<sup>19</sup> Appendix 4.2

When Korey's guilty verdict is spoken, he runs to Elizabeth and shouts, "you liar, you lied on me"<sup>20</sup> hereby underlining her role as the "bad guy" and her guilt for making false promises and locking up innocent boys.

Moving on to Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin, who's guilt is ascribed to them the second they are brought to the police station and are taken in for questioning. Firstly, focusing on Korey, who's "guilt" is thrust upon him through his guilty verdict. Korey is made to look guilty through his confession tape, that he was told to record with the false promise of being able to go home. When Korey is placed in solitary and thinks of what got him there, he goes through the speech in the courtroom scene. Through the flashback the viewer is reminded of how Korey was bullied into saying what he did. As Elizabeth addresses Korey<sup>21</sup> about skipping school, the image of a "bad boy" is created, automatically making him look more guilty. Korey emphasises the guilt he feels when it comes to disappointing and breaking his promise to his older brother. The viewer sees Korey's guilt through the use of memories and illusions, for example, when Korey's brother appears to him in solitary and takes him back to the memory of Korey making a promise to change and not skip school anymore. Confirming his feeling of guilt about skipping school, as this was brought up in court. The scene also allows for the viewer to get to know Korey more through the use of different performance signs that allow the viewer to identify with him (Butler, 2018:87).

Antron, Raymond, Kevin and Yusef's guilt is also thrust upon them in the courtroom through a guilty verdict and the persuasiveness of the prosecutor, Elizabeth. Antron, Raymond and Kevin however in the penultimate scene of the first episode feel so guilty about lying about one another that they admit to doing so right away. Their guilt is shown through their facial expressions<sup>22</sup> and emotions, presented through close-up shots. These start the moment they are introduced to one another, where the viewer sees the realisation of what they have each done and how bad they feel about lying on one another. Yusef isn't a part of this since he never gave a "confession" or signed a statement. Nevertheless, this doesn't matter in court as all the boys are presented as vicious, guilty criminals, by emphasising the victim and the injuries she has suffered, as well as the point being made that the boys were in Central Park to "rob, beat and attack innocent New Yorkers"<sup>23</sup>. By using the word "innocent" to describe bystanders, the prosecutor automatically projects the word guilty onto the group.

<sup>20</sup> (Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 00:24-01:43

<sup>21</sup> Appendix 4.3

<sup>22</sup> Appendix 4.4

<sup>23</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe: 23:16 - 28:08

The guilt of the five protagonists that is ascribed to them through monologues by the prosecutor as well as forced confession tapes that support the prosecutor's argument is conveyed differently than the guilt the five boys feel towards one another and their families. Guilt as discussed, is shown through different camera angles, close-ups and emotions. In sum, the overall image being conveyed is of five innocent young boys who know they messed up and regret everything they did to get to where they are.

As mentioned at the start of the section, guilt is a complex matter, as there are many layers to it, starting out with simply feeling guilty, that everyone involved in the case does at some level, not just the people affected by it directly but the families as well. Then there is the ascribed guilt, that affects the five protagonists as they are being portrayed as committing a crime they did not commit, and lastly, we have the portrayal of guilt. The last form of guilt is the most important as this is the impact of the drama documentary, by highlighting the prosecutors' actions and conveying their guilt for putting innocent boys into prison there is a parallel impact in the real world, where people are made aware of this injustice and implement action of change. This, as DuVernay mentions, was one of the goals of the miniseries: to make people aware of certain situations that need changing since "you can't change what you don't know" (Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now, 2019). The scenes portraying guilt can be seen as enigmas, that according to Butler create a chain of reactions that drive the narrative forward (2018:58). These enigmas can be linked to what Mittel refers to as kernels, also moving the narrative forward (2015:23-24). An example of a chain of reaction being the boys sneaking out at night when they should not be, that leads to their arrest, their prosecution and the loss of their parent(s) jobs. The portrayal of guilt in this case doesn't only move the narrative forward in the story world but also in the real world, by highlighting the portrayal of guilt when it comes to Linda and Elizabeth. Hereby connecting the impact of style with that of a drama documentary since as mentioned the genre aims at implementing change through discussion (Paget, 1998). The following section looks at politics as this is an important theme that links corruption of the justice system.

### **THE RENDITION OF POLITICS**

Politics is important to look at as this, in addition to criminal justice systems can easily be "corrupted by poor leadership" as discussed by Graham Brooks (2019:23). Politics is one of several factors that undermine corruption (Ibid:20), that in turn is a "product of its environment, [...] and social development" (Ibid:21). The rendition of politics is constructed from the very beginning of the series and continues throughout, starting off with Linda having to convince Morgenthau to give her the case

instead of Nancy Ryan<sup>24</sup>. Once Linda takes charge of the case, she tries to prove to everyone that Korey, Antron, Kevin, Yusef and Raymond are the perpetrators, having convinced herself of this already. Antonio Gramsci points out “‘truth’ or the discourse of truth [...] is a construct of political [...] forces [...] that hold power” (1971; in Brooks, 2019:27). Therefore, Politics is an important theme to look at in *When They See Us* as it is one of the basis that highlights and builds the corruption of the justice system and can through the portrayal in the miniseries make viewers aware of this, hereby continuously highlighting the aspect of truth telling in the drama documentary genre.

The case becomes a political one since the prosecutors care more about how they themselves are viewed by the public rather than about doing the right thing by playing fair and stepping down once realising that there is no evidence and the actual perpetrator might still be free. The lack of evidence is highlighted by Elizabeth, during her first meeting with Linda, where she describes herself walking into the courtroom “armed with [...] conflicting statements, no physical evidence, no weapon”<sup>25</sup>, hereby also underlining the consequence the lack of evidence would have on her reputation. Elizabeth’s facial expressions<sup>26</sup> during the conversation show that she is unimpressed, she barely makes eye contact with Linda and doesn’t seem very interested in the case. All these elements are character signs that help construct Elizabeths character to the viewer (Butler, 2018), this being someone that only cares about her own image and not about what is wrong or right.

Once the case starts developing some backbone, however, Elizabeth becomes more involved as it is in her interest to win the case and maintain her reputation. The more time Elizabeth spends on the case, the more she realises that the five protagonists are probably not the perpetrators. Her doubts are brought to the viewer’s attention twice; firstly, when Elizabeth highlights that the case is no longer about justice but about politics and secondly when she confronts Linda about thinking that there is a possible sixth attacker. Elizabeth states that they are crossing a line, emphasising that the whole country is watching her during this trial, so they can’t lose. When Elizabeth tries to make clear to Linda that the boys aren’t the actual perpetrators, Linda puts the pressure on Elizabeth by emphasising that “they are watching you”. The “they” refers to the country and the use of “you” emphasises the weight Elizabeth carries with her as she is the main prosecutor on the case, underlining Elizabeth’s fear of ruining her reputation.

<sup>24</sup> Assistant District Attorney

<sup>25</sup> (Part 1, 2019) Timeframe: 47:50-49:31

<sup>26</sup> Appendix 5.1

In episode two of *When They See Us*, Michael Joseph, Antron's attorney, has a meeting with Elizabeth, where she states openly that "It's no longer about the justice counsellor. It's about politics. And politics is about survival"<sup>27</sup>. This statement shows that politics impacts the justice system very strongly in this case as justice is just set aside when it comes to making it through the case successfully. The statement emphasises the importance of a prosecutor's reputation, that this comes before all else and that the prosecutors do what they want in order to get what they want.

Race as well plays an important role and adds to the construction of politics in this drama documentary, starting with the fact that the falsely accused perpetrators are black and Hispanic. Race is highlighted as an issue as Raymond points out whilst in the holding cell when answering Kevin's question about why they're being treated the way they are, asking "what other way they ever do us?"<sup>28</sup>. Raymond knows that it isn't a coincidence that they all got arrested and were told to confess to something they didn't do, underlining that the police and detectives took advantage of the boys coming from different racial backgrounds.

