

'THE MOST PROFOUND SHOCK': TRACES OF THE HOLOCAUST IN SAM FULLER'S *VERBOTEN!* (1959) AND *THE BIG RED ONE* (1980)

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It is widely known that film-maker Sam Fuller soldiered during World War II, and that his experiences as a member of the First United States Infantry Division greatly influenced the subject matter, style, and sensibility of the films he made throughout his postwar Hollywood career (Figure 1).¹ Less known, however, is that a tangible fragment of Fuller's war experience survives in the form of a 22-minute, black-and-white, 16-mm film Fuller shot at the close of the European segment of the war.² On May 8, 1945, Fuller was asked by his Captain to prepare the 16-mm camera that his mother had sent him while he was overseas. Fuller's division had just liberated the Falkenau concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, where, as Fuller narrated it in his autobiography, 'In the barracks were men and women with hollow eyes, unable to move their emaciated bodies. They'd been tortured, beaten, and experimented upon' (*ATF* 214).³ The condition of the camp's inmates, which Fuller goes on to describe as 'beyond belief, beyond our darkest nightmares,' would not just remain part of the director's fraught psychological history; it would also become the literal subject matter for his first film, shot on May 9, 1945, 'V-E + 1,' as Fuller puts it in the white titling that precedes the film. As Fuller explains, 'So I returned with my camera, loaded and all that, and walked right into the camp. I didn't know that I was going to photograph, I was going to shoot my first movie... It might be the work of an amateur, but the killings in this are very professional.'⁴

Fuller's 'first movie,' as he terms it, depicts the First Division attempting to bestow a degree of respect and dignity upon the dead inmates of the camp. It also

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FIGURE 1 Sam Fuller, First United States Infantry Division, photographed in an unidentified European location in 1944. Courtesy of Christa Lang Fuller.

portrays a choreographed ritual played out before the camera: local townspeople are brought in to the newly liberated camp to carefully dress corpses that had formerly been thrown on top of each other in a small shed; the dressed corpses are ceremoniously laid out on white sheets, then stacked in a wooden cart, pushed and pulled by these same townspeople through their town, located just outside the camp's gates, and then uphill to a cemetery; finally, the bodies are placed in a single row in a mass grave, each body is covered with a white sheet, and the grave begins to be filled, at which point Fuller's film ends (Figures 2 and 3).⁵ The film also carefully attempts to catalogue evidence of the suffering of the now-dead camp's inmates, capturing emaciated bodies, sores, swelling, and rotting flesh, frequently in close-up shots that convey the source of the 'profound shock' that Fuller experienced upon seeing these things with his own eyes.



FIGURE 2 The local townspeople dress the dead and lay them out on white sheets in Sam Fuller's 16-mm film, "V-E + 1" (May 9, 1945). Courtesy of Christa Lang Fuller and the Academy Film Archive, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Fuller's Falkenau reel represents a peculiar drama of witnessing, one being repeatedly played out in various guises at newly liberated camps across Europe.⁶ Fuller captures these acts of witnessing in a fashion that reflects a multitude of perspectives, the most important of which include: select neighboring townspeople seeing up-close and for themselves the dire consequences of internment in the camp, which they vehemently denied any awareness of, and then having to parade through the town so that they would be seen by their own neighbors in this implicitly compensatory role; the camp's survivors watching this attempt at dignifying the dead and disciplining those whose passivity, the ritual and the film imply, enabled the deaths to transpire; the liberating soldiers both orchestrating and observing the aforementioned ritual; and, of course, Fuller (and his camera) capturing select moments in this unfolding narrative.

