

The Documentary Killers

Copyright 2007 by
Phil Clarke Jr.
(917) 754-7535
dogglebe@yahoo.com

FADE IN ON:

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The dynamic logo for the television show *HARD FACTS* flashes on the screen, accompanied by a few bars of DRAMATIC MUSIC.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Tonight on Hard Facts--

EXT. GLITZY CLUB -NIGHT

Grainy stock footage of Paris Hilton exiting a club. Dozens of paparazzi rush to get her picture. Cameras FLASH.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Wedding bells for Paris? Is the
Hilton heiress planning a trip down
the aisle?

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The show's logo appears, and the music repeats itself.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM

GEORGE BUSH stands behind a podium, talking (MOS).

SILVERS (V.O.)
Is the War in Iraq purposely being
prolonged? And if so, what is
George Bush's secret agenda?

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The logo appears, and the music repeats itself.

JOEL SILVERS (30) sits, next to the screen. He's dashing, in an expensive suit. He looks directly at the camera, smiling.

SILVERS
Good evening. I'm Joel Silvers.
And this is Hard Copy.

He casually gets off his stool and slowly side steps across the stage. The camera pans, following him.

SILVERS

Can the princess of paparazzi
settle down? Are our brothers and
sisters in the military fighting a
war that the president never plans
to end?

He stops and faces the camera in a dramatic stance.

SILVERS

More on these important stories
later, but first this.

CLOSE UP. PHOTO.

A snapshot of DAVID BREISS smiling at the camera. He's
college-aged and dressed very casually.

SILVERS (V.O.)

On May 11th, film student David
Breiss disappeared from his New
York City apartment and was never
seen again--

The camera pulls back. David shares the photo with STEVEN,
JONATHAN and CALVIN. They are all the same age.

Steven and Jonathan each hold small digital video cameras.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Suspected in his disappearance are
fellow film students Larry Grant,
Jonathan Schell and Calvin
Hoberman. Tonight, we investigate
David's disappearance in a segment
we call--

A still photo of an antique movie camera and a bloodied
clapboard.

SUPER: THE DOCUMENTARY KILLERS

SILVERS (V.O.)

'The Documentary Killers.'

The show's dramatic theme plays.

INT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD. -DAY

Grainy home movie footage of STANLEY BREISS (50) bar-be-
cueing in front of a large gas grill.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Since the age of twelve, David Breiss had been fascinated with making movies.

EDNA BREISS (8) skips up to Stanley, carrying a paper plate. She wears a colorful dress and pig tails.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Armed with a movie camera, his family and millions of ideas--

Stanley opens the grill. A whiff of smoke bellows out.

On the grill are phony-looking human body parts.

SILVERS (V.O.)

David made movie-making a part of his daily life.

Stanley puts a body part on the plate.

The two look directly at the camera and smile, baring cheap vampire fangs.

SILVERS (V.O.)

At the age of eighteen, David enrolled in--

EXT. GOTHAM FILM INSTITUTE -DAY

An old, archaic building on a busy city street. The sidewalk is packed with pedestrians. Traffic crawls on the street.

SILVERS (V.O.)

The Gotham Film Institute, located in New York City.

INT. DENNIS ROSEN'S OFFICE.

DENNIS ROSEN (45) sits on a chair, facing GINA Yarrington (25). He is grey-haired and wears glasses and an old sweater. She wears an expensive designer suit and perfectly styled blonde hair.

SUPER: DENNIS ROSEN, INSTRUCTOR

He talks to her (MOS).

SILVERS (V.O.)
Hard Facts correspondent, Gina
Yarrington brings us the story from
New York.

YARRINGTON
Everyone describes David as the
model student. Would you agree
with this?

ROSEN
David was the ideal student. He
never missed a class. He took his
studies very seriously.

YARRINGTON
How was he with the other students?

ROSEN
Everyone knew him. Everyone liked
him. He helped other students
whenever he could. He was friends
with everyone.

CLOSE UP. PHOTO OF THE FOUR

The same one as earlier.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Friends with everyone? Could
David's popularity have been his
downfall? In one school
assignment, he teamed up with
classmates--

EXTREME CLOSE UP of Steven Grant, from the photo.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Steve Grant--

EXTREME CLOSE UP of Jonathan Schell, from the photo.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Jonathan Schell--

EXTREME CLOSE UP of Calvin Hoberman. He has a sinister smile
on his face.

SILVERS (V.O.)
And Calvin Hoberman. Their
project?

A documentary on how a person can
successfully dispose of a human
body... We'll be back after this.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: CLAIROL SHAMPOO. :30.