The role race plays in this case is emphasised once more when Yusef's lawyer Mr. Burns underlines it multiple times during his opening speech in court. Mr. Burns starts off by mentioning that although there were several incidents during the night, the other cases were not treated with the same intensity as the one of the "white female jogger"<sup>29</sup>. The use of the term "white" emphasises the point Mr. Burns is making about the political role of race: a white victim, especially a female, is automatically given more attention. Mr. Burns goes on to mention that since the suspects were "black and Hispanic" (Part 2, 2019) decisions were made and there was firm motivation to "solve and close the case as soon as possible" (Part 2, 2019). During the monologue the camera focuses on Elizabeth and her co prosecutor; cuts to a shot of the jury when talking about the media as these symbolise the eyes and ears of the court case; and then focuses on the white and then black audience members, enabling the viewer to see how segregated the races are not only in the case but in the audience as well. Furthermore, these shots permit the viewer to see people's reactions in court, for example, the audience doesn't seem surprised when the race of the protagonists is addressed as a reason for why these five boys are in the situation, they are in. Hereby again creating a sense of realism as Fiske mentions that realism "reproduces reality [...] to make it easily understandable" (2001:24). Whereby this scene very clearly highlights the racial discrimination going on in the case.

<sup>27</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 44:06 - 44:48

<sup>28</sup> (Part 1, 2019) Timeframe 55:59 - 59:19

<sup>29</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 23:16 - 28:08



The construction of politics as mentioned, is one of the characteristics of the corrupt justice system, the prosecutor according to Michelle Alexander is “the most powerful law enforcement official in the criminal justice system” (2010:87). Politics helps in creating Linda and Elizabeth’s reputation, especially when the factor of racism is brought to the viewer’s attention. Race is an issue that people still deal with today, Elizabeth Goggin et al. mention that black men specifically, remain “the subject of racial profiling and criminalization in political, social, and cultural systems of the United States” (2016:349), through the portrayal of racial discrimination, issues in politics are clearly highlighted. In turn creating a sense of realism as the miniseries is mirroring reality (Fiske, 2001:21). The use of documentary footage such as Trump’s advertisement urging the return of the death penalty, in *When They See Us* helps address and makes people aware of not only the racial issues people had to deal with 1989 but also of Donald Trump’s willingness to bring back the death penalty. In addition to constructing the sense of authenticity in the miniseries (Paget, 1998:125) as well as realism, which in turn helps create discourse (Fiske, 2001:41). Hereby, addressing modern day politics and linking them to modern day racial issues makes viewers aware of Donald Trump’s character as he is currently running the White House. This leads to the construction of different power roles and the misuse of power, that will be looked at in the next section.

### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF POWER**

The construction of power is noted in two different ways throughout the miniseries, firstly the misuse of power in power positions, and secondly the power of change. Power in this sense is another basis together with politics that helps construct the image of corruption in the justice system. Therefore, the two roles of power will be discussed further: firstly, looking at the misuse of power in power positions, looking at how different players within the justice system use their positions’ to attain power, what is then misused and secondly, the power of change, that will look at how power affects the narrative of the story. This section will aim to highlight the relationship between power, politics and the justice system because as Paget mentions the drama documentary genre aims at addressing issues in order to stimulate discussion (1998:61) and through this the series itself can be seen as powerful by stimulating discussion and implementing change (Corner, 2011:17).

There are several characters within *When They See Us*, who either possess or attain power and misuse it. When looking at the detectives who lead the interrogations of Korey, Yusef, Raymond, Antron and Kevin, for example the viewer is shown some of the tactics used during questioning them. Interchanging between a good cop, bad cop routine, actual violence and the so-called Reid technique, that is used for intimidation and ultimately leads to a confession, even if the individual is not actually guilty of the crime. When looking at the interrogation scenes, Antron, Kevin, and Raymond go from denying everything to giving a false confession. The scenes start out with three detectives in the room

asking about “the lady”. Whilst the scene progresses so does the aggression towards the suspects as well as the accusations, slowly revealing “witnesses” who saw the rape, which turns into beatings of the protagonists, until another detective comes into the room playing the “good guy”. Hereby the viewer is shown how power is implemented onto the boys through different tactics, for example through the power to dominate (Foucault, 1982:786). Foucault discusses the form of power domination by mentioning how a legitimate role (1977), such as being a detective makes it easier to control certain problems. The power of domination is shown through the stages of convincing the boys of their crime, where the detectives start out with no statements however through their role as detective and through the power they possess, are able to produce statements in order to build a case.

The *mise-en-scène* of these scenes uses a combination of close-up and medium shots. The close-up shots help portray the emotions the boys go through as well as the aggression towards them in the faces of the detectives. One detective is always closer to the protagonist being questioned, portraying the power of intimidation the detectives have over the boys, especially as they slowly gang up on each boy, getting closer and closer to him. The rooms in which the boys are questioned add to the discomfort of the whole situation. Through the use of only natural light the scenes are very dark, making the detectives look even more powerful as they are just these dark figures hovering over and shouting at the young boys, who just want to go home. All of these factors combined make the boys look young and breakable and innocent, whereas the detectives are being constructed as powerful and evil.

The violence and intimidation continue in prison, impacting Korey the most, as he is transferred from one prison to the next. This behaviour allows for the introduction of several prison guards who use their position of power to take bribes, hereby enabling and encouraging violence in prison. The first guard Korey deals with is a typical uber confident, buff guard who is very direct when talking and who licks his lips the first time he sees Korey, indicating a sign of hunger and the arrival of fresh “meat”. The guard’s power over Korey is shown through his lurking and scaring Korey as well as a slow zoom into Korey’s face when being spoken to by this guard. Considering that the guard accepts bribes, the viewer knows that in return he uses his power in favour of those paying up, clearly highlighting a misuse of power and an extremely corrupt prison system.

The second corrupt guard to whom the viewer is introduced is a masochist, who is extremely condescending towards Korey and who uses his power to let Korey know that he is not welcome in the prison. The second guard’s attitude is highlighted through low angle shots onto the guard during a conversation with Korey. Here the viewer is placed lower than the guard, with the guard looking

down past the viewer at Korey, where half of his face is lit from light coming through a tiny window. Through the use of natural light, most of the guard is placed in shadow, making him seem more threatening as the little light there is, is combined with shadows making the atmosphere very cool and unwelcoming. Here again the viewer is shown these roles of power through domination (Foucault, 1982), with the first guard for example the influence of power is slower, through the acceptance of bribes it is shown that the use of power may first be implemented in the future (Ibid:789).

The prosecutors, Elizabeth and Linda, use their role of power to turn the narrative of the case into whatever they want. When discussing the confession tapes for example you have Elizabeth mentioning the separation of trials so that the confessions don't implicate each other, therefore needing to "find the right combination of defendants" (Part 2, 2019)<sup>30</sup> that "requires the least amount of editing of the tapes" (Ibid), herein contributing to the misuse of power in her position of power. Elizabeth also underlines the power of authority in the opening statement scene of the courtroom, by stressing that the NYPD<sup>31</sup> has carefully collected evidence, thus enhancing the validity of the evidence that will be used against the five protagonists, even though the viewer knows that the proof the prosecutors have is not clean. The prosecutors, Elizabeth and Linda, are shown as two people in control, influencing certain people to get what they want hereby reflecting their power. Their approach is underlined by Linda who casually mentions a sock with DNA found at the crime scene, pointing out that the defence doesn't know about this. The ball is in her court and if the DNA is in their favour, they will use it against the defendants; if, however it is not, no one will ever have to know about it. All of these points affect the narrative of the story, changing the narrative as they please so long as the boys' verdict comes out as guilty.

Through the tampering of narrative, the power in change is highlighted, as the storyline changes twice, the protagonists' go from innocent to guilty and back to innocent and the prosecutors go from good to bad. These changes and role reversals will be discussed in more detail further on in the analysis. Regardless, it is important to highlight that the district attorney Robert Morgenthau was part of both of the narrative changes that took place in *When They See Us*; firstly when he was worried that splitting up the group of five during the court cases would "tank the gang narrative" (Part 2, 2019) and secondly when he re-opens the case and hands it over to Nancy. Here Morgenthau literally gives Nancy the power over the case, that was taken from her by Linda at the beginning of the drama documentary. Morgenthau transfers the power by handing over all the files he has on the case<sup>32</sup>,

<sup>30</sup> Timeframe: 13:43-14:26

<sup>31</sup> New York Police Department

<sup>32</sup> Appendix 6.1

allowing Nancy to pursue the case and be in full control. Once Nancy has the power, she uses it to implement the changes needed in order to undo the wrongs that were done.