This extraordinary bit of amateur cinematography cannot simply be taken as Fuller's memory of Falkenau, but it is a striking record of the director's formative encounter with the inhumane conditions in the concentration camps. Fuller filmed and later edited his Falkenau footage in a fashion that is at once quite understandable (it follows a temporally sensible narrative path) and at the same time offers little insight into how, why, or by whose hands such a scenario as that discovered by his division came to pass.⁷ The film is thus explicit—it pictures clear evidence of inhumane treatment alongside an attempt to provide a dignified sense of closure for



FIGURE 3 With an American soldier in the lead, the local townspeople proceed through their town—located just outside of the camp—on their way to bury the camp's dead. Courtesy of Christa Lang Fuller and the Academy Film Archive, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

the camp's victims and survivors—and yet it can only offer a limited sense of what transpired within those gates.⁸ It offers vivid proof of Nazi abuses and yet it is an incomplete portrait, even in terms of this particular camp.⁹ A personal memento of the war (there is no evidence that Fuller's film was ever used in any official capacity); the film is also a necessarily partial replica of Fuller's own experience. It is, in other words, a highly subjective, focused, and personal documentary, testifying to Fuller's experience of bearing witness to the aftermath of the Nazi's campaign for racial purity and their pursuit of absolute power.

Fuller's Falkenau reel also functions as a mechanized, rational container, of sorts, for a situation and experience that was, as Fuller and many others would understand it, utterly irrational. As Saul Friedlander has noted, employing 'straight, documentary realism'—which Fuller certainly does here, even though this is not a film made with public exhibition necessarily in mind—to represent the Holocaust produces its own set of problems, not the least of which is the need for some sort of filter: 'that of memory (distance in time), that of spatial displacement, that of some sort of narrative margin which leaves the unsayable unsaid.'¹⁰ Although Fuller's Falkenau film does not offer an '*allusive* or *distanced realism*,' as Friedlander terms it,¹¹ we see evidence in Fuller's later, Hollywood-produced films of the director's quest for a distancing vocabulary with which to articulate his deeply personal experience of the Holocaust and the Nazi's camp system.¹² This quest, however, is complicated by the existence of this footage as an unerring reminder of the real—or at least Fuller's experience of the real—of that post-liberation moment and of the graphic knowledge it contained.

An awareness of Fuller's amateur film of Falkenau is crucial to understanding his later films, especially those about World War II, which will be the focus of the following pages. These films owe a fundamental ideological debt to this 'first movie' and I want to illustrate here the way that Fuller's career revolved around both addressing and re-imagining these same experiences that he memorialized on 16-mm in May 1945. This is not to say that Fuller's Falkenau film provides a simple window into the director's consciousness, although it is virtually unique in its depiction of such a singularly traumatic and important event in the film-maker's life. But Fuller's amateur film does provide us with privileged access to the very iconography of memory that Fuller worked with, and perhaps against, in the making of two films explicitly concerned with WWII and its aftermath: the largely fictional *Verboten!* (1959) and the semi-autobiographical *The Big Red One* (1980).¹³ As the following pages will illustrate, Fuller struggled with different aesthetic approaches to representing the Holocaust and the camps as he worked through the process of translating his own firsthand experiences into narrative cinematic moments.

Fuller's relationship to the historic footage preserved on his Falkenau reel is revealing precisely because of the contradictions and challenges its existence created. Fuller's sense of responsibility—first as a liberator and, later, as a keeper, commemorator, and narrator of those memories—is illuminated by an analysis of his evolving representational decisions in his Hollywood films. Fuller begins to wrestle with these issues in *Verboten!*, in which he employs surrogate archival footage to illustrate the moral education made possible by documentary images, even those gruesome images that often elicited a sense of 'profound shock' in those who viewed them. Interestingly enough, however, this is precisely the graphic vision of the Holocaust that Fuller opts out of, virtually altogether, in his later attempt to tackle World War II, *The Big Red One*, a film in which evidence of atrocity is shorthanded and the process of witnessing is made much more personal. For *The Big Red One*, Fuller adopts a stylized and perhaps even an anti-archival approach that calls into question the presumed efficacy of historically authentic but explicit images.

