



Unreliable Narrator.

Final Major Project

PHO705

Phil Hill

Supervisor: Dr. Wendy McMurdo

August 2021

Falmouth University

Institute of Photography

MA Photography

German Bight Cohort

Contents

Statement

Unreliable Narrator - *Photographs*

Unreliable Narrator - 'The Latchkey kids' accompanying short story

Dissemination

Book:

- Overview and Plan
- Book Flip Video
- Artist Book/Dummy notes
- Maquette images

Exhibition - Four Corners Gallery

Website & Social Media

Recognition and submissions:

- Podcast Interview
- Fotofilmic feature
- Vice Magazine graduate call
- Fotospeed Talk
- Source magazine writing prize & graduate call

Feedback

Future Plans

Bibliography

List of Figures

Quick Links

3.

4.

Click or Scan:

38.

Unreliable Narrator
- Book Flip Video:

'The Latchkey Kids'
(Unreliable Narrator short story):

44.

47.

47.

48.

57.

The Absence
of the Photograph
- Essay:

Unreliable Narrator -
Online Gallery:

58.

60.

Note – Figure titles for project images within the sequence have been omitted and left as 'Fig 1, Fig 2' etc, to experience the narrative as intended. Full Titles are included in the list of figures and bookmarked in the table of contents.

65.

66.

Statement

Unreliable narrator considers the stories we tell to ourselves and each other. We are all fallible, all unreliable.

The project began with the reminder of a 20-year-old question; one that I was far too young to comprehend at the time.

Why do you keep the photograph you cut if it wounds so deeply?

What was it that wounded?

Upon looking through a family album, an image stood out from the rest. One of the aging 6x4 photographs was defaced, designed to keep its silence, yet the spectre of the missing piece shouted loudly. Hidden in the partial absence of this benign family photograph was a far more complex narrative - potentially the semblance of an answer.

Unreliable narrator is a journey to discover the answer to a family secret, navigating different truths, beliefs and half-told stories.

Unreliable Narrator comprises of a book consisting of photographs and a short story insert, which can be read together or independently.

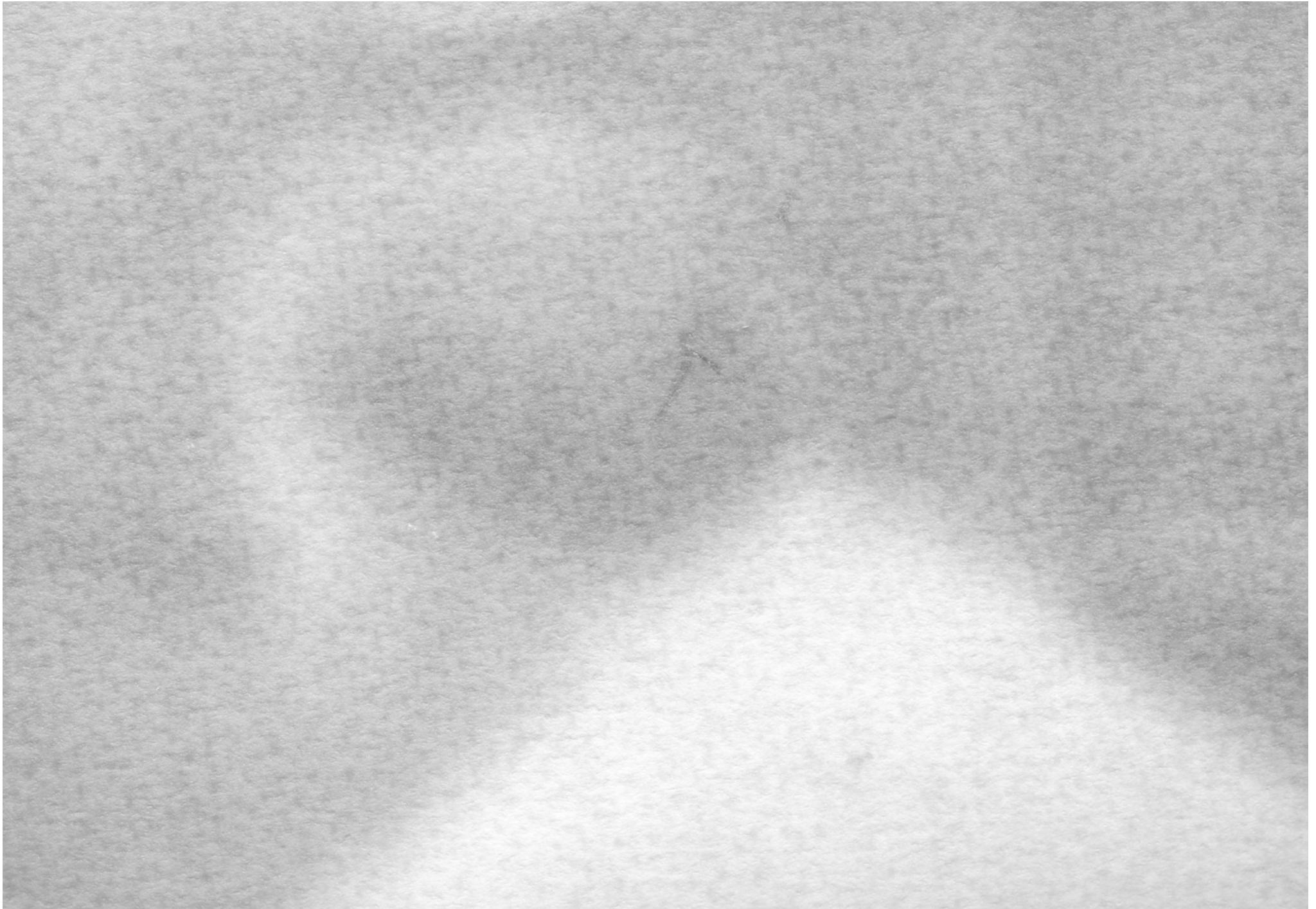


Fig: 1.

Why do you keep a photograph that wounds so deeply?



Fig: 3.



Fig: 4.



Fig: 5.



Fig: 6.



Fig: 7.



Fig: 8.



Fig: 9.



Fig: 10.



Fig: 11.



Fig: 12.



Fig: 13.



Fig: 14.



Fig: 15.



Fig: 16.



Fig: 17.



◀ Fig: 18.

▲ Fig: 19.



Fig: 20.



Fig: 21.



Fig: 22.



Fig: 23.



Fig: 24.



Fig: 25.



Fig: 26.

You have to realise that I live a rather strange life at the moment, which one day might change.



Fig: 28.



Fig: 29.



Fig: 30.



Fig: 31.

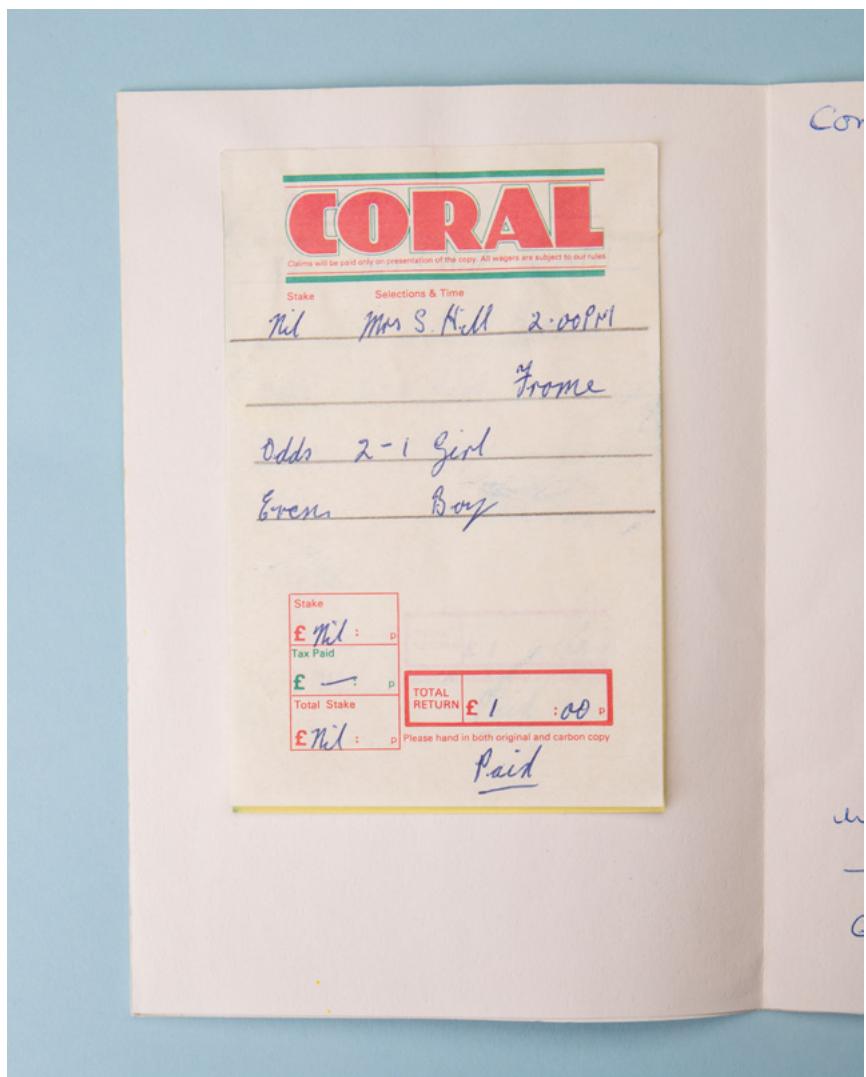


Fig: 32.