Foucault mentions that people are, through the use of power, subjugated or made the subject of someone else through dependence and control (1982:781). This form of power is part of everyday life, by categorizing an individual through their individuality (Ibid). As seen in *When They See Us* the five protagonists are made the subject of someone else, through the domination of the detectives for example because their individuality allows them to do so, they are young and scared and have never been in a situation that like the one they were in before. When looking at the narrative theory (Mittell, 2017:4), the viewer sees that power is constructed through the different aspects, such as natural lighting, where the protagonist is placed when spoken to, as well as, the different character roles. Regardless of what role an individual plays within the system, whether being a police officer, a detective, prison guard, judge or prosecutor, it is important to accentuate that these roles are all part of the justice system and through the misuse of power the corruption of the justice system is emphasized, which will be looked in the next section.

### **THE CORRUPTION OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Through the last two sections on politics and power the basis for this section was created, the themes link together to create a bigger image of the corruption of the justice system and as mentioned by Brooks (2019:21) the criminal justice system is a product of its environment and social development. Therefore, one can genuinely say that the justice system is damaged through its corruption, whether through the misuse of power, authoritarian rolls or by trying to buy the boys' submission through certain transactions. Hereby discussing the role of transactions further as well as looking at how injustice is portrayed and directed at Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin.

The representation of injustice is highlighted through the actions of the prosecutors and other characters towards Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin. From the start to the end of the series, the viewer is presented with the injustice the five boys have had to endure, from police brutality, to fake statements, lies and prison violence. Just by watching the series and telling the story of the five youths, the audience is made aware of the injustice the boys have gone through. Hereby also constructing realism as the realistic narrative helps in constructing truth and creating discourse (Fiske, 2001:25).

The use of different style techniques helps emphasize the injustice that Korey, Yusef, Raymond, Antron and Kevin went through, however the narrative has a bigger influence when it comes to the

image of injustice. The injustice towards the five protagonists is clearly highlighted when Michael, meets Elizabeth and addresses what had happened earlier in court, when the DNA evidence is found inconclusive. Michael states that she's "not playing fair", whereby Elizabeth asks what "fair" means. Michael addresses the linkage between fairness and justice, wherein Elizabeth responds with "It's no longer about the justice councillor. It's about politics"<sup>33</sup>. This statement clearly accentuates a point made by Michael earlier during the court hearing, being that "the police decided to solve this case no matter what"<sup>34</sup>. Both of these quotes clearly highlight the injustice that takes place within this case. These boys never even had a chance because as Linda mentions whatever needs to be done to "help[s] the jury believe what we know is true"<sup>35</sup> should be done. Consequently, everything is done to persuade the jury of the boys' guilt no matter if just or unjust. That being the start of injustice the boys go through, clearly showing the influence power and politics have in corrupting the justice system.

The injustice towards the five boys starts at the beginning of the miniseries, whereby the boys were not read their rights, in addition to the detectives not waiting for a parent to be present during questioning. The injustice continues when the detectives use brutality to get what they want out of the boys, the brutality persists throughout the episodes, affecting Korey more than the others as he is extremely mistreated both by the guards and other inmates in prison. The viewer is shown the injustice that goes on in prison among prisoners, specifically if an inmate is charged with a particular crime such as rape. The viewer is shown that injustice is supported by several prison guards, who turn a blind eye to brutality and beatings, in exchange for bribes or favours, bringing to light a very corrupt system. These scenes in turn highlight the different positions of power that are presented and the misuse of power throughout the drama documentary.

Furthermore, corruption of the justice system is highlighted through the ways that different people in power try to buy the boys' submission. This is portrayed four times throughout the miniseries, guiding the viewer from one episode to the next. There are the different NYPD detectives that offer the boys the chance to go home and be free in exchange for a confession, Elizabeth does this as well by also offering Korey freedom in exchange for a confession. In this first example of submission the boys give in, not knowing any better, highlighting their youth and innocence through the trust they have in authorities as mentioned earlier in the analysis. Then there is the prison guard that Korey deals with, who accepts bribes in return for the safety from other inmates. Highlighting the use of transaction

<sup>33</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 44:06 - 44:48

<sup>34</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 23:16 - 28:08

<sup>35</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe 29:53 - 32:24

through the guard's misuse of power when it comes to his role in the justice system. The viewer is shown that this isn't the only person Korey deals with when it comes to the transaction for something in his favour. The parole board that is presented more than once, offers Korey his freedom in exchange for him admitting to his guilt.

These examples show that one can never be fully free and innocent, these forms of transactions, whether giving someone snacks in exchange for one's safety, or giving a confession in exchange for freedom clearly underline the corruption of the justice system. The portrayal that one is never fully free, and innocent is further highlighted once Antron, Kevin, Yusef and Raymond are released from prison. Shown through the way they are treated in the real world, because even though they are free from confinement they are still captive in the sense that they can never be free from the guilt that was ascribed to them.

The viewer sees that the two themes of politics and power help in understanding the justice system or in this case the "un-just" system by showing how corrupt the system is. Starting at the bottom with the prison guards who accept bribes for favours, moving higher up the hierarchy to the detectives, who run the interrogations, using scare tactics and other methods, that are not made for young boys. Lastly, there is the main prosecutor of the case, who doesn't want to "lose face" by giving up the case even though she knows the boys' are innocent.

All these different individuals no matter how small their role is in the system, portray certain actions, that all add up to create a corrupt justice system. A further example of the system being corrupt is when two detectives that were part of Antron's interrogation are being questioned on the witness stand<sup>36</sup>. These detectives get asked the same questions, but deliver different answers, making them look extremely untrustworthy. Antron's attorney points this out and digs a little deeper by getting one detective to admit that Antron said he was not guilty several times before admitting to the crime. These statements however do not exist because there were no notes or recordings of the interrogation, due to how mistreated the boys were and how inhumane the interrogations were. Hereby the viewer is reminded of how the boys were treated during interrogations, that there was also a misuse of power physically (Foucault, 1982:789) and not just mentally.

When it comes to human rights of certain individuals Evelyn Kallen (2004:8) points out that people in authority are able to violate the human rights of certain groups by treating them worse and with

<sup>36</sup> (Part 2, 2019) Timeframe: 38:22 - 40:29

less respect, hereby depriving them of equal chance of opportunities in life. This treatment links back to the dehumanization of Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin. By labelling them “The Central Park Five” a certain stigma is created, hindering them from leading a normal life after release of prison. The stigma is highlighted mostly in the third episode, that focuses on the life after prison of Kevin, Antron, Yusef and Raymond, who have to be home at certain times of day as well as go to the courthouse for a check every 90 days for the rest of their lives. These restrictions underline the control and power the justice system has over people even though it is corrupt.

Joshua Jackson<sup>37</sup>, during the Oprah Winfrey special on *When They See Us*, points out that the one thing he has learnt about the justice system is that “it’s the wrong name for it” (Oprah Winfrey Presents: *When They See Us Now*, 2019). The term “justice” as previously mentioned, was highlighted once before through a conversation between Michael and Elizabeth, who discuss its meaning, where Elizabeth states “it’s about politics”. By highlighting politics, the viewer is made aware that there is more to the justice system than being found guilty for a crime committed or having been ascribed guilt. DuVernay, when talking about Linda mentions that “she is a part of a system that’s not broken”. DuVernay goes on to discuss the system as being “built to be this way [...] built to oppress [...] to control [...] built to shape our culture in a specific way [...] built for profit [...] built for political gain and power [...] it is incumbent upon us” (Ibid). The statement is extremely important as DuVernay underlines the reality and urgency of the situation, by pointing out that “it is incumbent upon us” (Ibid) highlighting that the issue needs to be addressed promptly and cannot be ignored any longer. The statement addresses the change that needs to happen and the discourse that people need to create as discourse is formed through individuals wanting to make an impact (Fiske, 2001:42).