Eyewitness to that great agony: cinematic proof in *Verboten!*

Verboten! is Fuller's late 1950s film about end-of-war and postwar Germany, and his first attempt to confront World War II as a Hollywood director. The film depicts a budding American-German romance and the rise of a violent Nazi-inspired secret army—a terrorist ring, of sorts—the Werewolves, whose goal is to kill Americans with the hopes of driving them out of Germany, but who end up instead harming hungry and sick German citizens. In the film, David Brent (James Best) falls for a young German woman, Helga Schiller (Susan Cummings) who cares for him after he is wounded during a battle at the close of the war. The romantic plot allows Fuller to explore the implications of being a German versus being a Nazi, the ramifications of American occupation and German demoralization, and the tenuous future of the war-torn nation. However, Helga's younger brother Franz (Harold Daye) provides the pivotal source of dramatic conflict and carries the film's central message about documentary evidence and the value of witnessing. Fifteen-year-old Franz, who angrily blames American soldiers for his maimed arm, becomes involved with the

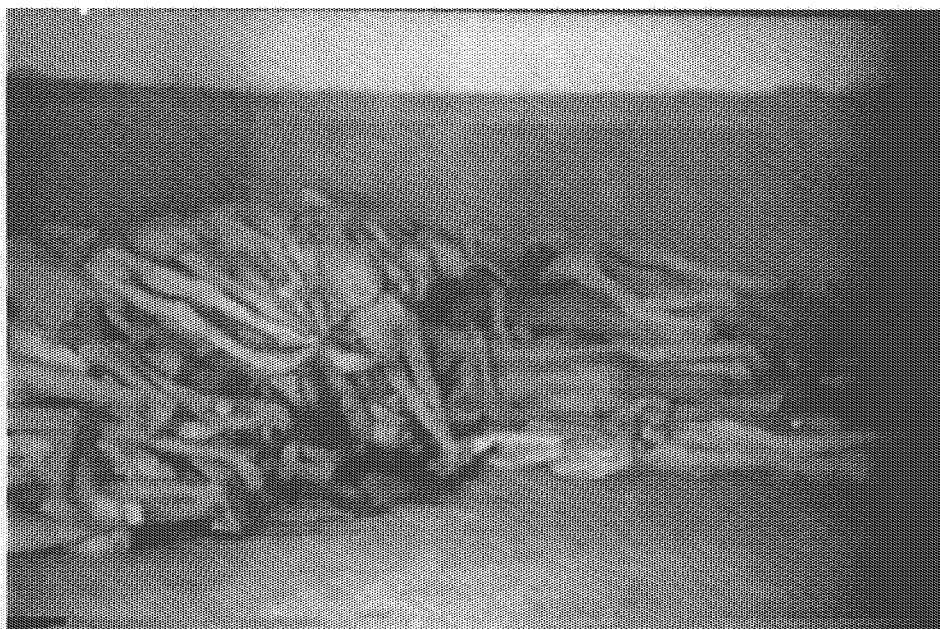


FIGURE 4 Fuller includes a disturbing but familiar image of stacked corpses in the Nuremberg trial sequence in *Verboten!*

Werewolves and is especially enchanted by the gang's proto-Hitler leader, Bruno (Tom Pittman). Franz blindly believes in Bruno's mission to perpetuate the Nazi vision of Germany and to follow Hitler's teachings, and the film climaxes with Helga's attempt to disabuse Franz of his infatuation with Bruno and with the Werewolves' ideology.

In order to deter Franz from following the same path that led Germans through the fateful course of the 1930s, Helga tries to tell him the truth about Germany under Hitler; however, she fails to convince him with words of what has transpired in his homeland. So Helga asks Franz, 'If I can prove to you what the Nazis did would you believe me?' and she proceeds on this mission by taking Franz to an event at which he can see things for himself: the Nuremberg trials, the sequence which Fuller aptly describes as 'the emotional centerpiece of the picture' (ATF 372). Fuller intercuts images of Helga and Franz, who sit in a spectator's gallery along with a few other observers, with documentary footage of the trials and with filmed evidence of various Nazi atrocities (Figure 4). This blend of fact and fiction is fascinating in and of itself, especially when considering how Fuller interweaves these archival materials into a fictional narrative. *Verboten!* privileges the compelling power of documentary imagery both in terms of legal evidence and in terms of supporting Helga's more personal persuasive argument; the 'factual,' in other words, greatly influences the 'fictional.'

