

Documentary records in the face of dramaturgical rules.  
Narration in a documentary film using editing means  
typical of a fictional film

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ABSTRACT

The subject matter of this doctoral dissertation is a feature documentary film, **SOMETHING BETTER TO COME**, directed by Hanna Polak, which was edited by the author of the dissertation. It tells the story of homeless people living on a garbage dump 25 kilometres from the Kremlin. It recounts the stories of people who have nothing, who are disconnected from society and even civilisation, who often suffer from addiction and disease, who are on the brink of death, struggling to survive, with the only thing they have left being the remnants of their dignity. The protagonist of this almost ethnographic story is Jula, a girl who is 10 years old on the day the filming begins and whose story we follow for the next 14 years. The film was a major success. It won more than twenty festivals and was screened at dozens of others. It was also a box office success and had a large number of views on streaming platforms.



The theoretical part of the dissertation presents an analysis of the process and method of documentary film editing with a particular focus on dramaturgical constructions and narrative structure. The author provides examples how dramaturgical and narrative solutions conventionally used in fictional films are applied to stories based on a documentary record of reality. What is taken into account in the analysis is the historical background of documentary filmmaking, as seen through the author's own creative experience. The paper draws attention to the need to adapt the storytelling modality to the market demands imposed primarily by streaming broadcasters. The analysis from the perspective of the film editor also covers the shooting stage and production conditions, the personal approach to the subject and protagonists, as well as the collaboration process with the author. The detailed examples of editing solutions used in the documentary in question are compared with the dramaturgical rules formulated by Aristotle.

#### **SOMETHING BETTER TO COME**

**direction, screenplay and cinematography: Hanna Polak**

**editing: Marcin Kot Bastkowski, Hanna Polak**

**producers: Sigrid Dyekjar, Hanna Polak, Izabela Łopuch**

**production: Danish Documentary Production, Hanna Polak Films**

**co-production: HBO Europe**

**duration: 94 minutes**

**Denmark, Poland 2015**