Kochan et al. mention that corruption is considered to be one of the bigger obstacles in government (2011). Through *When They See Us* the viewer is given the chance to see what this corruption looks like, whether as a form of transaction, also known as rent seeking in the criminal justice system (Kochan et al, 2011:22) or bribery. Whereby rent seeking or transactions is the action of accepting something in return for something else (ibid:22). Showing how power is implemented through the legitimacy of an individual’s role as mentioned by Foucault (1977), as the rent seeker can only be someone in a role of power. Furthermore, through the use of the drama documentary DuVernay is able to open viewer’s eyes, be creating an image of the un-just system. Highlighted by giving a glimpse of insight into a corrupt, broken system, making viewers aware of their ignorance, in the

<sup>37</sup> Plays Michael Joseph, Attorney

hope of implementing change and holding people accountable for their actions. Holding people accountable is part of the drama documentary genre (Paget, 1998) and will be addressed in the following section, looking at role reversals, the acknowledgement of innocence and transferal of guilt.

### **ROLE REVERSAL: THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INNOCENCE AND THE TRANSFERAL OF GUILT**

The acknowledgement of innocence and the transferal of guilt as mentioned at the start of this analysis is highlighted through several different scenes, actions and themes in *When They See Us*. The themes of innocence and guilt are especially important in this regard. However, power, politics and the corruption of the justice system thread into the theme of guilt. In turn creating a bigger build up for the transferal of guilt from one set of characters to another. Whereby the transferral of guilt is one of the dramadoc genres main aims as it can lead to extreme consequences for some (Paget, 1998:1).

In episode four when Matias Reyes, in 2001, confesses to the attack on Trisha Meili whilst serving life in prison, the acknowledgement of innocence and the transferal of guilt is emphasized. Morgenthau re-opens the case and as mentioned hands it over to Nancy who goes over the case in detail. Two important scenes highlighting the transferal of guilt are when Nancy goes to speak to Sheehan, one of the lead detectives on the case, and Linda, hereby making them accountable for their mistakes. These two scenes will be discussed in more detail further on, as it is important to highlight the acknowledgement of innocence first, before the transferal of guilt can occur.

The full acknowledgement of innocence of Korey, Yusef, Antron, Kevin and Raymond begins when Korey gets a call from his mother telling him that he has been exonerated. Following this conversation, the dramadoc focuses on the other protagonists and their reactions to finding out that they have been found innocent, whilst the activist and long-time-supporter of the five boys, Nomsa Brath holds a speech. The scene is made up of real-time shots in combination with voice-overs from the speech. Whereby the voice-overs are used when showing the lead up to the reaction of each protagonist including the reactions themselves, highlighting that the boys always had someone standing up for them and backing them up. In Nomsa Brath's speech the boys' innocence is acknowledged and the guilty parties named, blaming the police, the prosecutors and the press for not doing their job right. She declares that "not only would five young lives not have been destroyed, but many women would not have been subjected to the violence of the actual rapist!"<sup>38</sup>. Through this statement Nomsa Brath not only places the guilt on the police, the prosecutors and the press but

<sup>38</sup>(Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 01:05:34 - 01:08:17



underlines the guilt they should feel because they not only ruined the lives of the five boys but also ruined the lives of all the other women who became victims of Matias after the boys' arrest.

The guilt of these characters is further underlined when Nomsa Brath states that “while the police [...] prosecutors and puppets like Donald Trump patted themselves on their fat backs [...] we didn't give up on these men”. Directly addressing Donald Trump, makes the viewer aware of how current the issue is and that the corrupt system is still in place. By mentioning these roles of power patting themselves on their “fat backs”, shows that they think they did a good job. The use of fat backs can hereby signify wealth and without worries, that this case was just another problem that needed to be solved without much trouble. The statement also highlights the role Donald Trump played during the prosecution of Korey, Antron, Kevin, Raymond and Yusef, by advocating for the death penalty. Nomsa Brath goes on to list everyone who kept fighting for the boys, making everyone who worked this case seem even more guilty, as it was only people in power who were for the prosecution of the five protagonists, compared to all the local support the boys received for their innocence.

Through Nomsa Brath's speech the viewer is shown that the public has been made aware of the boys' innocence. Furthermore, by attending a welcoming event for Korey, Yusef, Raymond, Antron and Kevin, the public fully acknowledges the boys' innocence. Before the boys' innocence is acknowledged, Linda and Sheehan are made aware of their mistakes by Nancy, who sits down with them and describes the case to them in detail, going over facts and their mistakes, underlining their guilt in framing the five protagonists for something they did not do.

Nancy meets Sheehan with her partner in a small, dark, depressing bar; Nancy and Sheehan are sitting in a booth drinking beer. The bar seems to mirror Sheehan's character to the viewer as a depressed ex detective, this is constructed through style creating meaning in relation to characters (Butler, 2018:425). When addressing the case, Nancy points out the corrupt justice system, that is underlined by her partner. Sheehan however doesn't oblige into admitting his guilt and his mistakes, instead he creates excuses for the confession of Matias stating that “prison gets really boring”<sup>39</sup> reflecting back on a fight Korey and Matias had several years earlier indicating that “they were fighting over this [...] Reyes is talking now because he wants a better cell assignment”<sup>40</sup>. During the conversation Sheehan becomes very defensive and angry, which shows that he's been backed into a corner and perhaps realises he was wrong, however is too stubborn to admit it. This is shown through Sheehan's

<sup>39</sup> (Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 01:05:34 - 01:08:17

<sup>40</sup> (Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 01:05:34 - 01:08:17

various facial expressions<sup>41</sup>, that are enhanced through the use of natural light and a single light in the booth they are sitting in. The dim lighting allows for full focus of facial expressions, that shows every reaction Sheehan has towards things that are being said to him. Lastly right before Sheehan walks away, he stands in front of the American flag stating that “justice was fucking served”<sup>42</sup>, not only is this remark extremely patriotic because of where Sheehan was placed when saying it, but it shows that Sheehan stands by what he has said and done.

Through Sheehan’s stubbornness, and his not owning up to being wrong, his image as well as the image of all the other detectives, who were part of this investigation contributes to the image of a corrupt system. Leigh Tost suggests that power permits the manipulation of some (Cote et al., 2011; Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008; Fleming & Spicer, 2014, in 2015:30). This concept means that through the misuse of his power as a detective, Sheehan has managed to convince himself that his actions were correct. Sheehan’s reaction could also be a coping mechanism where he wants to think he did the right thing but in reality, knows that he hasn’t. In the eyes of the viewer though Sheehan has always been the “bad guy” since the series portrays what the five protagonists went through. In the real world however the detectives’ image goes from having done a great job interrogating the alleged perpetrators to being a bad person for having treated five innocent boys in such a dehumanising way.

When Nancy meets Linda, she too gets defensive by stating right away that Nancy has “simply identified a sixth rapist”<sup>43</sup> and nothing she says or does can change what has been done. Nancy underlines that the boys were coerced, backing up her evidence with DNA along with the original confession tapes. By stating that all DNA found at the scene links to Matias, the transferal of guilt from the boys to the actual perpetrator is highlighted. Throughout the conversation, Linda never loses face, highlighting just as Sheehan did that, they “got justice”<sup>44</sup>. Linda’s persistence in being right can also be seen as a form of self-persuasion where Linda keeps telling herself that she is right and everyone else is wrong. Furthermore, Nancy mentions that she thinks Linda has convinced herself of her opinion, moreover, emphasising the power of manipulation, when it comes to one’s own mind. The conversation ends with Linda leaving the table, conveying the image of losing even though she leaves with her head held high. As discussed by Dyerberg power can be seen as a concept that “combines intentions and consequences” (1997:1), whereby this scene highlights how Linda loses her role of power as a consequence to her past intentions,

<sup>41</sup> Appendix 7.1

<sup>42</sup> Appendix 7.2

<sup>43</sup> (Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 01:09:48 - 01:12:41

<sup>44</sup> (Part 4, 2019) Timeframe 01:09:48 - 01:12:41

Just as with Sheehan, Linda portrays stubbornness, by becoming defensive and not owning up to her mistakes she is in denial. The conversation highlights the innocence of the boys as well as the injustice that was carried out, emphasizing that by failing to accept the truth, Linda is made to look even more guilty than she already is just because she doesn't want to be wrong. By discussing the confession tapes, and by Linda informing Nancy of another police report coming out concerning the case, the viewer is made aware of how corrupt the justice system was and still is. This scene clearly highlights Linda's guilt, especially since she is given the chance to own up to her mistakes but doesn't. In the *mise-en-scène*, the characters are placed at a big window<sup>45</sup> with natural light coming in, herewith signifying the truth coming out into the open and clearing up the mess. Nancy and Linda's body posture<sup>46</sup> portrays the importance of the matter; Nancy is leaning forwards, trying to approach Linda, who is seen slouching back in her chair. Their posture shows that Linda isn't interested in what Nancy has to say, even though Nancy is giving Linda a chance to own up to her wrongdoings.