Perhaps equally intriguing is that Fuller provides a voiceover narration for the footage, none of which is culled from Fuller's own 16-mm arsenal, *in his own voice*. In *A Third Face*, Fuller explains that: 'I had only a few days to do the picture, and I had to do it in a hurry. We were in a hurry when it came time to record that narration, and I couldn't find an actor to do it the way I wanted. It had to be delivered like a reporter,

scene and emotionless. I'd been an eyewitness to that great agony, so I used my own voice. It was tough to do, believe me. With *Verboten!*, I wanted to tell people the harsh truth and never let them forget what really happened during the Holocaust.

(ATF 374)

In addition to articulating his desire to perpetuate the mission of bearing witness to the devastating outcome of National Socialism, Fuller explains that he wrote his voiceover narration for the Nuremberg trial section of the film not based upon his own memories or interpretation, but by 'borrowing heavily from Supreme Court Justice Charles H. Jackson's actual opening statement at Nuremberg' (ATF 372).¹⁴ Fuller's borrowing here is motivated partly by his lack of firsthand experience; in fact, Fuller frames his absence at the Nuremberg trials as one of the few regrets of his life. Members of his division were interviewed to serve as guards for Nazi prisoners at the trial, but Fuller opted to visit his brother in Paris instead. As he put it in relation to his perpetual desire to eyewitness: 'What a missed opportunity. I could've watched the Nuremberg trials in person' (ATF 366).

Given Fuller's claim that his absence from the trials was the motivation for borrowing language and sentiment from an actual participant/witness, it is all the more interesting to consider Fuller's reasons for also using borrowed footage to document evidence of Nazi atrocities, which he was not only eyewitness to, but which he had himself filmed. Fuller claims that he got the 'war stuff' he used in *Verboten!* from 'military friends in Washington' and the Nuremberg footage 'from Ray Kellogg, my special-effects man . . . [who] . . . was a cameraman at Nuremberg. He gave me twenty reels of 16-mm, black-and-white footage he shot at the proceedings' (ATF 366). Fuller's explicit evidentiary mission here is served by a return to the archives, by an unearthing of Holocaust imagery that will correct Franz's vision of Nazi Germany and, implicitly, that will remind the film's spectator of the events of the recent past. But Fuller also understands his decision to employ his voice in the film as crucial to establishing the truth-claims of the images. His role as an eyewitness gives him what he perceives as a privileged ability and right to narrate the things—'to tell people the harsh truth'—that he himself had witnessed more than a decade prior. Fuller seems to understand this portion of the film as part of the larger ideological project of keeping the Holocaust alive in the consciousness of postwar audiences, in a way reminiscent of what Alain Renais and Jean Cayrol achieved several years earlier in *Night and Fog* (1955). This, however, makes it all the more perplexing that of all of the documentary footage Fuller uses in *Verboten!* outside of the Nuremberg trials, that Fuller does not incorporate any footage from his own 16-mm films, especially the material from his Falkenau reel.

Verboten! is not just invested in the power of archival footage, which is used throughout the film and not just in this trial scene; it is utterly reliant upon it. Archival footage, in fact, constitutes a significant portion of the film's content. Fuller uses it to lend realism and, no doubt, economy to a battle sequence, to a scene of postwar food foraging, as well as to this pivotal trial sequence. The documentary evidence Fuller includes in the Nuremberg sequence consists of precisely the kind of iconography that circulated immediately after the war and that has become instantly recognizable, and perhaps equally controversial, as conventional Holocaust



FIGURE 5 Another gruesome image from the trial sequence in *Verboten!*, likely of SS Women disposing of a deceased female prisoner after a camp liberation. This image is part of an explicit and graphic representation: images of people scavenging for food, prisoners behind barbed wire, children with arm tattoos, emaciated corpses and visibly sick people, gas chambers, piles of bodies, a naked corpse being thrown in a mass grave (Figure 5).¹⁵ If the archives are suppressed or elided in *The Big Red One*, as I will suggest momentarily, they are privileged here. As Michael Rothberg notes, 'a commitment to documentation and realistic discourse has come to hold an almost sacred position in confrontations with genocide';¹⁶ Fuller's use of archival footage is in keeping with the idea that to recreate such footage would represent a debasement or compromise. But despite the fact that Fuller was clearly aware that 'Americans had been overwhelmed with images of the Holocaust, proof of Hitler's monstrous Final Solution' in the immediate postwar period (ATF 365), *Verboten!* does not shy away from continuing this tradition of frank and graphic visual confrontation.