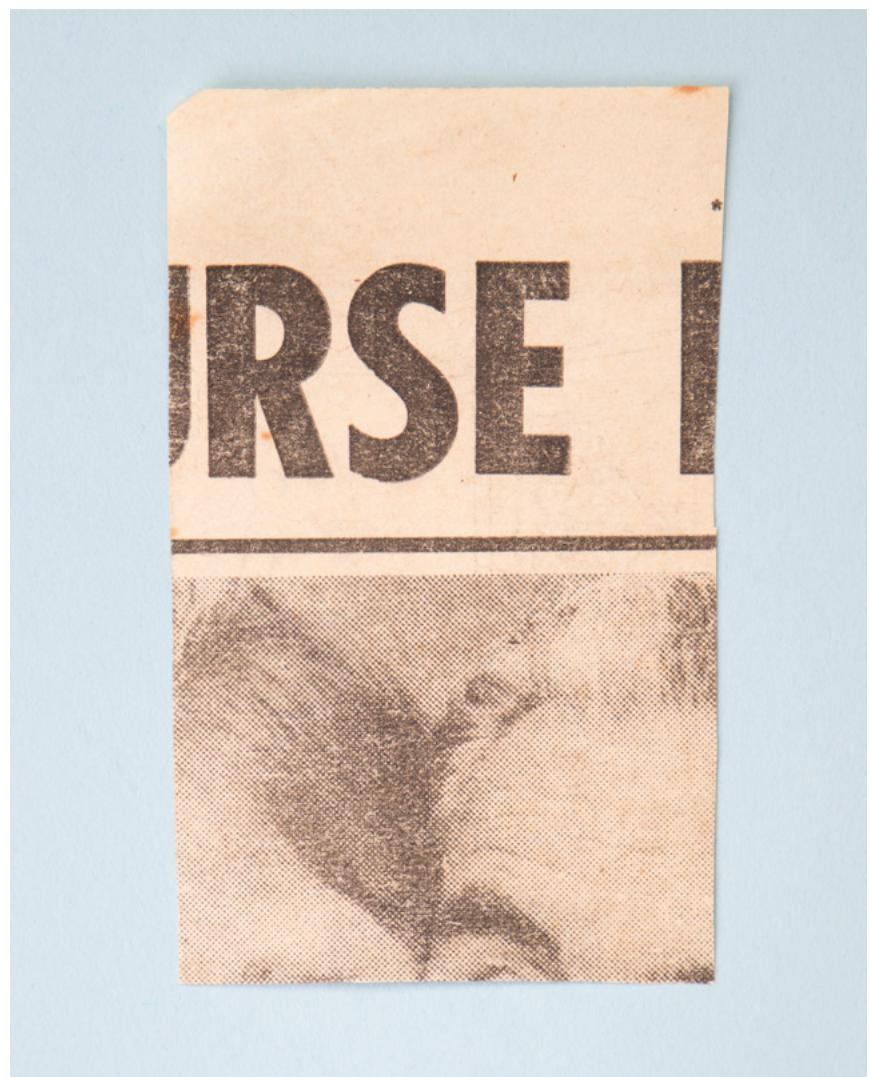


Fig: 33.



Fig: 34.



Fig: 35.



Fig: 36.

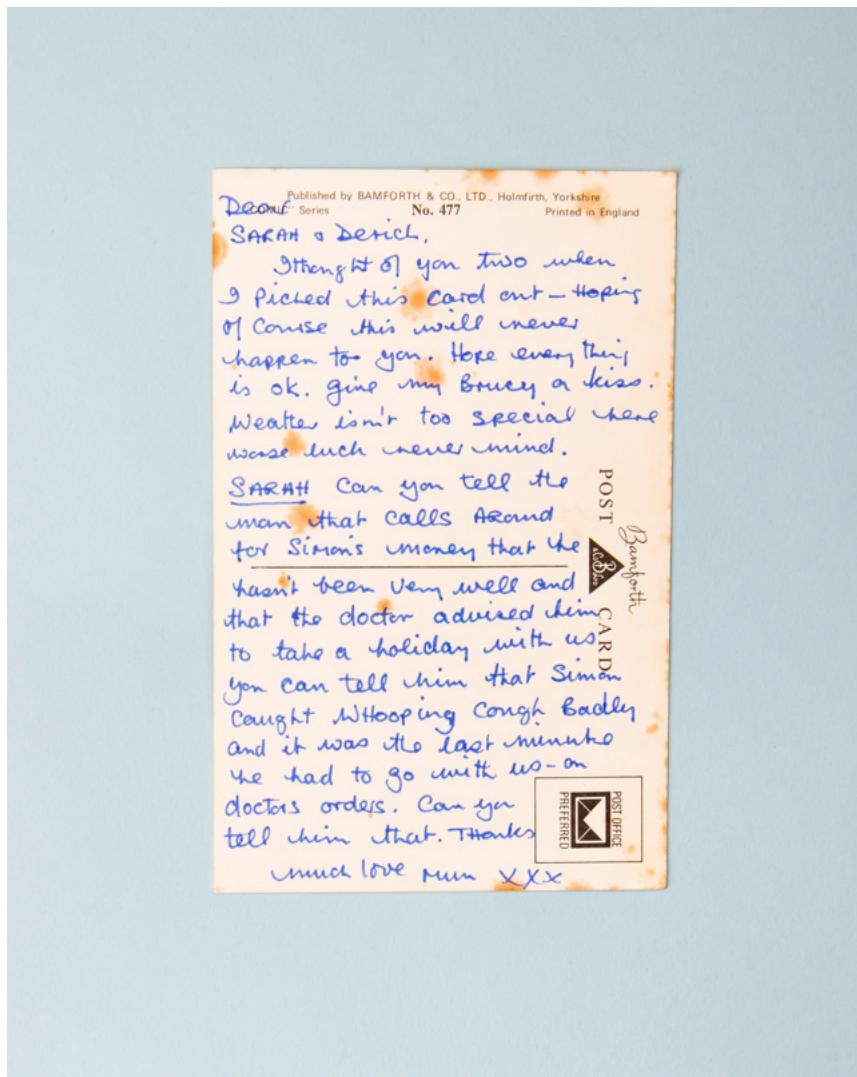


Fig: 37.

Fig: 38.



Fig: 39.



Fig: 40.



Fig: 41.



Fig: 42.

This... is not going to trouble me anymore.

Fig: 43.



Fig: 44.





Fig: 47.

There is more but I am going to write it all down for you to find after I die.

The Latchkey Kids. Accompanying short story to Unreliable Narrator.' (To be included in the book).

A leak.

There was a leak in the roof of my parent's house; this meant that everything that had been stored there for years had to come down into the spare bedroom. For my parents, notorious for not being sentimental, it was the opportunity to 'spring clean' a lifetime of accumulated objects.

Unlike the family archives of others, ours is quite modest, existing in only a few albums but also in piles of old decaying plastic carrier bags full of negatives, with little in terms of organisation.

Still, it was good to go through them all and be reminded of childhood.

It was there that I saw the page and it made me pause. Among all of the other photographs of weddings, births, holidays and parties, there was this yellowing 6x4 print of my maternal aunt and paternal grandad sharing a joke on a sofa. The photograph had been abruptly cut in two. It was easy to see that this had been done long enough after the print was placed into the album because the faded edges were still there - the spectre of the photograph. At some point in the photograph's history, it was peeled from the photo album, cut in two and placed back onto the page. Amongst those carrier bags, I found the negative belonging to this print. It was Gran who had been removed from the photograph and my mum made this cut.

My mum and Gran have not spoken for over 20 years. I never really understood why, only that she was 'not a very good person' and ties had been cut completely. Very little has been spoken about it since and every time the subject came up, it was quickly closed. I had been told it was my Gran's fault, but I only had one side to go by. What if it was ours?

The more that I viewed this photograph though, the more I speculated over the absent part. Surely, it would be better to simply remove it from the album completely, avoiding those questions. It is a half-told story, for the missing narrative; I would need to speak to my gran. For that, I wrote two letters; the first reaching out and a second to follow up.

Belief.

The cut photograph played on me for a time and I started to look at my family differently. I questioned how innocent photographs truly are when they are taken in the most fleeting of moments, moving on to the next. Looking back, I can only see the instant in the photograph instead of any nuance that might have been during the moment and intervening years between then and now.

It was not that I viewed my family negatively, it was more that I began to notice things. They place objects and messages around the house appealing to unknown entities for better luck, good fortune, or health. They are not religious but it is definitely a system of belief. However, my family has always had a deep-rooted mistrust of power. My parents and my brother have garden waste incinerators for destroying documents, they have all never voted and are not wholly convinced by the pandemic. These are all truths, something to navigate and understand the world, much like the collection of historic photographs that are supposed to show our history and a sense of identity.

A few months had passed and still no reply from Gran. Had things become so bitter that even her grandchildren were no longer welcomed?

Memories.

I received a message from a cousin, who I have not seen for a long time. Gran had died. She had lung cancer, which was not a surprise, owing to a lifetime of heavy smoking. Some memories I have are of the way that her house smelt, the rolling machine on the kitchen table and the clouds of smoke billowing into the back seat of the car as she drove us. My feelings on receiving the news that she died were surreal but there was also a strange distance - she was my grandmother, but also someone I have not seen for two decades. She never knew me as an adult and to be fair, I left it far too late to reconnect. I stumbled across a Facebook page of the former employees of the Bowyers factory in Trowbridge that made meat products. Before I was born, my mum, dad, uncle and Gran all worked in different parts of the Trowbridge institution. I even went to one of their Christmas parties, as Gran continued to work there, and remembered feeling out of place. The factory is long gone now, but still remains in the center of the town waiting to be turned into luxury apartments, or similar. They added a memorial: "Ah that's sad news, she was a lovely lady, best QA we had in prepack."

I have one more memory, which comes back to me: Picking blackberries through the wire fence opposite Gran's house separating the council row from the Great Western mainline. My mum grew up in that house too. There was a path that also followed the railway all the way to the Kennet and Avon canal that Granddad used to fish from, or at least who I thought was my grandad - we were told to call him that anyway. I sometimes heard my mum and aunt refer to him as 'Dogs Teeth' but I never knew why. Anyway, one day he wasn't there anymore and Gran moved to Westbury, a stone's throw from the White Horse. It wasn't long after that we stopped visiting.

I wonder what she made of those letters that I sent?

According to my cousin, Gran had known about the cancer since June of the previous year but gave specific instructions that no one was to know until after she died; this included my mum, who found out like the rest of us. My mum once told my aunt that she didn't want to know if Gran became unwell.