Through the use of the drama documentary genre and the impact this genre has on the viewers, *When They See Us* has a happy ending not only in the miniseries, which highlights that the boys have gotten justice, but also in real-life where the narrative of the series has affected the real-life outcome, causing some of the people who dealt with the case to be held accountable for their actions. Linda, for example, who had gone from being a prosecutor to an author has been dropped by her publisher and has stepped down from various board positions (Oprah Winfrey Presents: *When They See Us Now*, 2019), thereby being held somewhat accountable for her actions. Nevertheless, DuVernay states that the series is "not about her" (Ibid), it is about the bigger picture of a corrupt system, that needs to be changed. In the Oprah special, Kevin states that "30 years later, not too many things have changed" (Ibid), however one thing did change which DuVernay mentions as a concluding remark is that "You won. We believe you and We See You" (Ibid), the "you" referring to the Korey, Antron, Kevin, Raymond and Yusef. DuVernay hopes that the five men can go on and live their lives' now that their story has been told. This remark clearly emphasises the happy ending, that shows that the roles of good and bad are fully reversed. The five men are now seen as completely innocent, as they have been given a voice and have been heard, the stigma of The Central Park Five label has crumbled and they are now known for the people they truly are.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix 7.3

<sup>46</sup> Appendix 7.4

## 5. NOW WE SEE YOU

This thesis aimed at looking at the mediatisation of events in *When They See Us*. By analysing how the events in *When They See Us* are dramatized in addition to how the drama documentary genre is used in reflecting authenticity as well as investigating the interplay between story world narrative and the prosecutors portrayed by this narrative.

The analysis is based on the miniseries *When They See Us* in addition to the Oprah Winfrey's talk show *Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us Now*. Oprah Winfrey hosted the special, after the release of the miniseries, hereby inviting not only the cast but also the real-life people *When They See Us* is based on. During the Oprah show the outcome of the miniseries is brought up with both the real-life people and the cast as well as discussing the perception of the miniseries, how true to life *When They See Us* really is. When talking to the cast of *When They See Us* Oprah focuses on what went into the pre-production and what it was like for them to portray the role they played. Interviewing the original five men allows for the confirmation of the miniseries sense of authenticity in addition to the confirmation of it being a truth teller. By hearing Korey Wise's, Yusef Salaam's, Antron McCray's, Raymond Santana's and Kevin Richardson's side of the story the Oprah show helps mediate the real-life events with the series, again backing up what the viewer is shown through the confirmation of the five original protagonists of the story.

### THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE DRAMA DOCUMENTARY GENRE

The sense of authenticity and truthfulness are not only confirmed through the Oprah Winfrey show, that backs up the information portrayed in the miniseries but are also constructed through the drama documentary genre. What is shown in the miniseries is meant to impact real-life events, therefore, a sense of authenticity and truthfulness is needed. Through the combined use of the documentary genre, that helps provoke discourse, (Paget, 1998:3) by concentrating on a chain of events based on past happenings and the drama genre, that focuses on the relationship among characters. The viewer not only gains insight into certain information that may not have been available to the public before but is able to identify with certain characters by being drawn into the frame (Ibid:16). The use of original documentary footage plays a crucial role in portraying the sense of authenticity in the drama documentary genre. Original documentary footage is used several times throughout *When They See Us* as it helps convey the message of how current the issues portrayed in the miniseries are. Through the use of news footage underlining Donald Trump wanting to reinstate the death penalty because of the five boys, the viewer is made aware of what type of person is currently in office.

Throughout the four episodes, *When They See Us* reaffirms its sense of authenticity as the research that went into the pre-production of the miniseries plays an important role in helping portray everything as realistically as possible. Hereby also confirming the miniseries sense of realism. The sense of authenticity and truthfulness of the miniseries is confirmed through Oprah Winfrey show, where Oprah asks the actors depicting Korey, Antron, Kevin, Raymond and Yusef in *When They See Us* what had helped them in becoming the person they portrayed on screen. Asante Blackk who plays Kevin as a child discusses how the best way to prepare was getting to talk to Kevin himself. Therefore, one can say that the sense of authenticity is a characteristic of the drama documentary genre in addition to truthfulness, that support one another through certain elements. These elements include: the use of original documentary material, pre-production research as well as realism.

## **THE DRAMATIZATION OF EVENTS**

*When They See Us* is a drama documentary, whereby as mentioned the drama part of the dramadoc genre focuses on the relationships among characters, therefore when looking at the dramatization of events the relationships that are affected need to be taken into consideration. There are several ways that the dramatization of events is highlighted throughout the miniseries, whether being through different narrative and style techniques or by implementing original documentary footage. The implementation of documentary footage concerning Trump wanting to reinstate the death penalty has an impact on several scenes in the miniseries. The footage causes emotional outrage when it comes to Yusef's and Korey's mothers, which in turn creates drama within the miniseries as well as helping the viewer identify with what the characters are going through.

Furthermore, the boys' courtroom scenes are dramatized through different style techniques, through the use of natural lighting, as well as a combination of medium and close-up shots, that emphasize the focus on the person talking or the person being talked about. The dramatization builds up throughout the scenes as the viewer hears different sides to the case, whilst the narrative goes back and forth between the boys' lawyers and the prosecutor. The build-up of this is constructed through both the audience and the boys' parent(s) as well as the audible reactions, whereby the camera shows these when needed in order to construct support towards the main protagonists as well as disappointment towards the prosecutor. The courtroom scenes conclude with the boys' guilty verdict whereby the viewer is shown the emotional outbreaks of the parent(s) present as well as the shock in the boys' faces. Korey's outbreak is especially emotional and dramatized. Korey's disbelief is shown to the viewer through a flashback he has in prison, revealing an outburst of emotions as he runs

towards Elizabeth whilst calling her a liar. The emotional outburst adds to the dramatization of the event in addition to portraying the emotional hate Korey feels towards Elizabeth.

Nevertheless, these are just two of many examples that highlight how the mediatisation events are dramatized in *When They See Us*. Whereby the mediatisation of events in general should be highlighted as the theory itself aims at impacting individuals. The dramatization of these mediatised events helps in communicating the urgency of the issues being presented in the hope of impacting individuals' everyday life and implementing change. This in turn is highlighted through different narrative and style techniques of the drama documentary genre.

## **THE IMPACTS OF NARRATIVE**

Additionally, throughout the miniseries the viewer is introduced to the different characters of the story, some play a more vital role than others such as, the five protagonists in addition to the prosecutors and detectives put in charge of the case. During the four episodes the viewer is presented with the implementation of role reversals. By allowing the five protagonists to tell their side of the story, the viewer is given a chance to see their innocence and how the guilt has been ascribed to them, along with showing how the prosecutors are actually guilty for what they have done. In *When They See Us* the protagonists' ultimately stay innocent as the viewer's see what the five boys actually went through, compared to the in real-life where the protagonists' image went from being villains to the innocent victims of a corrupt system. The prosecutors and detectives in the miniseries on the other hand are portrayed as the villains they truly are, compared to in real-life where their image goes from being heroes, trying to and managing to solve this rape case to actual villains, as the drama documentary makes the viewers aware of what happened, holding the prosecutors accountable for their actions.

Therefore, one can say that throughout *When They See Us* the interplay between the story world narrative and the portrayal of the prosecutors through this narrative has helped construct the role reversals of the characters mentioned. The prosecutors, through the story world narrative for, are portrayed as the villains of the story, that in turn impacts the real-life portrayal where they are transformed from heroes to villains. Through this the power of the drama documentary genre is fully accentuated. The genre is able to implement change and impact people's lives, whether through holding people accountable for their actions or changing the ending of a story, from a sad to a happy ending. These five men are able to tell their side of the story and are, through this miniseries, introduced to the world for who they really are; innocent and wrongly convicted, the exonerated five; Korey, Yusef, Antron, Kevin and Raymond.