Apropos of the liberal use of this explicit footage, it is worth considering the degree to which Fuller's audience here is doubled: it is both Franz, whom Fuller clearly seeks to shock into ideological conversion, and his film's audience, whom he presumably need not discipline but perhaps to viscerally remind. This is, from an ethical perspective, an impossibly conflicted duality, and one that was equally present in the immediate era of post-liberation film spectatorship. As Douglas points out, the trope of atrocity films including footage of 'Germans forced to bear witness to Nazi barbarity,' precisely that act which Fuller captured in May 1945 in his own liberation film, functions problematically: 'although we might take grim satisfaction in watching the Germans forced to confront the legacy of their shame and quiescence, the film

places the 'innocent' viewer in much the same position as German civilians . . . If we think of viewing as a sanction, then the film seems to impose virtually the same punishment upon us.'¹⁷ Although noting the substantial difference between firsthand witnessing and watching a film, Douglas is right to note the conflict between directorial motivations and spectatorial responses across the spectrum of audiences. Where the presumption that exposing German civilians, like Franz, to such footage was done 'so that they would understand and accept the guilt of their defeated regime,' as Dagmar Barnow has pointed out, the motivations and potential outcomes of subjecting a 'foreign' audience to this same footage in the context of entertainment is decidedly less clear.¹⁸

In *Verboten!*, Fuller's narration of this Nazi atrocity montage seeks to guide the spectatorial response of his film's characters, but speaks equally to his film's audience: 'We will show you the defendants' own film. You will see their own conduct in the course of the conspiracy.'¹⁹ Not unlike the spectators depicted in Fuller's *Falkenau* reel, who watch the consequences of 'their own conduct,' Franz is compelled to witness that which he does not want to see. Perhaps not surprisingly, this visual and verbal assault 'works,' triggering Franz's moral awakening and effectively purging the indoctrinating influence of Bruno who has mis-educated him. Reverse shots of Franz interrupt the archival montage, as he progressively registers an understanding of what Nazism has wrought and what he has been complicit with. Franz begins to cry and looks away from the images when they become too much for him, but Helga intercedes and turns Franz's face towards the screen that he's been watching. 'Franz, I want you to look,' Helga says, 'Franz you've got to look, we will look together. This is something we should see, everyone should see, the whole world should see' (Figure 6).

Helga articulates Fuller's own logic here, justifying the recirculation of this footage for the morally justified purpose of remembering and not repeating. There is, however, a good deal of difference between showing von Ribbentrop, Göring, and von Papen sitting in a courtroom and showing disturbing visual evidence that testifies to the suffering of camp inmates. As Hanna Caven points out in relation to the use of liberation newsreels in the immediate postwar era, there is the troubling 'spectre of placing the Holocaust within an entertainment setting.'²⁰ Although this is a different issue entirely when considering the situation of screening newsreel images before a feature film, Fuller's decision to contain this footage within a fiction film—a romance, at that—forces us to consider the implications of unearthing these images in this context. Along these lines, the reviewer for the *Motion Picture Herald* observed that

Fuller includes some familiar newsreel footage of scenes taken in concentration camps to remind his audience of the enormity of the crimes of the Nazis . . . At times this serious purpose has the unfortunate effect of getting in the way of the action. Preachment and melodrama are difficult to mix.²¹

Although this reviewer, identified only as 'R.G.,' articulates no complaints about the explicit content of the newsreel images, the association of these images with 'preachment' and the subsequent declaration that they detract from the melodramatic core of the picture suggest the potentially risky nature of blending the fictional with the factual, the frivolous with the serious.

...the same view of the film's political message. ... as a warning, but the film seems to ... through seeing the physical ... a film that is right in ... and historical response ...



FIGURE 6 Helga physically forces Franz to watch the shocking film images that testify to Nazi abuses.