After we found out, my mum and I did speak a little about her as a family, although she remained closed. I always thought that my youngest brother took

his daughter to meet Gran, but that never happened. He did see her once around 2002, but only said that walking into her house was too much, referring to that strong smell of cigarettes.

My other brother seemed to think that the reason why mum and Gran fell out was because mum set out to find her real dad in the mid-nineties, though he wasn't completely sure.

Len.

I never met Len but I did meet his sister Pat once; she used to send us £5 each for Christmas. Len was my mum's biological father; I guess that makes him my actual grandfather. My mum found him living in London where he was from originally - Tottenham as far as I can remember. A world away from Somerset and Wiltshire, where my family all live.

I was told he left Gran for another woman when my mum was four, her brother two, and her sister only a few weeks old. Gran would have been 22 at the time, as old as my mum when she had me, yet Gran had three children by then. I can only imagine what it would have been like to be a single parent of three in the mid-sixties.

Mum paid the Salvation Army a small fee to use their 'find a lost relative' service. She met him once with her sister and brother. Apparently, he didn't talk much, only to say, "You all look alike, don't you?" and that was that. There are two photographs of Len in the album, given to my mum by Pat. Mum didn't really keep in contact with him, she only kept in contact with Pat.

Winning the Bingo.

It wasn't that long after that my cousin messaged me again to say that they had some pictures for me that Gran had. I hadn't actually seen my cousin or aunt in a very long time either, so I made the trip across country, back to the west country to catch up. The last time I was there, I was a kid, there was a playhouse in the garden, which is the first thing my aunt said followed by offering a coffee. I walked into the house and there were things piled everywhere. This is more or less how I remember their house. We sat down to look over the photographs, which were a combination of childhood photographs, an album of my parents wedding, and curiously, a stash of photographs from a holiday that we all took together in 1987 that I had never seen before - we only have a few of these.

At this point my aunt got up and moved over to the other side of the room, she has MS and it helps to be mobile. This is followed by some creaking from upstairs. "I didn't know dad was here." said my cousin.

"He is working nights." my aunt followed, which is punctuated by an alert on her phone and moves off to the kitchen to make him a cup of tea.

As she came back from delivering the tea, she started to talk about this holiday and made reference to my mum and Gran: "Things started to change after Spain."

The only time I ever went abroad as a child was after Gran won the bingo and took us all to Majorca. I was four so I barely remember it. There aren't that many photographs from this holiday in my family's albums but there was another photograph from this holiday that I found cut; the difference is that it wasn't my Gran this time.

Two Nans and a Gran.

I had three nans as a kid. Is this unusual? I'm not sure. Gran, Nan Beck, and Nan Hill. They were nans because they were older, that's how we defined it - I even think that they were similar ages. Gran was mum's mum, Nan Hill was dad's mum, and Nan Beck was Gran's mum. Gran was young when she had my mum so this meant that her mum was also relatively young. We used to go to her small house in Upton Scudmore; she always had custard creams, she loved poodles and had this Margaret Thatcher dog toy that we found hilarious.

Nan apparently never always accepted my aunt, believing that she was another man's child.

Dog's Teeth.

"The man was abusive, manipulative, a bully," my aunt tells me. This information was offered casually, as if I already knew it and it was just being confirmed.

Followed up by my cousin's response of, "I am glad that I have no memory of him."

Just to get this straight in my head "domestic violence?"

"Yeah" my aunt responds, "to Gran and your mum."

I had no idea.

In the background of some of the photographs there is the shade of a presence giving the impression that he used to have a greater presence within these albums. He was an intimidating character. I remember him not talking a great deal and when we used to visit Gran; he would either stay in the kitchen or be off fishing somewhere in a dark coloured Bedford van that he used to drive. I was still so young so perhaps many of the memories I have are tied up with the photographs that I can look at now. Sat there as he did in my parents back garden in one of these pictures: smoking, or sat on a picnic blanket with the rest of us at the Longleat estate, before they started charging to spend Sunday afternoon in the grounds. In the photographs that my aunt gave me, he was there at my parents' wedding, at the head table. He even walked my aunt down the aisle, though she told me how much she regretted that now. There is another photograph of me and my brother as page boys sitting on Gran's sofa, getting ready for that day but again, I barely remember the event.

20 years is a long time to wait to talk about a subject you have no idea of its significance. I contemplated this as I drove back with more photographs.

The Latchkey Kids.

There were things about my mum that I never really understood growing up. Why the lack of trust in things? Why did we never speak to our family?

After I came back from my aunt's with the photographs and the revelations around mum's step-dad, I wondered why my mum would also cut Gran out of her life.

Before this though, when we found out Gran had died, the conversations did start to change. My brothers and I were curious so asked more questions and maybe as adults, Mum was more willing to offer more and more about the reasons for the rift. Would it have been the same if she was still alive?

As she became even more candid, I listened to the stories, starting to understand a little more about what happened but also it meant understanding Mum as a person going through a traumatic period of her life.

“How do you tell your children?”

“She once chucked her wedding ring into the bushes opposite the house and just left us there. I remember the fear, the total fear that we would be left with him and just hoping that Nan would come and get us. Take us away from that place.”

Gran was gone all of the time, partly because she was working, had to, but also because she would go off for the weekend, leaving mum to look after her younger siblings. “We were known as the latchkey kids.” mum recalled referring to how she was left alone all the time.

My mum started to tell me a side of Gran that I had not really heard before, “We were brought up with violence, not just my step father but your Gran too.”

“She used to bully us, I was very afraid of her”

“When you are born into it, that's all you know”

Mum explains that it took until she was in her 40s to make the break from Gran, such was the power she had.

Present.

After meeting my Dad, my parents bought a house quite early, Mum was 19 and they would marry the following year. They moved to my Dad's hometown, which is where I was born a couple years later. I always thought that was quite young to start out and buy a home. It makes more sense now. They wanted to make a break from that cycle so that it would be different for me and my brothers.

“I only answer the phone to you and your brothers now.”

“When the three of you were little we made a choice to be present. We brought the three of you up with love.”

There is more but I am going to write it all down for you to find after I die.

The story can be viewed as a PDF:

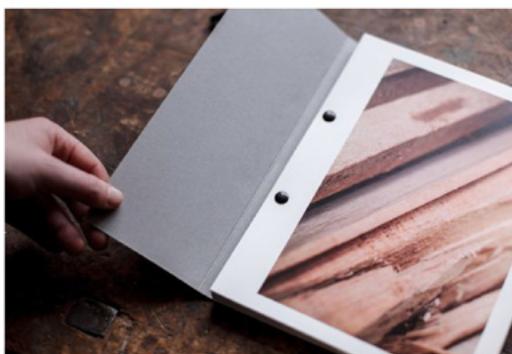
<https://www.philhillphotography.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-latchkey-kids-Phil-Hill.pdf>

Scan or click the QR code to view:

Unreliable Narrator: Book overview and plan

I have been working with **Emily Macaulay of Stanley James Press** with a plan to produce a book dummy ready for the cohort group show in October. Due to the nature of the story that I am telling the way that the project developed in the later stages I made the decision during discussions with Macaulay to delay the production of the book until the themes were fully resolved. However, we are working on some ideas for the final publication (Macaulay, 2021).

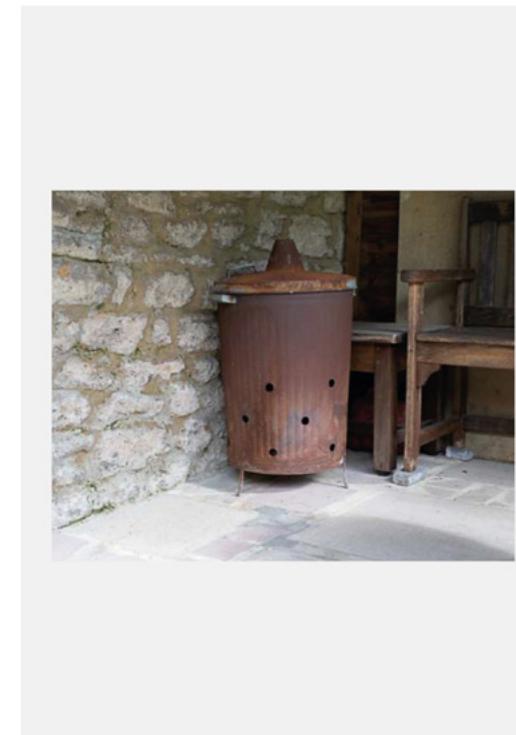
BINDING - SCREW POSTS



I think screw posts would be a nice way to bind your book. They are frequently used to bind photo albums. They look nice and they also allow us to use different paper stocks throughout.

The book will support the theme of the unreliable narrator, memory, trace, and the journey of discovery that I undertook. The physicality of the experience is important for the reading. For example, the book will reference the photo album that started my project (**Fig: 49**) and also use elements that suggest the trace of something missing (**Fig: 52**). Early on in the FMP I made a number of experiments using carbon copy paper, which leave indexical traces and suggest an evidential value similar to how photography is perceived. Macaulay agreed and we will include this in the publication (**Fig: 53**).

CONTENT TYPE 1 - PHOTO PAGES



I think we should try include some of the various parts we've been discussing over the phone, photocopies, carbon paper, references to old photo albums.

If we are going to include these then I think we should keep the majority of the pages containing your photos simple to allow some breathing room.

Fig: 49. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

Fig: 50. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

The book is about Unreliable Narrators so it is important that the image sequence can be ambiguous enough that the reader makes their own connections and assumptions before the story is considered. Therefore, the story that I wrote will be included as a separate insert for the short story, which can be read after looking at the images, or even at the same time as the images.

CONTENT TYPE 2 - MISSING PHOTOS



In your text you mention the faded edges in the photo album confirming the missing photo that was once there. I thought it would be nice to have 'missing' content throughout the book. We could either sun bleach the paper or print the darker areas giving the illusion of content that was once there.