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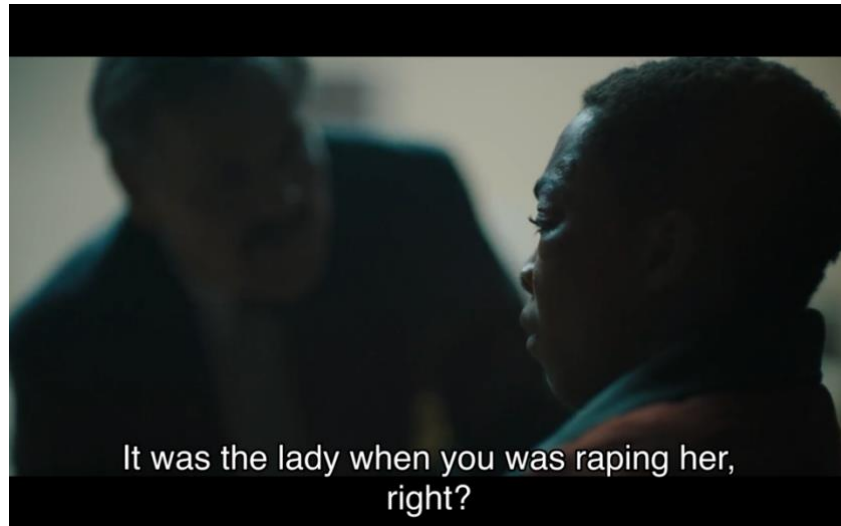
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# APPENDIX

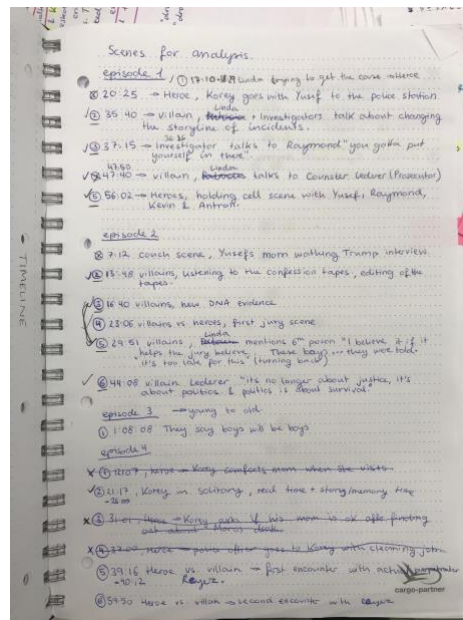
## APPENDIX 1 METHOD

### APPENDIX 1.1 – CONSTRUCTING THE DEEPER MEANING



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 28:46 – 28:59 – Power*

### APPENDIX 1.2 - STEP 1, CHOOSING SCENES





APPENDIX 1.4 - STEP 3, EXAMPLES OF EXCEL SHEETS

Shot #	Text/Sound	Speaker	Textual Analysis	Visual	Visual Analysis	Semiotics	Time Frame	Themes	Characters in Scene
Ep.2 #4	During this trial, you will learn that the three defendants, Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray & Raymond Santana were among a group of 30 young men who went into Central Park to rob, beat and attack innocent New Yorkers.	Elizabeth	highlights the guilt of the boys through the use of the verbs "rob, beat and attack" -> emphasize the actions. Emphasizes guilt through the use of "Innocent New Yorkers"		Very focused on the faces of defendants -> highlights the innocence. Especially when told what they are guilty of -> close up shots	American flag -> justice	23:16 - 28:08	Politics	Elizabeth Lederer - very confident. Follows everything she was told, has been discussing with Linda
	I want to highlight what Ms. Lederer did not say this morning. None of the victims including Ms. Mile has identified my client as a perpetrator in these crimes	Michael	Blatantly states that his client (Antron) is innocent because of the proof that no one identified him		Close up shots of jury + family sitting in audience to see the reaction of the opening statements -> trying to see how they think, what side they are on			Innocence	Michael Joseph (defendants lawyer) - Clearly has a lot of experience in this field. Is a confident speaker with clear goals.
	These defendants are charged with the rape, sodomy, attempted murder, assault and sexual abuse of Patricia Mile. You will see video statements from Antron McCray and Raymond Santana where they describe in detail how they participated in the rape and attempted murder of Ms. Mile	Elizabeth	Highlighting guilt by listing the charges/ the things Ms. Mile went through. "video statements" -> political since they are cohesed. "describe in detail ... participated in ..." again highlighting the guilt of the defendants		Elizabeth - Emphasizes words and meanings with certain arm movements = making the scenes more realistic and believable for the jury			Injustice	Peter Rivera (defendants lawyer) - Doesn't seem to care. Offers a short statement with no real affect towards the jury or audience.
	The police decided to solve this case no matter what it meant to the life of a scared 14 year old child	Michael	Highlighting politics because the case was going to be solved no matter what. Innocence is highlighted through the use of "scared 14 year old child" - "child" makes the jury/audience aware that Antron is only a child.		Michael - stays very focused on the jury, emphasis the tapes by pointing at them, points at whatever he references so the jury knows exactly what he is talking about			Guilt	Bobby Burns (defendants lawyer) - starts out with a lack of confidence, but this changes once he starts talking.
	Carefully collected evidence in a thorough investigation by the NYPD will be presented to you that will prove the guilt of this group beyond a reasonable doubt	Elizabeth	Referencing NYPD + evidence shows the power the case has, the importance of it. Guilt - will be proven beyond reasonable doubt		Close up shots of Michael and Burns when Rivera talks, because they can't believe his speech. Raymond as well looks back at his dad and can't believe the speech.			Power	
	During this NYPD investigation that Ms. Lederer has described today where they scoured central park for bodily fluids, blood, for marks, for fingerprints on it and they did not find one thing. The only just verdict in this case is the verdict of not guilty on all accounts	Michael	Innocence is proven by highlighting that nothing, no DNA or proof was found that can be connected to the defendant. By stating what the verdict should be is the use of power. Telling the jury what to do.		Burns speech -> discusses race = focuses on black jury members, black and white audience members, showing people of different color and age that are listening him.				
	Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen. The evidence in chief against Raymond Santana is a statement he made. And I submit to you that that statement was cohesed. And after you hear it I'm sure you'll see that the people have failed to prove their case against my client Mr. Santana. Thank you	Rivera	guilty because of statements defendant made. Political/Power because of the mentioning of cohesed statements. Injustice is highlighted through the failure of the people against Raymond		Again the foreground of most images is blurred when close up shots are not used. Focus is on the center of the images.				
	Thank you, your honor. Uh, ladies and gentlemen (breathes) the evidence, it uh, the evidence is going to show that until the body of the female jogger was discovered the crimes which had been committed and reported to the police that night, they weren't treated with the same degree of seriousness of intensity as the		Power of judge is highlighted through the use of "your honor". Mentions that the seriousness of the case wasn't always the same = political as it only became serious when it was discovered that the victim was a white female jogger.						

Shot #	Text/Sound	Speaker	Textual Analysis	Visual	Visual Analysis	Semiotics	Time Frame	Themes	Characters in Scene
Ep.2 #5	Elizabeth	Michael			Lots of close up shots, very personal. Atmosphere seems to be quite cold. Seems that they are alone in a big empty library. Background in close up shots are blurred -> helps with focus on person talking		44:06 - 44:48	Politics	Michael (defense attorney) - Annoyed with Elizabeth, thought she's better than that. Gets angry when Elizabeth says it's all about politics now. Seems unimpressed when Elizabeth mentions a plea deal
	Michael	Elizabeth			In the first shot with Elizabeth standing at the railing, railing can symbolize that she's being pushed up against the wall. No way out. That's what the railing is - a way out for her.			Injustice	Elizabeth - Looks exhausted, knows she's wrong but can't back out now because of the way it would look. Reputation = important. Keeps a steady voice throughout the conversation. Looks like she's begging him when she mentions the deal -> as if it would clear her conscience
	Did you call me here to apologize?	Michael	Highlights the injustice taking place during the trial					Innocence	
	Apologize for what?	Elizabeth							
	(breathes out) you saying that the DNA evidence was inconclusive, that's not playing fair	Michael							
	Fair? What's that word mean anyway?	Elizabeth							
	I don't know... something to do with justice I think	Michael							
	It's no longer about the justice councillor. It's about politics. And politics is about survival	Elizabeth	Highlights that it's about politics and nothing else. = Survival.						
	Survival at what cost? Those boys don't deserve to pay the price	Michael	Injustice = Pay the price, Innocence = use of the term "boys"						
	(interrupts at those boys) I'm not interested in having a philosophical discussion	Elizabeth							
	(interrupts at philosophical) Then what are you interested in?	Michael							
	I am here to talk about a deal	Elizabeth	Politics = talking deals, know's she's wrong any wants to make it go away						