SUPER: HONDA CIVIC. :30.

FADE IN ON:

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The logo appears, and the music repeats itself.

INT. SUBURBAN KITCHEN

David Breiss sits at his kitchen table, talking directly to
the camera.

DAVID

My name is David Breiss and I want
to be a filmmaker.

He continues talking (MOS).

SILVERS (V.O.)

On May 11th, twenty-two year old
film student David Breiss
disappeared from his New York City
apartment--

A small clay dinosaur waddles across the table as David
talks.

David stops talking. He and the dinosaur look at each other.

SILVERS (V.O.)

While filming a documentary on how
to dispose of a body.

David and the dinosaur talk to each other (MOS). He points
to the camera. The dinosaur looks at it, waves and smiles.

EXT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM -DAY.

Stanley sits in front of the camera.

STANLEY

David was working on this documentary with three classmates of his on how to dispose of a human body.

Gina sits opposite him.

GINA

Is it possible that he just took some time off from school to hang out with friends--?

STANLEY

No. No. Not at all--

GINA

Or maybe a new girlfriend--?

STANLEY

Film school is his life. He wouldn't do that.

GINA

Could David be working on a new film project and he didn't tell you about it--?

STANLEY

David called home practically every night and told me what's going on with school. He told me about this latest project. I helped him get the mannequins for it.

GINA (V.O.)

David's documentary 'How To Hide A Hide--'

EXT. GARAGE -DAY

In black and white, three college-aged guys place a mannequin on a bright blue tarp, spread out on a garage floor.

A fourth films the three with a hand held camera.

Other mannequins are propped up along the walls.

SUPER: DRAMATIZATION

SILVERS (V.O.)
 In this documentary, David, Steven
 Grant, Jonathan Schell and Calvin
 Hoberman would take store
 mannequins--

The four tie cinder blocks to the 'body.'

SILVERS (V.O.)
 Weigh them with cinder blocks to
 simulate a human body--

One of the three duct tapes a clear plastic bag to the
 mannequin's chest. In it is an envelope. Written on it, in
 big letters, are the words: 'BODY #3 REWARD IF RETURNED.'

SILVERS (V.O.)
 Attach a note to it, claiming a
 reward if the phony body was found.
 Finally, to simulate the smell of a
 decaying body--

One of the three throws a lot of store bought chicken parts
 on the body.

SILVERS (V.O.)
 Five pounds of uncooked chicken.

They wrap up the body in the tarp and duct tape it closed.

The fourth teen films as they lug the mannequin to the back
 of an SUV. They look around, seeing everything around them.

EXT. HIGHWAY -DAY

The fourth teen sets up a camera and tripod by the side of a
 rural highway. He films the SUV pulling up on the far side
 of the road.

The three teens get out of the SUV and quickly look around.
 One opens the hood. He waves at the camera.

SILVERS (V.O.)
 The four would then drive somewhere
 secluded and fake mechanical
 problems--

The other two pull the 'body' from the back of the SUV. They
 carry him over a guardrail and into the woods.

The fourth pulls a shovel and a video camera from the SUV and
 follows the other.

SILVERS (V.O.)
And then they would bury the body.

EXT. WOODED AREA.

David Breiss (not an actor) stands in a two feet deep hole in the ground. The hole is long enough to lay a body in.

The actual video is a little shaky.

SUPER: ACTUAL FOOTAGE.

SILVERS (V.O.)
This footage was taken in early February while David and his classmates buried another one of their artificial victims.

David sticks the shovel into the hole and leans on it. He turns to the camera.

DAVID
(winded)
This is body number four that we're burying. We're about two hundred yards east of the Taconic State Parkway... About six miles north of Hardscrabble...

LARRY (V.O.)
You sound tired, man.

DAVID
I am. The ground's frozen. It's hard. Didn't we pass a Starbuck's down the hill?

David and Larry LAUGH. The camera pans up to Calvin. He GIGGLES quietly. He has the same sinister smile from the photo, earlier.

The image FREEZES on his smile.

SILVERS (V.O.)
The four buried a total of six mannequins throughout New York and Connecticut.

INSERT

A map of the northeastern United States. Five stars appear in various spots through out New York. One appears in Connecticut.

SILVERS (V.O.)

The first mannequin was buried in early October and, with the exception of one incident, their project went without a problem.

EXT. HIGHWAY -DAY

Three police cars and a police van surround the car, lights flashing. David, Larry and Calvin stand by the back of the SUV, with police all around them.

The mannequin lays on the road, unwrapped.

SILVERS (V.O.)