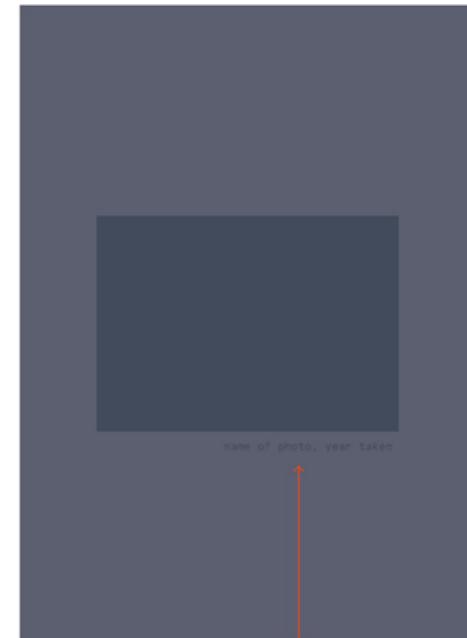
This is how we could display old photos in the book.

This form of incidental content will also be used to create an object that falls out of the book as it is being read. The plan is to reproduce the full negative of the cut image, which I discovered. This will not be made reference to and be left for the reader to discover the person in the image is my grandmother – much like I did when looking through the family archive (**Fig: 55**).

CONTENT TYPE 2 - MISSING PHOTOS



We could attach any old photos as separate parts.



There could be pages where the photo is completely missing, maybe with a note underneath saying what the missing photo once showed.

Fig: 51. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

Fig: 52. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

CONTENT TYPE 3 - CARBON COPY

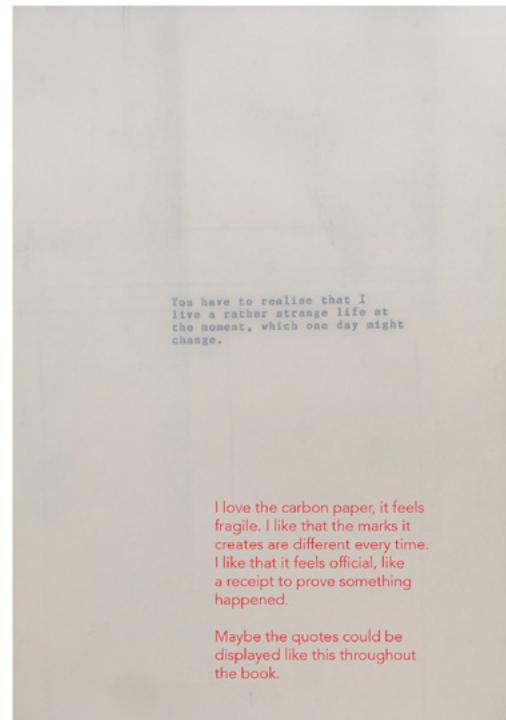
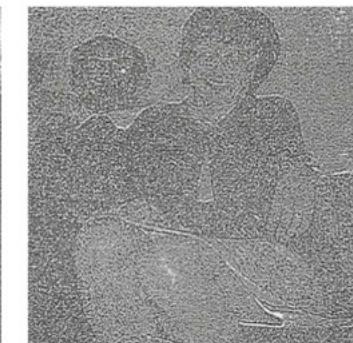


Fig: 53. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

CONTENT TYPE 4 - PHOTOCOPY



I love the idea of including a photocopy that changes with each book. I think it really connects to a memory fading with time, and I like that everyone's book will be slightly different and yet exactly the same.

If we include the photocopies in the version for the exhibition, it would be good to show three copies side by side so you can see this page gradually change.

I'm not sure what you photocopy.

Fig: 54. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

CONTENT TYPE 5 - INCIDENTAL



Finally I like the idea of something incidental, that is unattached and falls out of the book, like you were never meant to see it.



This could be a note or maybe a fake negative strip.

Fig: 55. Emily Macaulay (2021) Unreliable Narrator Ideas.

Artist Book/Dummy

The following pages show a working maquette of the book in its current prototype.

Follow the link below to also view a 'book-flip' of this maquette (**Fig: 56**):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nL2MyZcAebU>

(4:55 for negative insert & 5:10 for short story insert)



Fig: 56. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator Book Flip video.

(Click to View)

Artist Book/Dummy: Notes

- The screw post binding acts as a link to the way that family photo albums are bound, it also means that the content of the book can be changed and future editions of the work might include subtle shifts in the sequence and the materials placed into the publication to further push the concept of unreliability.
- Carbon Copy paper reacts to pressure applied to it, which has been placed at various points within the book (**Fig: 60**). The more that the publication is integrated with, the more that these pages will evolve and change as our memories and retelling of them also changes. The carbon copy paper also provided an opportunity to create small differences, which may not be seen straight away. For example, the title page having been redacted (**Fig: 61**) and a typo made on a typewriter is then corrected on the carbon page (**Fig: 64&65**). The quotes within the publication have been typed on a typewriter onto watermarked letter writing paper (**Fig: 63**).
- Separate to the publication is the insert, titled: 'The Latchkey Kids.' (Hill, 2021). A short story booklet, which chronicles the narrative (**Fig: 67 - 70**). It is intended to be placed at the back of the main book to encourage an initial reading in which the reader makes their own assumptions of the work. Between each written page is a sheet of tracing paper, which then reveals the next page of text (**Fig: 70**). This use of material is to suggest the discovery as they move through the text. Some of the photographs are referenced in this text and many are still left for the reader to continue making assumptive connections based on their own experiences.
- A reproduction of the full negative from the cut image will also be placed into a negative envelope (**Fig: 66**). This will be loose inside the publication and designed to come across, or even fall out of the book upon reading it and add to the sense of discovery. The envelope itself is from my family archive, which creates an opportunity for a limited edition run of the book that contains an object with a direct link to the archive the work references.
- Final design, production and finish will ensure a much higher standard than maquette.

Unreliable Narrator Artist Book/Dummy (Maquette)



Fig: 57. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy cover.



Fig: 58. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional material: Negative envelope & short story.



Fig: 59. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy image spread.



Fig: 60. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copy page



Fig: 61. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copy detail.



Fig: 62. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy typed quote page

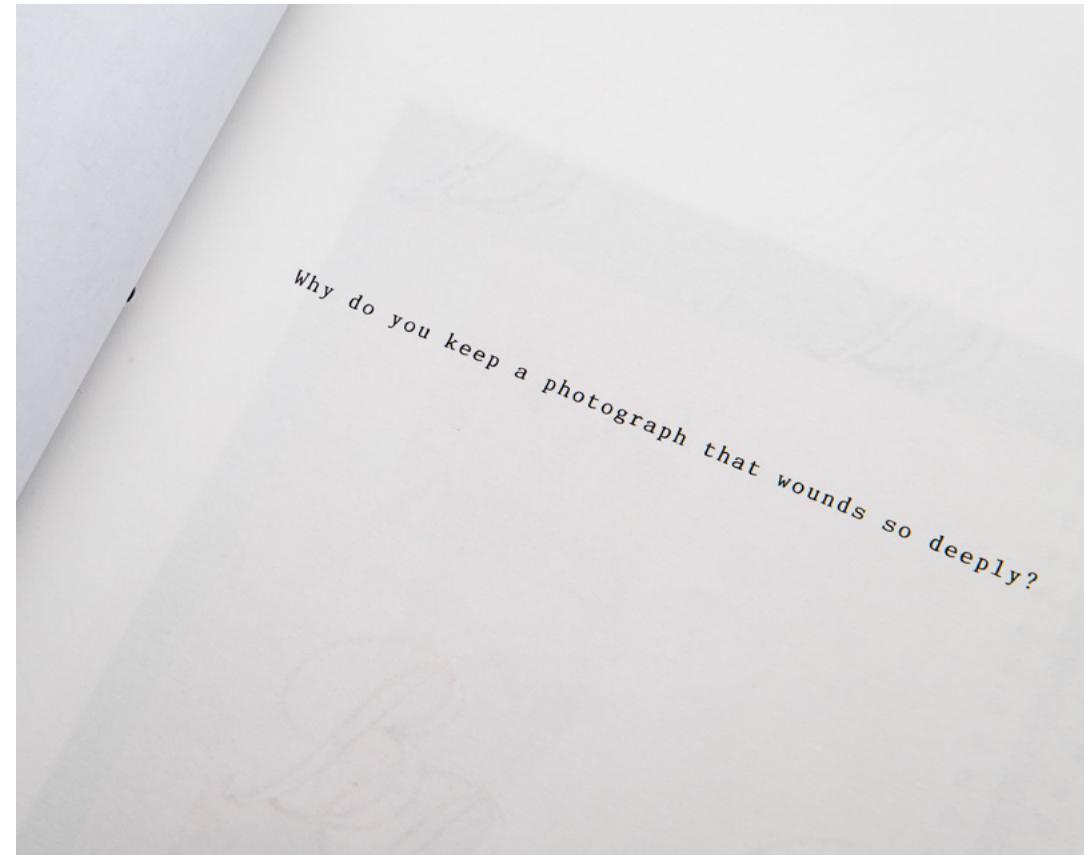


Fig: 63. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy quote detail showing watermark paper stock.