APPENDIX 1.5 - OPRAH WINFREY PRESENTS: WHEN THEY SEE US NOW, ANALYSIS

**TALKSHOW TEXT:**

**OW:** So, lets get started & let's welcome everybody out. She plays Deborah Wisa, mother of Corey Wise Niece Richardson Justin Cunningham, Jovan Adepo plays Antron McCray as an adult, welcome Jovan. Following the adult of Yusef Salaam, Chris Chalk, he plays the adult Raymond Santana Jr. Freddy Mryers, Jonathan King is executive producer on this project! Jonathan! Another one of the executive producers, Barry Welsch. He plays Corey Wise as a young man, adult, Tharrel Jerome, in the role of Kevin Richardson as a young man, welcome Asante Blackk, playing the young Antron McCray, Catal Harris. Ethan Herisse plays Yusef Salaam as a young man. In the role of Bobby McCray, Antron McCray's father, Michael Williams Mikeky Joseph, ~~the~~ the defense attorney for Antron McCray is played by Joshua Jackson. One of the executive producers of When They See Us, Jane Rosenthal. And finally, the creator, the executive producer, the writer, the director, the visionary who shared every step of this film with the exonerated five, ~~the~~ welcome Ava DuVernay!

**ADV:** Hello

**OW:** Hello you. This is a moment we're having.

**ADV:** Yeah, it's a beautiful moment.

**OW:** It's a beautiful moment that we're having right here. This film is so much more than a film. It's touched the zeitgeist in a way that few things can, especially in the world that is so overcrowded, as we know one of the things that moved me is I was on Twitter I saw this from actor LeVar Burton. Those of you who are old enough to know, you know LeVar Burton, famously played Kunta Kinte children... in Roots. & he tweeted this on June 2nd about the series. He said, "I had to keep breathing. Episode 4 nearly broke my heart, however I'll keep watching. This is essential viewing for every American! As essential to your understanding of America as was Roots! Brava, Ava. Brava." That moved me, because essential viewing, was that the intention?

**ADV:** Yes. That was the intention. Hello, everyone. We're on a real Oprah Winfrey show. OMG. I can't even believe it. I'm just gonna keep on going.

**OW:** Just keep going.

**ADV:** Um, but yes, the goal was to create something that stuck to your ribs and that wasn't just food, to create something that was gonna be a catalyst for conversation. Entertainment serves all kinds of different purposes. But to be able to create something with my collaborators that is actually gonna move people to action, more people to evaluate what they think & how they behave in the world, was our goal... to hear something like that from Mr. Burton, Roots being such a seminal series, something that really shifted the culture, was one of the best reviews we could get.

**OW:** I remember... when there was some talk amongst producers about whether or not we should keep that name or not keep that name. & you insisted that the name be changed. Why?

**ADV:** "Central park five" felt like something that had been put upon the real men by the press, by the prosecutors, by the police. It took away their faces. It took away their families. It took away their pulses & beating hearts. It dehumanized them. They're Yusef, Antron, Kevin, Raymond & Corey. Those are their names, we need to know them I say their names. & so it became really important to think about that at every level...

**OW:** There is still that: "Is anybody gonna watch?" & then you wake up & it's trending, it's just trending! What did you think?

**ADV:** I was stunned that whole day... because with Netflix it drops in 190 countries at the same time. So, I'm getting tweets from the Netherlands, Brazil, Compton... it's all over the place... everything was overloaded with the response & I thought I hoped that the piece would be respected. I really wanted the men's stories to be told, & I wanted them to be heard... I didn't understand that it had the possibility to kind of shift the cultural conversation in the way that it's doing it now.

**OW:** I thought it was one of the best, most powerful uses of social media I've seen recently - you were surprised by the public. Have you been surprised by Linda Faurstein's response?

**OW:** I want to start by asking each of you about the boy you were on April 18th, 1989. What were your hopes, your dreams?

**YS:** God said "Be" and "it is" for me my whole life changed.

**KR:** I remember April 18th being excited to be out of school.

**AM:** I just was enjoying my life, you know.

**CS:** I loved listening to hip hop music, I loved shopping at the gap.

**KW:** Just being Corey, that's all.

**OW:** What went through your mind when you heard the word guilty?

**RS:** Life was over.

**AM:** I felt numb. I was the first one to rise... I started hating everything in the world.

**KR:** I thought I was going to die in jail because the whole world hated us.

**YS:** We hugged each other & cried. It was such a painful cry. We didn't get a chance to prepare. It was a difficult thing to now imagine this new normal. I'm going to have to fight, to protect myself. The only crime that trumps rape is child molestation.

**OW:** We saw some of what Corey went through but Ava you said you couldn't show all of it?

**ADV:** No, what all of the men went through was the loss of their innocence in the moment that they are brought into the precinct that day. When I first sat with Corey he said "Ava you can tell my story, but you need to know, right now, I feel that it's four plus one. Because at least they were together, and I was alone. I had a different experience." One of the things in collaborating with all men, was trying to tell their experience. They're become a brotherhood, they're become The Five. But all agreed -- we needed to make sure that Raymond approached us he said "Corey's story is different, make sure -- you tell his story, his story needs to be heard, for him, for us, for all of us."

**OW:** The thing that's echoed... is the fact that you just were going to go down to support your friend. Were there many times you regretted you went to support your friend?

**KW:** I do.

**OW:** Do you blame Linda Faurstein for what happened to you?

**RS:** Yeah!

**KW:** She was just doing her job but it caught up to her. Behind closed doors she was just doing her job.

**CS:** When the DNA comes back & nothing matches, that's her chance to re-evaluate & say something's wrong here cause it doesn't match. She had the power to do the right thing & she fumbled it & kept pushing forward.

**KR:** She was one of many, she was the culprit because people were going by what she said. There's still many more that need to be exposed.

**OW:** Did you know that Corey had it as bad as he did before you saw the film?

**AM:** No.

**OW:** I told the gentlemen as we watched this. I said "wow, this is almost like a play of words on us as well. Because not only with the world get an opportunity to see us for the first time, but we got an opportunity to see each other. We never spoke about or discussed how our experiences were, we had made assumptions that we had gone through the same exact things. It was important for us to be able to really see the trauma of 30 years. These individual stories... amazing piece of puzzle. The magic Corey has, wasn't even a suspect & goes down & he becomes the alcoholic thing that freed us. That's my guy, he had my back. He was my ace in the hole & I will forever hold this back."

**OW:** Did you ever ~~reconcile~~ have reconciliation with your father?

**AM:** Did you ever forgive him?

**AM:** No, ma'am. Like I said before, he's a coward. I hate him.

**OW:** It feels like this movie has brought a sense of not just recognition to you exonerated five, but it feels like something is happening in the whole country. That this act has now elevated the conversation. Do the point that we sit tonight are willing to look at the injustices & you here as part of that. Does it feel like some kind of redemption?

**AM:** Not for me Avon, but I appreciate it.

**OW:** What do you want to say about this cycle of injustice & racism?

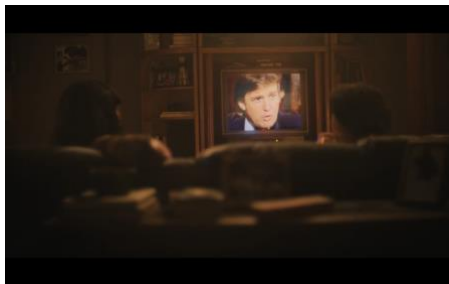
**KR:** Here we are, 30 years later, not too many things have changed. I'm so happy that we can start the conversation now. To make sure that there will never be another central park five. & make sure we have the platform to make sure of that.