On December 2nd, 2006, an unmarked police car spotted three teens removing a suspicious object from their vehicle. The following footage was recorded without police knowledge.

A TROOPER steps up to the three.

TROOPER

(very muffled)

You realize just how stupid this stunt is?

SUPER: TROOPER: "You realize just how stupid this stunt is?"

CALVIN

(very muffled)

We didn't mean to cause any problem, Officer.

SUPER: HOBERMAN: "We didn't mean to cause any problem, Officer."

TROOPER

We have twenty of our men going through these woods right now--

SUPER: TROOPER: "We have twenty of our men going through these woods right now--"

CALVIN

I'm sorry.

SUPER: HOBERMAN: I'm sorry.

TROOPER

We're bringing in dogs from a
hundred miles away for this--

SUPER: TROOPER: "We're bringing dogs from a hundred miles
away for this--"

CALVIN

I'm sorry.

SUPER: HOBERMAN: "I'm sorry--"

DAVID

We're sorry.

SUPER: BREISS: "We're sorry."

A police cruiser slowly pulls past the group.

The trooper continues talking (MOS).

SILVERS (V.O.)

After a six hour search of the area
revealed no real bodies, the three
were charged only with dumping and
had to each pay six hundred dollars
in fines. Cameraman, Steven Grant,
was fined seventy-five dollars for
parking his vehicle on a highway.

CLOSE UP. PHOTO.

The snapshot of the four.

SILVERS (V.O.)

The four successfully buried five
mannequins in the months that
followed, never once getting
caught.... In May of this year,
David told his father that the
other three wanted to do more. And
that their plans were growing
darker as time went on.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM -DAY.

Stanley sits in front of the camera.

STANLEY

David called me sometime in early May and told me that they were finishing up their project, but some of them wanted to do more.

Gina sits opposite him

GINA

What do you mean, more?

STANLEY

He said that when they got caught, they really understood the risk involved in what they were doing. It was a rush for them. And knowing that they could actually get caught, made burying the next ones more exciting.

GINA

So they rushed to bury more mannequins?

STANLEY

They wanted to bury more than mannequins.

GINA

More? Like what?

STANLEY

Animals. They wanted to kill and bury cats and dogs.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER.

Cages line the wall. Loud BARKING, from many dogs, is heard.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Dogs and cats--!

A dog stands on its hind legs, leaning against the cage door. It has a sad look on its face, with big sad puppy dog eyes.

SILVERS (V.O.)

At the beginning of April, Brian told his father of Calvin Hoberman's plans to adopt cats and dogs from local pounds.

A kitten lays in a cage, looking directly at the camera.

SILVERS (V.O.)

They would kill these animals and dispose the same way they disposed of the mannequins. The big difference? If caught, they would face possible jail time.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM -DAY.

Stanley sits in front of the camera.

STANLEY

David wanted nothing to do with hurting animals. And he told the others that. They weren't happy.

INT. CLASSROOM -DAY

Grainy black and white footage of the four college age actors (from earlier). The one representing David stands a few feet apart from the others.

He argues with them (MOS).

SUPER: DRAMATIZATION

SILVERS (V.O.)

Hostility grew within the group. David wanted nothing to do with hurting animals and threatened to report the others.

The actor, depicting Calvin, gets in 'David's' face. The other two stand behind 'Calvin,' giving 'David' dirty looks.

SILVERS (V.O.)

This didn't go over well with the others, who feared legal ramifications as well as expulsion from film school.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM -DAY.

Stanley sits in front of the camera.

STANLEY

David called me, very upset. He told me they threatened him if he told anyone. Said he was going to regret it if he told anyone.

GINA
Going to regret it?

STANLEY
Yes...

GINA (V.O.)
On the morning of Friday, May 11th,
David called his father, telling
them that he would be coming home
for the weekend. His father said
he sounded distracted. Even a
little nervous...

CLOSE UP. PHOTO.

A snapshot of DAVID, looking through the director's lens of a
camera.

The photo fades to black.

GINA (V.O.)
It was the last time that anyone
heard from David.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM -DAY.

Stanley sits in front of the camera.

STANLEY
We expected him around dinner time--
at six o'clock--and around seven
o'clock. We started calling him.
He wasn't picking up and we
couldn't reach him anywhere.

GINA
When did you start worrying?

STANLEY
Right away. David always called
when he was late. He would've
called. He's good like that.

SILVERS (V.O.)
Stanley contacted the New York City
Police as well as the Katonah
Police Departments--

INT. KATONAH POLICE STATION

SGT. PAUL COYNE sits behind his desk. The town crest hangs on the wall behind him.