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Critical reactions to *Verboten!* suggest that the inclusion of the newsreel footage was, in fact, widely perceived as lending the low-budget film an important, if potentially alienating, patina of realism. In its March 16, 1959 review *The Hollywood Reporter* called the inclusion of 'considerable authentic documentary film concerning the horrors of the concentration camps . . . pretty ghastly,' then acknowledged that the footage 'is not only accurate but, when compared with the complete photographic record, comparatively mild.'²² The August 28, 1959 *Los Angeles Times* review argued that the footage was 'used very effectively to give the production a documentary quality.' *Variety's* March 16, 1959 review referred to 'the photographic record of Nazi atrocities' that Fuller uses, deeming it 'timeless horror and piercing documentation' providing 'grim authenticity.' *Boxoffice* offered a more cautious assessment in its March 23, 1959 review, describing the film as a 'downbeat tale' with 'startling clips of prison camp atrocities—these are not for the squeamish.' That every review of the film noted the inclusion of this footage suggests its remarkable status, especially in the context of a fictional narrative. The realistic nature of the footage may have been notable, but it did not, as the *Boxoffice* review suggests, necessarily make for comfortable mainstream viewing. In fact, it is worth noting that the film was banned in Israel, the censor reporting that the film's 'tendency and its contents are liable to hurt the feelings of the public in Israel.'²³ This is the type of reaction—not a misreading, but certainly an unpredictable and undesired response—that partly accounts for Fuller's rethinking the practice of using documentary and realist footage in *The Big Red One*, which was in fact shot in Israel. Offering the spectator realism is one thing, ensuring the nature of the spectator's response another.

I have no doubt that Fuller, who described himself as 'a nonpractising Jew' (*ATF* 479), sought to continue the project of bearing witness in *Verboten!* with the aim of keeping the memory of the suffering millions alive. However, what is perhaps most interesting about the film is not just that Fuller includes this footage, but that his use of it suggests a significant faith in the redemptive power and legibility of documentary evidence. Indeed, as a direct commentary about the value of cinematic evidence, this scene at the trial is fascinating. Franz does not appear to be at Nuremberg to watch the trial, but rather to see a movie of Nazi atrocities, things that 'the whole world should see' and which, the film assumes, will instantly convey an understanding that is in line with anti-Nazi sentiment. Coming from a film-maker who chose not to circulate his own version of this evidence—at least until a much later date and in a documentary framework—but who seemed equally unwilling to ignore or avoid the subject it depicted, Fuller's decision to lend his voice but not the 'harsh truth' contained in his Falkenau reel signals the conflicted relationships between witnessing, filming, remembering, controlling, and revising which the Falkenau footage posed throughout Fuller's career. Whereas Fuller's Falkenau reel tells a story, one that the director may have felt unwilling to fracture and insert into another narrative, the footage Fuller includes here functions more like snapshots of atrocity, less a story than pieces that intend to signify the whole. *Verboten!* certainly evinces an unerring faith in the awakening and healing power of seeing the consequences of the Holocaust on film and of the importance, maybe even the necessity, of being an eyewitness, however mediated, to atrocity. In fact, when Franz gets a chance to express his conversion to Brent, he tearfully tells him that: 'I saw Goering. I saw film. I didn't know. I didn't know.' Seeing film is here equated with an almost immediate understanding of the

truth. As Fuller, however problematically, articulates it in relation to his own Falkenau footage, 'a motion-picture camera doesn't lie' (ATF 217).²⁴

This was, in fact, the precise logic used by the Allied chief counsel for the prosecution at Nuremberg, whose opening statement prior to the screening of *Nazi Concentration Camps* revolved around his own 'conversion':

We will show you these concentration camps in motion pictures, just as Allied armies found them when they arrived . . . I am one who received during this war most atrocity tales with suspicion and skepticism. But the proof here will be so overwhelming that I venture to predict not one word I have spoken will be denied.²⁵

Jackson understood the act of spectatorship as replicating, at least to a certain degree, the experience of the liberators. This sense of discovery would have been more novel in 1945 than in 1959, but the 'overwhelming' shock produced by these images is understood as outweighing any possible disbelief in their veracity and in their meaning as signifiers of Nazi wrongdoing. This is an especially telling conviction in the context of *Verboten!*, for what Fuller does in this Nuremberg sequence is not just unleash a barrage of traumatizing images on his filmic audience, but also attempt to control the audience's response to the images through reverse shots of Franz that convey an 'ideal' reaction to the footage.