e that I live a rather stran
, which one day might change

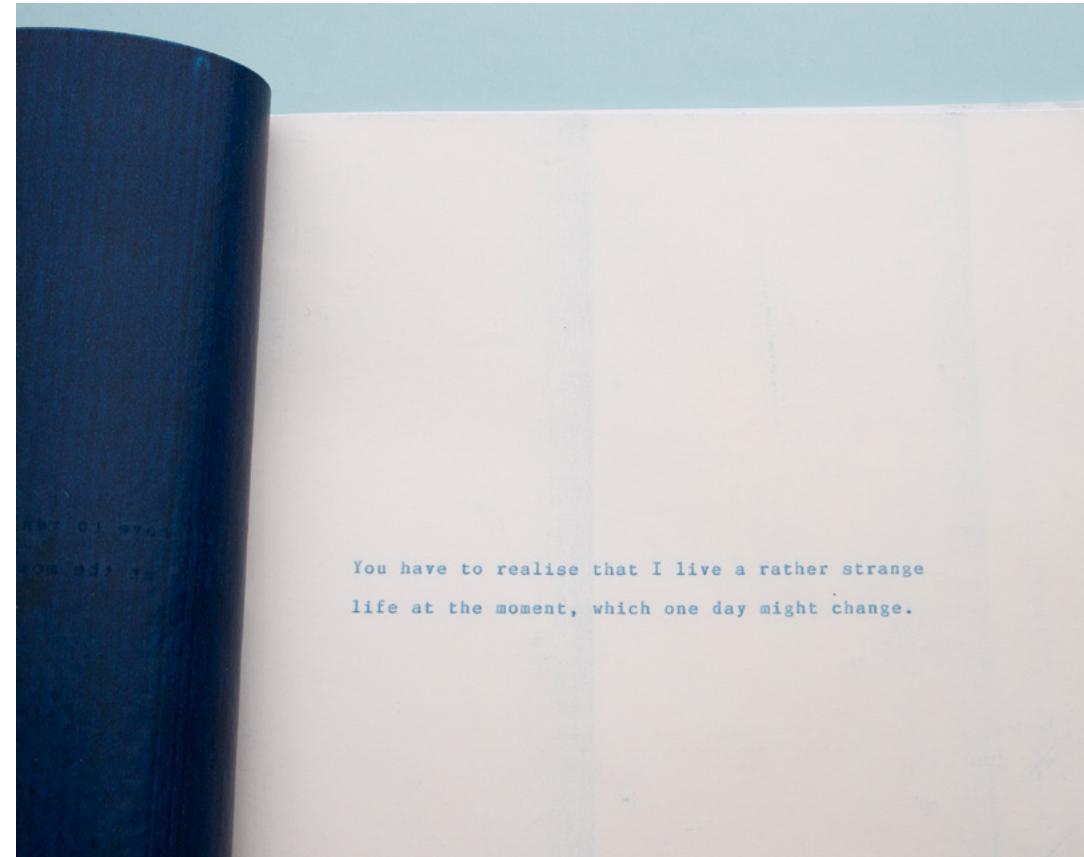
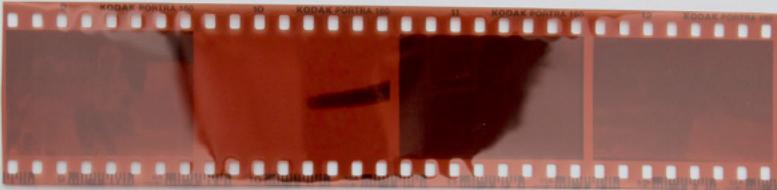


Fig: 64. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy utilised typewriter error

Fig: 65. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copied quote.



Take care of your negatives

Negative materials are easily damaged.

Handle them with great care by the edges only.



NEVER CUT THE NEGATIVE STRIPS INTO INDIVIDUAL FRAMES

When sending for reprints and enlargements, indicate the picture/s you require by quoting the frame number/s found on the edge of the negative strip adjacent to each picture.

DW 1685

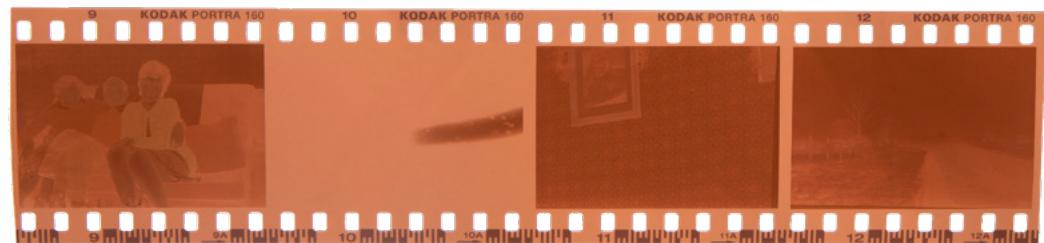


Fig: 66. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. Reproduction negative and film lab envelope from archive [Left]. Negative photographed for clarity [Top-Right] & Images from archive used for reproduction (minus intentional blank frame) [Bottom-Right].



Fig: 67. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. 'The Latchkey kids short story booklet



10

Fig: 68. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert.
'The Latchkey kids short story booklet inside spread

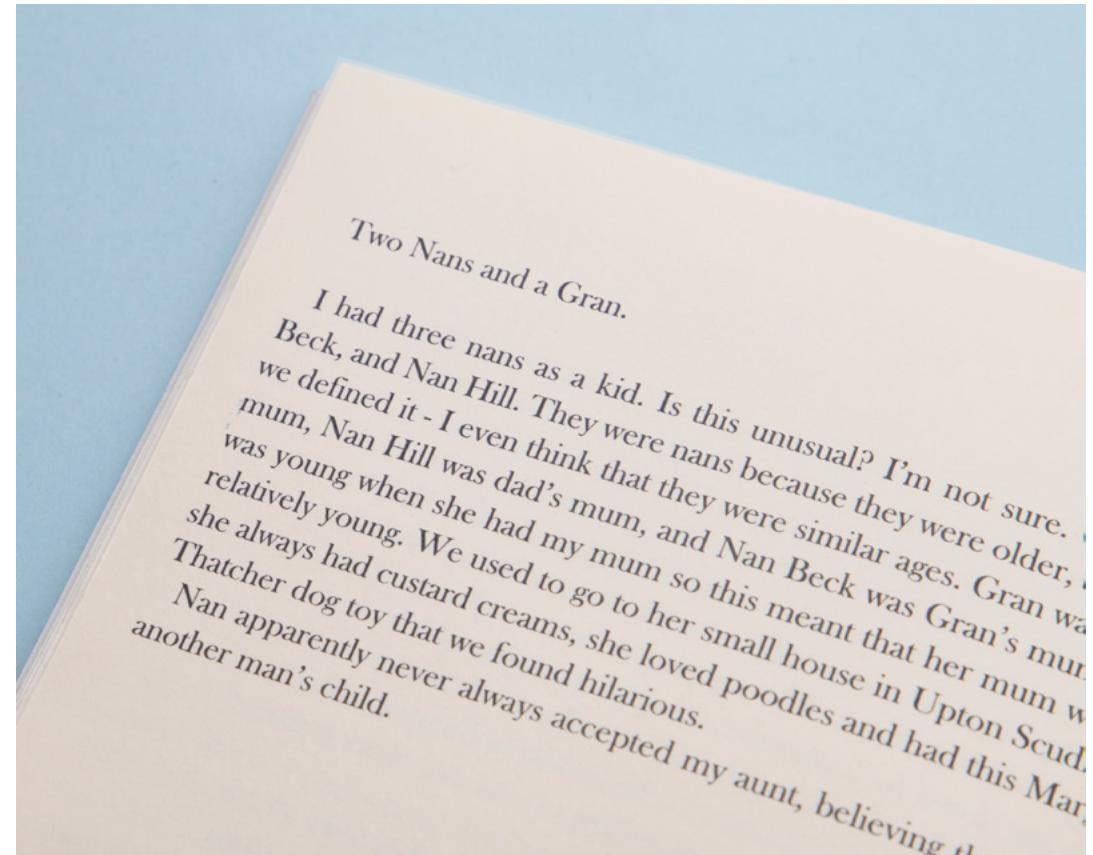


Fig: 69. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert.
'The Latchkey kids short story text detail

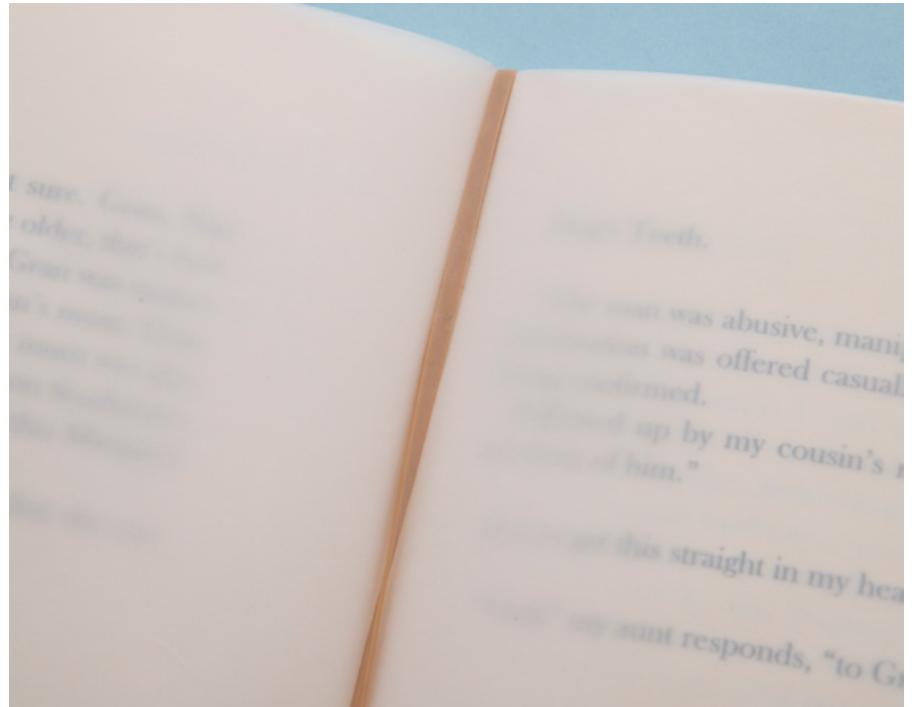
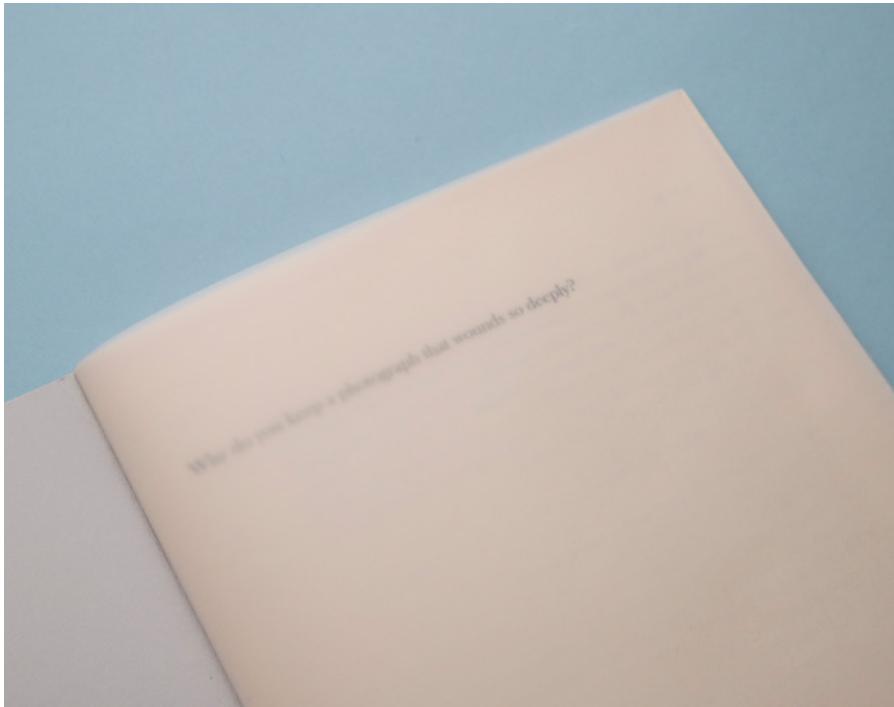


Fig: 70. Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. ‘The Latchkey kids short story booklet. Tracing paper pages detail showing differing levels of visible text.