SUPER: SGT. PAUL COYNE. KATONAH POLICE DEPARTMENT.

COYNE

We looked into this matter, and opened a missing person file, along with representatives of the New York City Police Department.

GINA (V.O.)

What about Stanley Breiss' accusations that David's disappearance is the result of his classmates?

COYNE

At this time, there is no proof of foul play.

GINA (V.O.)

No proof? Calvin Hoberman threatened David. He said he was going to regret it if he told anyone what he and his friends were doing.

COYNE

Representatives from the New York Police questioned Mister Hoberman. He denies making any such threat.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET -DAY

Calvin Hoberman walks quickly along a sidewalk, pursued by Gina Yarrington. She holds a microphone to his face.

Footage is slightly shaky as the RECORDING CAMERA is 'running' too.

GINA (V.O.)

We located Calvin Hoberman in New York and asked him about David--

Calvin watches her from the corner of his eye. He pushes the microphone away from his face.

CALVIN

No comment.

GINA
Did you threaten David Breiss?

He shakes his head slightly.

GINA
His father claims you threatened
his life. Is this true?

CALVIN
No comment.

GINA
Did you have anything to do with
his disappearance?

CALVIN
No comment.

He walks toward an SUV and opens the door. He climbs in.

GINA
Did you kill David Breiss and bury
his body along some highway?

CALVIN
You're a--

BLEEEEEEP!

He closes the door and starts the engine.

Gina stands next to the door. The camera films him as he
drives down the street.

GINA (V.O.)
Telephone calls to Steven Grant and
Jonathan Schell were not returned.

CLOSE UP. PHOTO.

A snapshot of DAVID, looking through a camera.

GINA (V.O.)
It has been six weeks since David
spoke with his father, about his
fear. Four weeks since anyone has
seen or heard from him... One can
only wonder if Calvin Hoberman,
Steven Grant and Jonathan Schell
murdered their classmate and
successfully disposing of his body.
Was the perfect murder committed?

Or is this simply the stuff of
Hollywood movies?

INT. HARD FACTS STUDIOS.

Silvers sits on a stool, facing the camera.

SILVERS

The perfect crime indeed... With me
tonight is Hard Facts
correspondent, Gina Yarrington--

He turns to his side. Gina sits on an adjacent stool.

SILVERS

Gina, your story does sounds like
something out of a Hollywood movie.
Is there any chance that this is a
hoax? A publicity stunt created by
Brian to promote this documentary?

GINA

Joel, I've interviewed dozens of
people who know David, from
classmates to instructors to
neighbors in Katonah and no one
believes that he would participate
in any such stunt.

SILVERS

Now, let's just assume that David
Breiss was the victim of foul play
by Calvin Hoberman, Larry Grant and
Jonathan Schell. Will his remains
ever turn up?

GINA

That's really hard to say, Joel.
None of the mannequins that the
four successfully buried have
turned up. No one has claimed the
rewards for them. But bodies have
been discovered years after murders
were committed.

SILVERS

Like that of Thomas White, the
South Carolina civil rights
activist who whose remains were
recently found forty-five years
after his disappearance.

GINA

Exactly, Joel. Unfortunately, this is a waiting game. David may show up alive and unharmed any day, or he may never be seen again.

SILVERS

Tragic... Thank you Gina, on an excellent report...

He turns to the camera.

SILVERS

Hard Facts is offering a ten thousand dollar reward for information leading to David Breiss' return--

SUPER: HARD FACTS. (212) 555-4867

SILVERS

If you have any information, please call this number. All calls will be kept confidential.

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The logo appears, and the music repeats itself.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Coming up next on Hard Copy--

A man sits in silhouette. His features are hidden in shadow.

MAN

(muffled)

The war in Iraq should've ended three years ago. Washington is purposely keeping it going.

SILVERS (V.O.)

Who is this man? And what important information does he have that could bring our troops home. We'll be back right after this.

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN

The logo appears, and the music repeats itself.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: NABISCO CHIPS AHOY COOKIES. :30.

SUPER: GEICO INSURANCE. :30.

FINAL CREDITS.

Twigs SNAP and dry leaves CRUNCH as footsteps are heard STOMPING through the woods.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Are you sure it's this way?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

I'm positive. It's right over this ridge here.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

But are you sure it's a bald eagle's nest?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

I saw the eagle. I saw the eagle in it... Okay. Look.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Where?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Up there. Right there.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

The big ball of sticks up there? Where's the eagle?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

She's probably out looking for food. I'm getting my camera out for when she comes back.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hey, what's that?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

What?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

That. That blue thing sticking out of the ground there?

FINAL FADE OUT.