Indeed, Franz's spectatorship might best be understood as a condensed and idealized version of the collective witnessing process depicted in Fuller's Falkenau reel, in which local townspeople are forced to see that which they vehemently denied being aware of, even though they lived just outside the gates of the camp.²⁶ Franz's experience reaffirms Fuller's sense of the transformative power of witnessing at the same time as it acknowledges the impossible contradictions inherent in possessing, in every sense of the word, such carefully constructed evidence of 'man's indescribable cruelty' (ATF 217). In fact, what makes Franz's reaction most interesting is that it represents a controlled and perfectly realized response to the process of witnessing: he sees the evidence, he understands it, he changes. This is the fantasy of documentary evidence's effectiveness dramatized in a somewhat melodramatic fashion. Sentiment aside, *Verboten!* offers a decidedly more explicit documentation of Nazi-era abuses as well as of the war's aftermath than appears in Fuller's other fiction films. By the time of his late-career homage to World War II, *The Big Red One*, we find Fuller presenting a highly selective reenactment of Falkenau's liberation, which centers on the trauma of individualized witnessing and removes itself starkly from documentary, graphic representations of that which he witnessed in May 1945 and which he selectively but forcefully revisited in *Verboten!*

Without documentary intentions:²⁷ *The Big Red One*

Fuller ends the Falkenau chapter of *A Third Face* with a series of provocative questions: 'How could we tell the world about what we'd experienced? About what we'd witnessed? How could we live with it ourselves?' (ATF 218). Fuller begins to answer these questions in *Verboten!* and continues this project of remembering, coping with,

and representing in *The Big Red One*, which attempts precisely to tell the world about the experience of the war and its conclusion. However, the film also refuses to approach this representational task in a conventionally autobiographical fashion; or by using graphic Holocaust imagery, as in *Verboten!*; or by including excerpts of Fuller's own 'archival' footage, a practice he employed in other contexts.²⁸ Fuller, in part, seems to be working through his own ethical understanding of Holocaust representation, grappling with a question Dominick LaCapra asks at the beginning of *History and Memory After Auschwitz*: 'What aspects of the past should be remembered and how should they be remembered?'²⁹ Although specifically revisiting Falkenau—or rather a Falkenau set reconstructed in Israel, where much of the film was shot³⁰—in the final sequence of *The Big Red One*, Fuller re-imagines his experience at the camp and, perhaps most interestingly, revises the witness-bearing component captured in his 16-mm footage and in the trial sequence in *Verboten!*.

Indeed, Fuller seems to have spent his career searching for an appropriate cinematic grammar with which to deal with the war and its aftermath. Fuller made *The Big Red One* after years of writing and talking about his World War II experiences and especially about his desire to make a film depicting 'all the nuts and bolts of foot soldiering' (ATF 475). Frustrated by Hollywood's heroic tradition of war film-making characterized by 'grand combat or glorious heroes' (ATF 475), Fuller intended to de-romanticize the war by representing elements of his own experiences on the front. But, as Fuller explains in his autobiography, 'I had no intentions of making a documentary. No audience would stomach the reality of war. It was too gruesome' (ATF 475). Although realizing that cinema could never approximate the 'horror of war' (ATF 475), Fuller claimed to both want to represent a more real version of war (in comparison to Hollywood's romantic mode) and yet to distance himself from the documentary tradition and perhaps from the responsibilities with which such representations are saddled. If the documentary form—or at least documentary elements—might bring audiences closer to the 'reality of war,' then we are left with the question of what changed between Fuller's use of archival evidence in 1959 and his refusal to entertain a relationship with documentary realism in this more personal representation of the war?

