

DATON DUNCAN

Writer and Producer  
(2 hats)

Upenn

1971 moved to NH

(German Literature Major, unofficially to stud English American lit)

2 years "Service" at Cheshire Med Ctr.

Reporter 5 - 6 years @ Keene Sentinel

Gov. Press Secretary in NH and became his Chief of Staff.

1953 - 1984 Walter Mandell Press Sec during his Presidential Campaign.

Wrote about Lewis and Clark

Story - Wrote out

West (1<sup>st</sup> book)

Researched 2<sup>nd</sup> book

Grass roots (2<sup>nd</sup> book)

Was Press Secretary of Duchasus Campaign

1979 Met Ken Burns (needed free lance jobs - BBC International Gov of NH about aging much in Towns in NH)

#### On Golden Pond

Nominee for award (academy) Brought Daton and Ken to Hollywood @ same time (because en's film was nominated)

#### American West's:

History was Daton's interest was co-wrote (w/ Jeff ward) and consulting - producer.  
1<sup>st</sup> Automobile Trip across.

#### National Parks:

Wrote ten books in total.

(including 2 children's in total companion books)

#### WHAT ARE YOU GUIDED BY?

Interested in and feel strongly about.

Confidence in what you know.

PASSION - trust that there's no "right" path. His work has aspects of solitary exercises and collaborative ones.

#### WRITING

"In the beginning was the word. . ."

To be a writer: TO WRITE (just do it)

Deadlines help (newspaper)

Structure your day . . .

It's not necessarily easy.

The place I'm at are a result of physical coordinates (lat/long) and the ordinates of time.

YOU'VE GOT TO READ

Especially other good writers you start to notice good things about style, etc.

"Realists" Novel writers, late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ameri + ing.

Authors – As a result Duncan writes long complex sent. structures.

JOHN MCFEE

(New Yorker) (Geology of N. America)

Can make anything interesting. . .

By using human characters

Nallace Stegner

Bernard Devoto

STARTING A SCRIPT

Do research first before writing. . .

Thing light/type notes distilled from the data.

Outline:

L refining it as the process moves along. . .

WHAT IS THE POINT?

Interesting

Look for the arch of the strong (which may in the process)

1<sup>st</sup> Draft (usually they're more than 2x long)

Then it can be trimmed down during the editing process.

4<sup>th</sup> Draft – send to expert consultants.

ASSUMPTION

We're trying to make the best film possible – hopefully everyone is on board.

Balance between in narrative (words) and visual. . .

As a writer, that's hot your problem.

Lots of it may be unnecessary. . . and may need to be cut, so you can't be attached to that.

## DOCUMENTARY FILMS:

In generally more words, but Florentine Films, it's less than typical. . .

## BLIND ASSEMBLE:

Put images and music to a script.

Scratch narration and voices. . . interviews.

Editors are asked to find images and music that works w/ it. . .

## AUDIENCE

w/ a book, the reader has control of the pace.

In a film, the film maker is in charge of the pace.

- Telling history in a non-lecture type of way in a film has to be.
- - Clear
- - Accurate.
- - Compelling narrative.
- 

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

They happen easily.

Being a reporter helps.

The interviewee must not feel like this a rote exercise – but that you care what your answer is. . . this enables them to care about what they're saying.

## INTERVIEWING CONT.

Listen to what they're saying – not because your units are unprepared. . . but let the process be spontaneous. . . Something they say might get you to go a different direction or fill up some time.

## OPENED ENDED QUESTIONS

Have questions that are pertinent to their expertise. . .

(i.e. African American Buffalo Soldiers)

Also open ended general questions that everything gets asked.

Why do we need National Parks? What would be one of your most memorable moments in a National Park? Where would America be w/o National Parks?

## PRODUCING

Amorphous title. . .

Role: to help make it possible for the creative process to occur.

## FUNDRAISING (usually executive producer title)

Have to worry about everything . . . the “general” creative decisions (mostly the director's role) Allocation's of funds, employees, details of funds, around music, shoots, travel, etc.

Not every decision gets up to the general. . . but “the buck stops here”.

Co-producer – certain specialties. . . some get raw materials (like the still images) – deciding on where interviews, should take place, scheduling, sound/camera, people camera, etc. . .

Mixture of business and creativity.

Historical Documentaries that have important messages for today.

Some moral lesson.

Separation or time – Allows time for in judgment. . .

The process of selection. . . What are you telling?  
What are you not telling?