Exhibition

- A group exhibition will be held at **Four Corners Gallery, London on 6th – 9th October, 2021 (Fig: 71)**. I plan to use this as an opportunity to present my pre-production book designed by Emily Macaulay (Final designs TBC). It will mark the start of promotion for the book and also pre-sales to produce and self-publish.
- Each exhibitor will have approximately 1.69 meters of wall space with the option of presenting work using plinths and other display (**Fig: 72**). I will make use of the wall space by displaying a large version of the cut photograph to accentuate the absent part of the photograph.
- The book will contain subtle difference between each printed copy, creating a unique art object but also linking to its core concept of unreliability. To show this at the exhibition, three copies will be presented, which highlight these differences.
- The short story will be available for people to read. There will be fewer versions of the story vs the photobook to ensure that people will have to read one before looking at the other.
- My statement and supporting information (TBC) will be added to the plinth. I will also have a QR code, which will take people to a site to pre-order the book.



Fig: 71: Four Corners Gallery (2021) View of Exhibition Space.

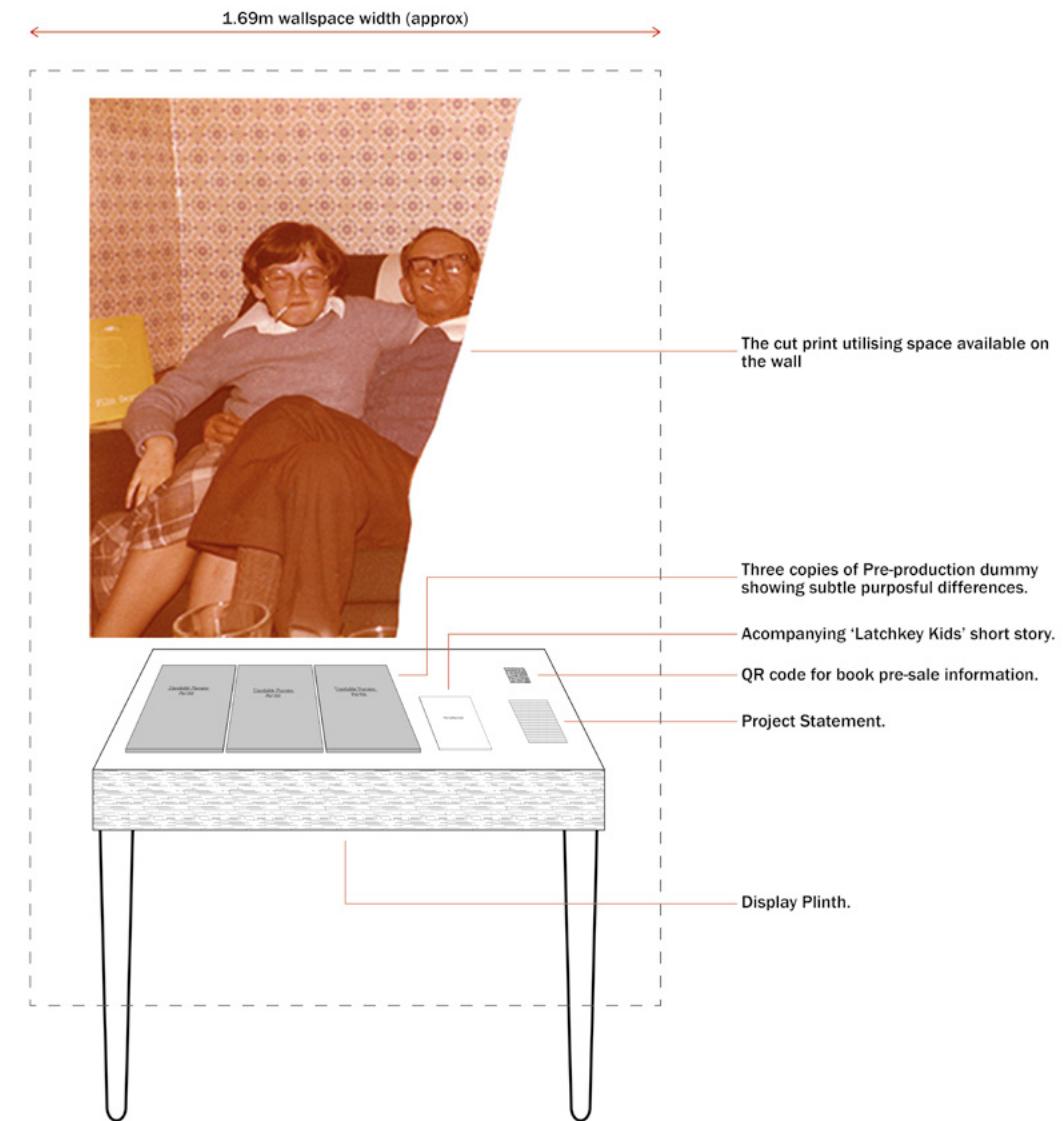


Fig: 72: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Four Corners Exhibition plan.

Website and online

An important method of dissemination is through my own website (**Fig: 73**) and use of social media platforms. Unreliable Narrator has been edited into an online gallery, which can be easily shared and viewed on a variety of platforms, whether it be on a computer (**Fig: 74**), or mobile (**Fig: 75**).

Since the start of the MA, I have gradually increased my following on Instagram from 300 to just over 600 followers (**Fig: 76**). Whilst relatively small, this increase has been useful in promoting and sharing my work. I am working to increase my engagement on other platforms , such as Twitter to mitigate changes that happen to single platforms.

View Unreliable Narrator online here:

<https://www.philhillphotography.com/portfolio/unreliable-narrator/>

Scan or click the QR code to view website:

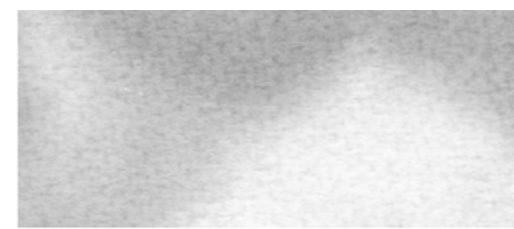
Scan or click QR code to view
@philhillphoto Instagram:

Phil Hill

Portfolio, photographic projects and visual narrative concerned with connection, identity and community.

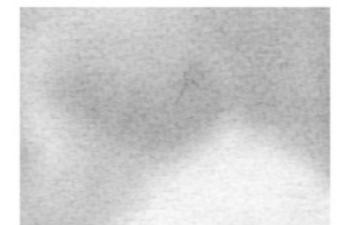


Fig: 73: Phil Hill (August, 2021) 'Phil Hill Photography' updated homepage.



Why do you keep a photograph that wounds so deeply?

WiFi Call 10:32
philhillphotography.com
book consisting of photographs
and a short story insert, which
be read together or independently.



Why do you keep a photograph
that wounds so deeply?



Fig: 74: Phil Hill (August, 2021)
Unreliable Narrator Computer view.



Fig: 75: Phil Hill (August, 2021)
Unreliable Narrator Mobile View.

Instagram

philhillphoto [Edit Profile](#)

237 posts · 622 followers · 1,153 following

Phil Hill
#philphotographs Portrait of Humanity 2021 'I hope this finds you safe and well'
published with Out of Place Books (see link). Also: @the_long_exp
www.philhillphotography.com/links-page

WIP **I hope ... b...** **Shared** **POH**

POSTS **IGTV** **SAVED** **TAGGED**

Post Insights

Messaging-related insights are unavailable due to privacy rules in some regions. [Learn More](#)

Interaction	Count
Heart	95
Comment	8
Share	--
Save	1

Interactions i

10 Actions taken from this post

Profile Visits

10

Discovery i

347 Accounts Reached
31% weren't following philhillphoto

Source	Count
Impressions	398
From Home	250
From Profile	78
From Hashtags	58
From Other	8

Follows

0

Fig: 76: Phil Hill (August, 2021) @philhillphoto Instagram profile view and post engagement for one Unreliable Narrator image.

Recognition

The project has been shared through various online platforms. I was interviewed for the ‘Photography in Higher Education’ episode of ‘The Togcast’ (Gregory, 2021) where I discussed Unreliable Narrator (Fig: 77). My submission for Fotofilmic gallery’s JRNL 9 was featured on their Instagram account (@fotofilmic) (Fig: 78). A portrait from the project was long listed for the Vice Magazine graduate call, which was put on display at the Photo Book café, London (Fig: 79).