## APPENDIX 2 AUTHENTICITY

### APPENDIX 2.1 - IMAGES OF ACTUAL DOCUMENTARY USE



*When They See Us Episode 2 Timeframe: 02:55 - 3:12 - Trump Advertisement Announcement*



*When They See Us Episode 2 Timeframe: 07:14 - 08:00 - Trump Interview on Television*



## APPENDIX 3 INNOCENCE

### APPENDIX 3.1 – RAYMOND



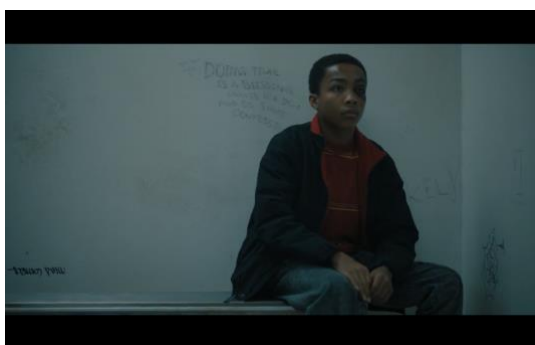
*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 36:26 - 37:37 - Raymond Questioning Scene*

### APPENDIX 3.2 – GROUP HOLDING CELL, BOYS APART



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 55:59 - 59:19 - Juvie Holding Cell*

### APPENDIX 3.3 – KEVIN



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 55:59 - 59:19 - Juvie Holding Cell*

APPENDIX 3.4 – ANTRON, FACE CLOSE UP



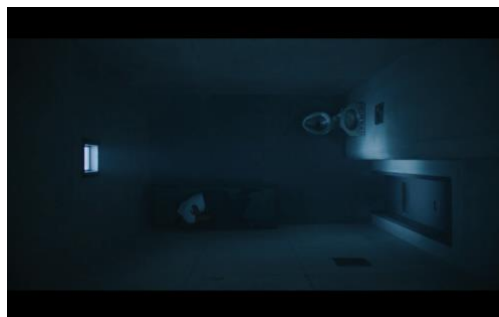
*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 55:59 - 59:19 - Juvie Holding Cell*

APPENDIX 3.5 – GROUP HOLDING CELL, BOYS TOGETHER



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 55:59 - 59:19 - Juvie Holding Cell*

APPENDIX 3.6 – KOREY IN SOLITARY, FOETUS POSITION



*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 21:17 - 26:09 - Korey in Solitary*

## APPENDIX 4 THE PORTRAYAL OF GUILT

### APPENDIX 4.1 - LINDA

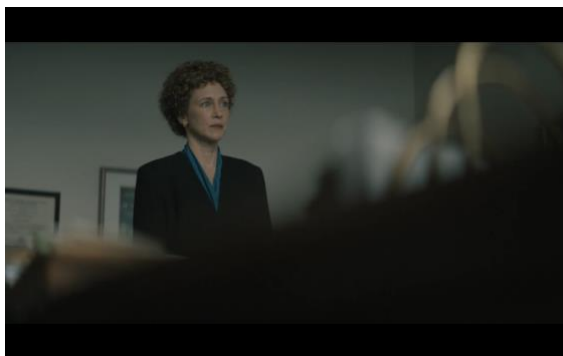


*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 17:10 - 18:29 - Linda + Nancy on call to Morgenthau*



*When They See Us Episode 2 Timeframe: 29:53 - 32:24 - Elizabeth & Linda discussing DNA/ Lack thereof*

### APPENDIX 4.2 - ELIZABETH



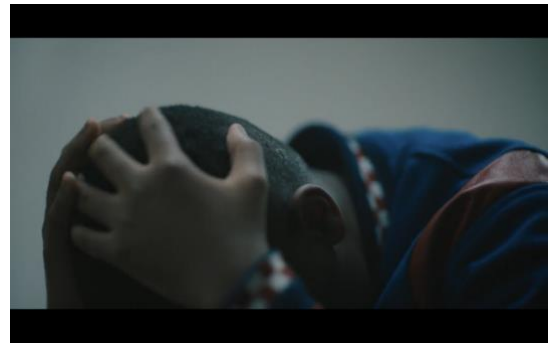
*When They See Us Episode 2 Timeframe: 29:53 - 32:24 - Elizabeth & Linda discussing DNA/ Lack thereof*

APPENDIX 4.3 – KOREY



*When They See Us Episode 2 Timeframe: 59:12 - 1:01:26 - Korey in Court*

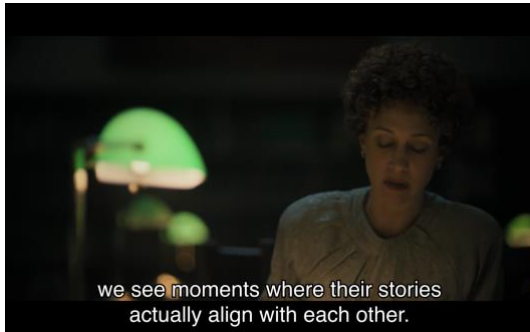
APPENDIX 4.4 ANTRON, RAYMOND & KEVIN



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 55:59 - 59:19 - Juvie Holding Cell, FLTR  
(Kevin, Antron Raymond)*

## APPENDIX 5 THE RENDITION OF POLITICS

### APPENDIX 5.1- ELIZABETH



*When They See Us Episode 1 Timeframe: 47:50 - 49:31- Elizabeth meets Linda*

## APPENDIX 6 THE CONSTRUCTION OF POWER

### APPENDIX 6.1 – POWER HANDOVER



*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 01:01:50 - 01:02:56 - Case Handover from Morgenthau/Linda to Nancy Ryan*

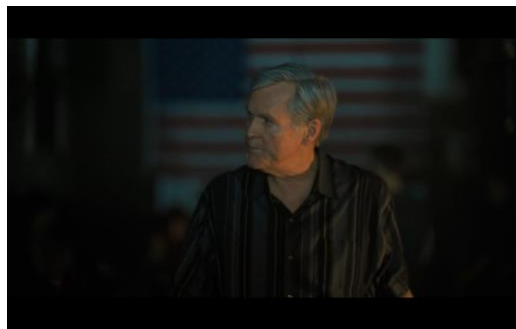
## APPENDIX 7 ROLE REVERSAL: THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INNOCENCE AND THE TRANSFERAL OF GUILT

### APPENDIX 7.1 – SHEEHAN FACIAL EXPRESSIONS; GUILT & ANGER



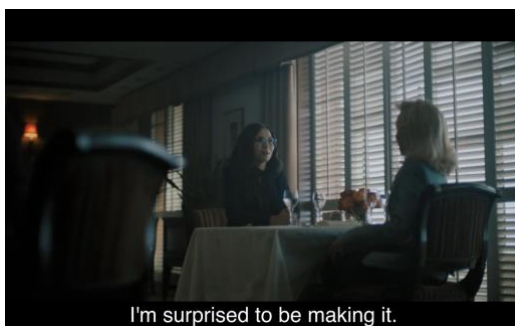
*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 01:05:34 - 01:08:17- Nancy + Sidekick meet Sheehan*

### APPENDIX 7.2 - PATRIOTIC AMERICAN FLAG



*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 01:05:34 - 01:08:17- Nancy + Sidekick meet Sheehan*

### APPENDIX 7.3 – NANCY & LINDA AT THE WINDOW



*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 01:09:48 - 01:12:41- Nancy meets Linda*

## APPENDIX 7.4 – NANCY & LINDA BODY POSTURE



*When They See Us Episode 4 Timeframe: 01:09:48 - 01:12:41- Nancy meets Linda*

## APPENDIX 8 CHARACTER LIST

Kevin Richardson - Exonerated Five  
Antron McCray - Exonerated Five  
Yusef Salaam - Exonerated Five  
Raymond Santana - Exonerated Five  
Korey Wise - Exonerated Five

Linda Fairstein - Prosecutor  
Elizabeth Lederer - Prosecutor

Robert Morgenthau - District Attorney for New York  
Nancy Ryan - Assistant District Attorney

Mathias Reyes - Perpetrator  
Trisha/Patricia Meili - Victim

Michael Joseph - Antron's Attorney  
Robert Burns - Yusef's Attorney  
Peter Rivera - Raymond's Attorney  
Colin Moore - Korey's Attorney  
Howard Diller - Kevin's Attorney

Helene Nomsa Brath - Family friend, supporter, activity



# APPENDIX 9 TIMELINE OF EVENTS, STORY WORLD NARRATIVE & REAL-LIFE EVENTS