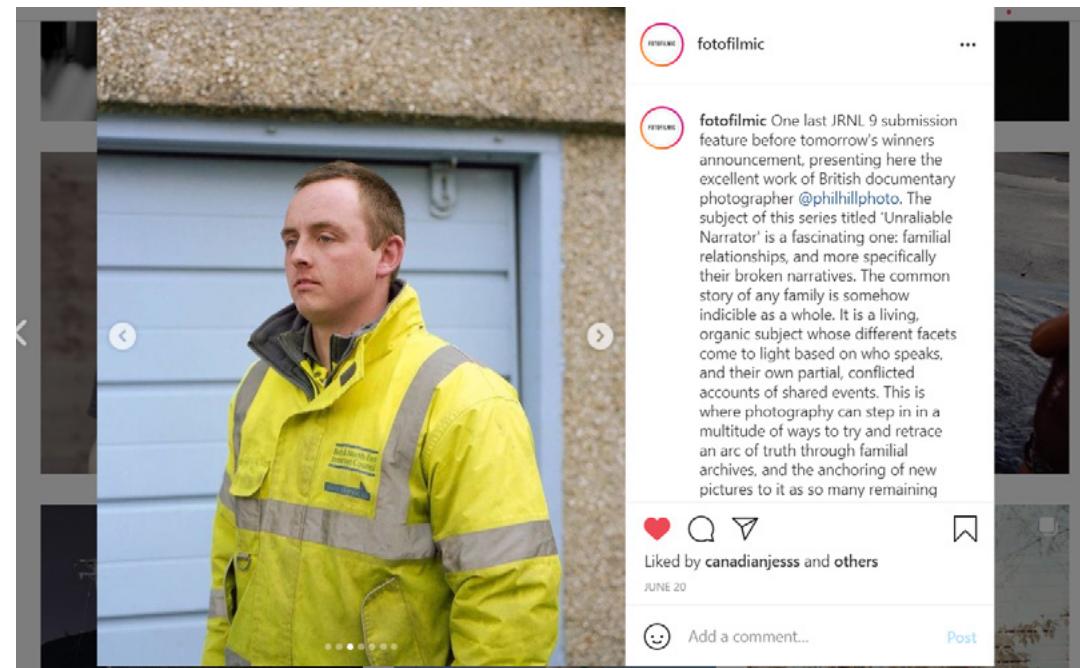


Fig: 78: Fotofilmic (2021) Fotofilmic Jrln submission feature on instagram.



The Togcast Photography Podcast
https://feed.podbean.com/thelogcast/feed.xml

In Focus: Photography in Higher Education
June 1, 2021

In this 'In Focus' episode we're talking about photography in higher education, both studying and teaching. We've talked to students, ex-students, tutors and mature returners to get a picture of the photographic degree scene.

There are a number of photography courses and options for studying for both young adults and mature students. In this episode we wanted to get a feel for a photography degree course, how to find the right one, what the role of the tutor is and what you might expect to do afterwards.

Contributors:

Big thanks to the following for contributing to the show:

Lottie Davies: lottiedavies.com
Lucy Cooksley: lucycooksley.com
Victoria Cooke: vphotography.website
Sarah Blandford: sarahblandford.com
Phill Hill: phillhillphotography.com

Fig: 77: Sam Gregory (2021) ‘The Togcast’ podacst



VICE

**UK Photography
Graduates, Send Us
Your Work**

BIG EXCITING UPDATE!
NEW COLLABORATION WITH PHOTOBOK CAFE!
IN REAL LIFE LAUNCH NIGHT!
IN REAL LIFE SHOWCASE OF ALL SHORTLISTED ENTRIES!
PRIZES!
NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE!

Fig: 79: Vice Magazine & Photobook cafe (2021) Longlisted graduate submission

Fotospeed Talk

I delivered a 30 minute presentation in conversation with Fotospeed where I spoke about my experience making the work and the research and concepts behind it (**Fig: 80**).

The Video can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyUylwyZy7E>



Fig: 80: Fotospeed (2021) Fotospeed talk with photographer Phil Hill.

Essay – Source Writing prize & Graduate Showcase

Writing is important to the development of the concept and the research. I wrote a short essay, which has been submitted to the Source magazine writing prize (**Fig: 81**), titled: '**The Absence of the Photograph.**' The project has also been submitted to the 2021 Source Graduate photography online showcase (**Fig: 82**)

The Essay can be viewed here:

https://philhillphotography.com/sketchbook/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The_Absence_of_the_PhotoGraph_Phil-Hill.pdf

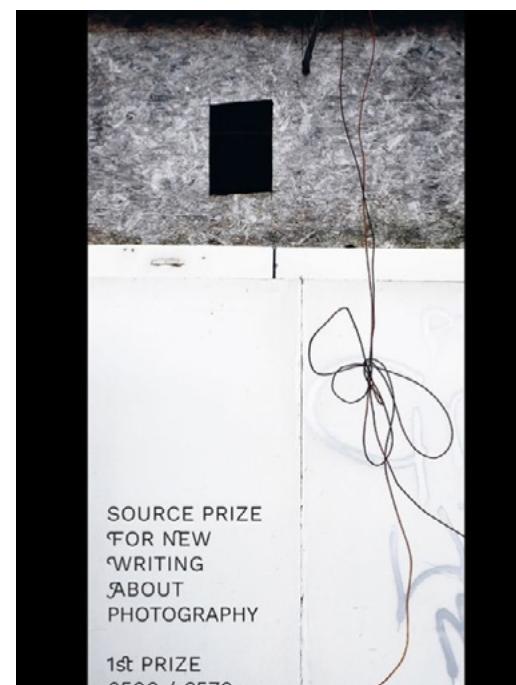


Fig: 81: Source Magazine (2021) Source Magazine writing prize open call.



Fig: 82: Source Magazine (2021) Source Magazine Graduate Online Call.

Feedback

Fotofilmic Gallery

The subject of this series titled ‘Unreliable Narrator’ is a fascinating one: familial relationships, and more specifically their broken narratives. The common story of any family is somehow indicable as a whole. It is a living, organic subject whose different facets come to light based on who speaks, and their own partial, conflicted accounts of shared events. This is where photography can step in in a multitude of ways to try and retrace an arc of truth through familial archives, and the anchoring of new pictures to it as so many remaining questions. (Fotofilmic gallery, 2021)

Paul Sng – Filmmaker & editor of Hidden Britain.

Sng is an independent filmmaker, having made ‘Poly Styrene: I Am a Cliché’ (2021) & ‘Dispossession’ (2017), which focus on under represented stories in the UK.

‘Good to chat last week and thanks for sharing the project. I think you have something interesting here, full of intrigue and drama. After looking at the PDF I wanted to know more, so I’d encourage you to decide on how you ultimately see the project (i.e. photography book with accompanying text, documentary film, etc.)’ (Sng, 2021).

Sunil Shah: Artist, photographer, and curator with an interest in photographic archives.

‘Thanks for sending me your project. It is very interesting and I like how you have used the archival images/family photos as a starting point to examining difficult aspects of the past. Its always very subjective when the project is personal

and always difficult to assess how effective photographs are in doing this job. However, I think that is what makes them perfect for this kind of work. allied to the very fact that history itself is indeterminate. Good luck with your work.’ (Shah, 2021)

Hanna-Katrina Jędrosz: Documentary photographer with a focus on narrative about place, people and the environment.

‘Thank you for your email. I’m a big fan of this project [...] I’ve just had a look and my initial thoughts and questions and provocations to you are:

- How does this topic make you personally feel? Don’t shy away from the personal in your writing just because it’s a documentation narrative. It’s good you pose questions and connect to a more universal human experience, but it’s your personal lived experience which will draw us in closer to the subject. Make us the viewers feel what you feel in relation to the narrative.

Hope this helps and provides food for thought.

Keep in touch!’ (Jędrosz, 2021)

Emma Bowkett: Director of Photography, FT Weekend Magazine.

Bowkett has been positive about the project, noting: “I like the new family work-interesting concept and the dummy is looking good.” (2021).

I have aimed to follow this up recently and unfortunately Bowkett was busy at the time owing to Arles and other projects, suggesting that I reply in a couple of months.

Feedback - Continued

Michał Iwanowski – Photographer with a strong focus of narrative

Thank you, Phil. I've looked through and will later read more of the text. The book gets your attention right away. You edited it well. I am intrigued and also got the clues, they have led me step by step, really nicely done. (Iwanowski, 2021)

Steph Driver - Audience Respondant

I consider it a real privilege for you to have shared these with me - they're incredibly personal and really emotional.

I read them two days ago, late one night and failed to reply - but I can honestly say I've sporadically thought about them each day since.

I've considered carefully if they have stirred something in me because I can identify with the feeling of having family secrets; or whether it's because as a parent I now have a sometimes overwhelming responsibility to make sure my children don't have that feeling as they grow up.

It is both straightforward and powerful - a combination not easy to achieve. It drew parallels for me with Naoise Dolan and her novel, Exciting Times. If you've not already read it, I recommend you do. I finished it in a day, I was so absorbed. In short, I love this and thanks again. (Driver, 2021)

Elizabeth Vogel - Audience Respondant

Thank you so much for sharing. What a fascinating piece of writing and written in such an engaging way. I like the shifts in time and the scenes are painted very intimately and also realistically. It must have been such a lot for you to take in to hear about your various family members in this way, especially only having your memories as a young child in the background. (Vogel, 2021)

Harry Man – Poet & former copy editor for Harper Collins.

I have been working with Man to continue development of the written element of the book. Man's experience of working on fiction novels and prose has been incredibly valuable in constructing this part of the book outcome. Man has been keen to work with me and provide feedback on the copy, regarding the story as 'very strong' (Man, 2021).

Future Plans

I have recently submitted to the following opportunities, and waiting for responses:

- Shutter Hub Year Book
- Portrait of Britain
- International Photography Award
- Foam Talent
- East Meets West
- Joan Wakelin Bursary

I intend to submit to dummy book awards as soon as my book is completed:

- Kassel Dummy Award
- Lucie Book Award (Where I can also submit in proposal form)
- Aperture Book award
- Foto Wien: Photobook Exhibition & Photobook Award
- Rake Collective - Community 2021: Practitioners-in-Residence

In addition to the self-published book, I will promote the project to be published for publications, such as. The FT Weekend magazine, Le Monde, BBC. I am also highly interested in publishing the project in other regions as I gain momentum with the work.

I will also be giving a talk about the project to a group of students at the college I work at.



Foam Talent Call

Fig: 83: Foam (2021) Foam Talent Call



Fig: 85: Kassel Foto Festival (2021) Dummy Award 2022



Fig: 86: Lucie Foundation (2021) Lucie Photo Book Prize

Bibliography

- Bowkett, E. (2021). Unreliable Narrator. [Email]
- Driver, S. (2021) Your Story. [Email]
- Fotofilmic & Hill, P., 2021. Fotofilmic Instagram profile. [Online] Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CQWToMYFRsB/> [Accessed 11 August 2021].
- Four Corners, 2021. Gallery. [Online] Available at: <https://www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk/gallery> [Accessed 24 July 2021].
- Gregory, S., 2021. In Focus: Photography in Higher Education. [Podcast] Available at: <https://thetogcast.podbean.com/e/in-focus-photography-in-higher-education/> [Accessed 11 August 2021].
- Hill, P., 2021. The Absence of the Photograph. 6 June. [Unpublished essay]
- Hill, P., 2021. The Latchkey Kids. [Online] Available at: <https://philhillphotography.com/sketchbook/2021/07/24/the-latchkey-kids-narrative-development/> [Accessed 24 July 2021].
- Hill, P., 2021. Unreliable Narrator - Book Flip. [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nL2MyZcAebU> [Accessed 11 August 2021].
- Iwanowski, M. (2021) Instagram Direct Message. [Online Direct Message]
- Jędrosz, H-K (2021). Portfolio Review thanks. [Email]
- Macaulay, E., 2021. Unreliable Narrator Ideas. [PDF]
- Man, H. (2021) Your Story. [Email]
- Shah, S (2021). Activating the Archive Question. [Email]
- Sng, P (2021). Unreliable Narrator. [Email]
- Vogel, E. (2021). Your Story. [Email]

List of Figures

Figure 1: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Abstracted images of the Step-father' from archive. Re-photographed and printed onto out of date darkroom paper. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Digital photograph of photographic fibre-based print].

Figure 2: Phil Hill (July 2021) 'Why do you keep a photograph that wounds so deeply' extract from 'Unreliable Narrator' [unpublished text].

Figure 3: Phil Hill & Unknown (January 2021 & 1970s) One of the cut photographs of my maternal aunt and paternal grandfather in family album. From 'Unreliable Narrator.' [Photograph].

Figure 4: Phil Hill (May, 2021) St Christopher Pendant. Given as Christening present. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 5: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Letter to Gran notes. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 6: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Baby's Family Tree with name changed. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 7: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Portrait of Dad. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 8: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Garden incinerator used to destroy documents. Parents Garden. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 9: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Garden Incinerator used to destroy documents. Brother's garden. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 10: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Bag of shredded paper waiting to be incinerated. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 11: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Water Fountain image stuck to back window for good luck and fortune. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 12: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Portrait of Taylor. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 13: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Book of Vitamins with bookmarks and notes. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 14: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Brick Circle for incinerator. Parents garden. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 15: Phil Hill (May, 2021) 'Jolly Pedlar mini-store' carrier bag used to store negatives. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 16: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Portrait of Melisa. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 17: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Disused building of the former Bowyers factory, Trowbridge. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 18: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Abstracted images of the Step-father' from archive. Re-photographed and printed onto out of date darkroom paper. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Digital photograph of photographic fibre-based print]. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 19: Phil Hill & Unknown (April, 2021 & 1990s) Photograph of 'Len' and Unknown person from family album. From 'Unreliable Narrator' [Photograph].

Figure 20: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Portrait of Darcie with Eye Patch. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 21: Phil Hill (June, 2021) The estate where mum grew up and we used to visit. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 22: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Portrait of Peter. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 23: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Portrait of Suzanne. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 24: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Bullet casing. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 25: Phil Hill & Unknown (March, 2021 & 1987) Cut photograph from Spanish holiday. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 26: Phil Hill (June, 2021) ‘Tom Sawyer: if I don’t know where I come from how can I know who I am?’ quote written on torn paper found in family archive. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 27: Phil Hill (March, 2021) ‘You have to realise that I live a rather strange life at the moment, which one day might change’ extract from ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Unpublished text].

Figure 28: Phil Hill (June, 2021) The estate where mum grew up and we used to visit. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 29: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Pine Trees on the Longleat Estate. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 30: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Portrait of Matt. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 31: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Ambar’s Cheshire Cat shoes. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 32: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Coral Betting slip in card. Found in family archive. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 33: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Newspaper clipping found in family archive. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 34: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Sunflowers painted by my brother as a child, framed by Gran in 1997. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 35: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Portrait of Jess. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 36: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Portrait of Sharon. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 37: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Postcard regarding ‘the man that calls around for Simon’s money.’ Found in family archive. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 38: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Coin bag containing hair from 1983 (my hair). From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 39: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Portrait of Matthew. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 40: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Portrait of Duncan. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 41: Phil Hill (April, 2021) Portrait of Ambar and Oscar. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 42: Phil Hill (July, 2021) Portrait of Claire. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 43: Phil Hill (March, 2021) ‘This... is not going to trouble me anymore’ extract from ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Unpublished text].

Figure 44: Phil Hill (May, 2021) ‘Mum at Peace’ card. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 45: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Newspaper clipping found in family archive. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 46: Phil Hill (May, 2021) Family Album. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 47: Phil Hill (June, 2021) Portrait of Mum. From ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Photograph].

Figure 48: Phil Hill (July, 2021) ‘There is more but I am going to write it all down for you to find after I die’ extract from ‘Unreliable Narrator’ [Unpublished text].

Figure 49: Emily Macaulay (2021) Binding – Screw Posts concept. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 2.

Figure 50: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 1 – Photo Pages. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 3.

Figure 51: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 2 – Missing Photos. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 4.

Figure 52: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 2 – Missing Photos. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 5.

Figure 53: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 3 – Carbon Copy. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 6.

Figure 54: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 4 - Photocopy. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 7.

Figure 55: Emily Macaulay (2021) Content Type 5 - Incidental. Unreliable Narrator Ideas [PDF] P. 8.

Figure 56: Phil Hill (2021) Unreliable Narrator - Book Flip. [Online video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nL2MyZcAebU> [Accessed 11 August 2021].

Figure 57: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy cover. [Photograph].

Figure 58: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional material: Negative envelope & short story. [Photograph].

Figure 59: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy image spread. [Photograph]

Figure 60: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copy page. [Photograph].

Figure 61: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copy detail. [Photograph].

Figure 62: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy typed quote page. [Photograph].

Figure 63: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy quote detail showing watermark paper stock. [Photograph].

Figure 64: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy utilised typewriter error. [Photograph].

Figure 65: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy carbon copied quote. [Photograph].

Figure 66: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Figure 67: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator Reproduction Negative additional insert [Top] and images from archive used for reproduction (minus intentional blank frame) [below]. [Photograph].

Figure 67: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. 'The Latchkey kids short story booklet. [Photograph].

Figure 68: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. 'The Latchkey kids short story booklet inside spread. [Photograph].

Figure 69: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. 'The Latchkey kids short story text detail. [Photograph].

Figure 70: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator dummy additional insert. 'The Latchkey kids short story booklet. Tracing paper pages detail showing differing levels of visible text. [Photograph].

Figure 71: Four Corners (2021) View of Exhibition Space. [Online] Available at: <https://www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk/gallery> [Accessed 24 July 2021].

Figure 72: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Four Corners Exhibition plan. [Digital Illustration & Photograph].

Figure 73: Phil Hill (August, 2021) 'Phil Hill Photography' updated homepage. [Online] Available at: <https://www.philhillphotography.com/> [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 74: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator Gallery computer view. [Online] Available at: <https://www.philhillphotography.com/portfolio/unreliable-narrator/> [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 75: Phil Hill (August, 2021) Unreliable Narrator Gallery mobile view. [Online] Available at: <https://www.philhillphotography.com/portfolio/unreliable-narrator/> [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 76: Phil Hill (August, 2021) @philhillphoto Instagram profile view and post engagement for on Unreliable Narrator post. [Online] Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/philhillphoto/> [Accessed 15/08/21]

Figure 77: Sam Gregory (2021) In Focus: Photography in Higher Education. [Podcast] Available at: <https://thetogcast.podbean.com/e/in-focus-photography-in-higher-education/> [Accessed 11 August 2021].

Figure 78: Fotofilmic (2021) Fotofilmic instagram profile. [Online] Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CQWToMYFRsB/> [Accessed 11 August 2021].

Figure 79: Vice Magazine & Photobook Café (2021) Graduate open call longlisted submission [online & exhibition].

Figure: 80: Fotospeed (2021) Fotospeed talk with photographer Phil Hill. [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyUylwyZy7E> [Accessed 18/08/2021]

Figure 81: Source Magazine (2021) Source Magazine writing prize open call. [Online] Available at: <https://www.source.ie/writingprize2021/> [Accessed 11 August 2021].

Figure 82: Source Magazine (2021) Source Magazine Graduate open call. [Online] Available at: <https://www.source.ie/graduate/submission/submission.html> [Accessed 15/08/21]

Figure 83: Foam (2021) Foam Talent Call. [Online] Available at: <https://www.foam.org/talent/foam-talent-call> [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 84: Format Festival (2021) Foam Talent Call. [Online] Available at: <https://formatfestival.com/news/2021/06/east-meets-west-new-masterclass-programme/> [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 85: Foto Festival Kassel (2021) Dummy Award 2022. [Online] Available at: <https://fotobookfestival.org/kassel-dummy-award/#:~:text=The%20KASSEL%20DUMMY%20AWARD%20is,exhibited%20at%20international%20photo%20events>. [Accessed 15/08/2021]

Figure 86: Lucie Foundation (2021) Lucie Book Award. [Online] Available at: <https://www.luciefoundation.org/lucie-photo-book-prize/> [Accessed 15/08/2021]