I am not sure that I can provide a definitive answer to this question, but I do want to take issue with Fuller's claim here that he 'had no intentions of making a documentary'; in fact, I want to suggest that Fuller's *The Big Red One* can be understood precisely as a different kind of documentary, a selective reenactment infused with a healthy dose of Fuller's often hyperbolic sense of narrative condensation and color. Like Bill Nichols, who finds Sergei Eisenstein's use of reenactment in *Strike* an attempt 'not to give us a pseudo-authentic impression of what events were really like but to give substantive form to the political unconscious and radical subjectivity itself,'³¹ I want to suggest that *The Big Red One* evidences Fuller's belief in the impossibility of conveying anything beyond an impressionistic reenactment of the war in general, and of the effects of the Holocaust in particular. Nichols sees Eisenstein as privileging fidelity to the political significance of what he depicts, as opposed to a commitment to the factuality of the events. Fuller's decision to sidestep certain aspects of his own experience—specifically the iconic images of the Holocaust that he documented in his Falkenau footage and included in *Verboten!*—suggests that he had concerns about the circulation of those images, and of spectatorial reactions to them.

That Fuller based *The Big Red One* on his own experience is no surprise. As he puts it in *A Third Face*, ‘Every frame of my picture would be based on firsthand knowledge’ (ATF 475).³² Fuller positions himself here as a privileged conduit for testimonial realism, granting the film authenticity based upon experience in a fashion reminiscent of his voiceover claims in *Verboten!* But he does not make *The Big Red One* explicitly about ‘Sam Fuller’s’ war memories, opting instead to displace his experiences across semi-fictionalized protagonists. The film has one character, Zab (Robert Carradine), who is an acknowledged stand-in for Fuller; other characters—such as the cartoon-drawing Griff (Mark Hamill)—possess different aspects of the Fuller persona. But the film distances its factuality through the gauze of fictional characters who only approximate real people doing things that really happened. A quick comparison of the film’s major narrative events—from the infamous testicle scene, to the birthing scene, to the young child whom the Sergeant (Lee Marvin) attempts to rescue at film’s end—with the expressly autobiographical *A Third Face* reveals that Fuller claimed these as real experiences, or at least close variations on them. Fuller did, indeed, seem to want to replicate certain aspects of the war as closely as possible. In his discussion of location scouting for the film, he looked at ‘actual battle sites’ but found that ‘they no longer had “the feel” of reality,’ compelling him to shoot the film in other than the ‘authentic’ locations, a decision that reflects the degree to which Fuller was seeking out a particular kind of recreated reality.³³

What is most notably absent from *The Big Red One* and its ‘factual death,’ especially from its final Falkenau sequence, are the representational tropes that had, by the time of the film’s release, become well-established in Holocaust iconography: the stacks of corpses, the mass graves, bunker after bunker of emaciated prisoners, etc.³⁴ In fact, we get nothing in *The Big Red One* that is at all resonant of any of the footage Fuller shot at Falkenau in 1945. Instead, Fuller significantly edits his Falkenau experience in the ‘Czechoslovakia May 1945’ section that comes at the close of *The Big Red One*. He substitutes two individualized moments of catharsis involving Griff and the Sergeant for the graphic, group ritual choreographed by the liberators at Falkenau in 1945. In some ways, Fuller stops the story before it’s over.

This portion of *The Big Red One* begins with a depiction of the battle to take the camp, showing the armed German resistance to American forces. During this battle sequence, three of the 1st infantry soldiers, including Fuller’s doppelganger Zab, open the doors to one of the camp’s buildings and are confronted with the sight of prisoners and, the film implies, the realization of what has transpired at the camps. It is hard not to anticipate a version of what we know to be Fuller’s visual experience, his memories of the status of the living and dead at Falkenau; but such expectations are defied by what the film provides. *The Big Red One* marks this moment with a bit of unusual formalism (at least in the film’s context): as each of the men opens separate doors into the building, a series of individual zooms into close-ups of the GIs, and then a series of extreme close-up reverse shots of their discovery signal the monumental nature of this encounter. They enter a dimly lit room in which we see individual or slow panning shots of six prisoners, their dark-ringed eyes barely illuminated, their faces only marginally visible (Figure 7). The reaction shots of the GIs signify that what they are seeing is traumatic, but we must trust their reactions—and our own iconographic knowledge of the Holocaust—for evidence of the trauma beyond that implied by the shadowy images. Despite Fuller’s description in the Weiss documentary of the camp’s

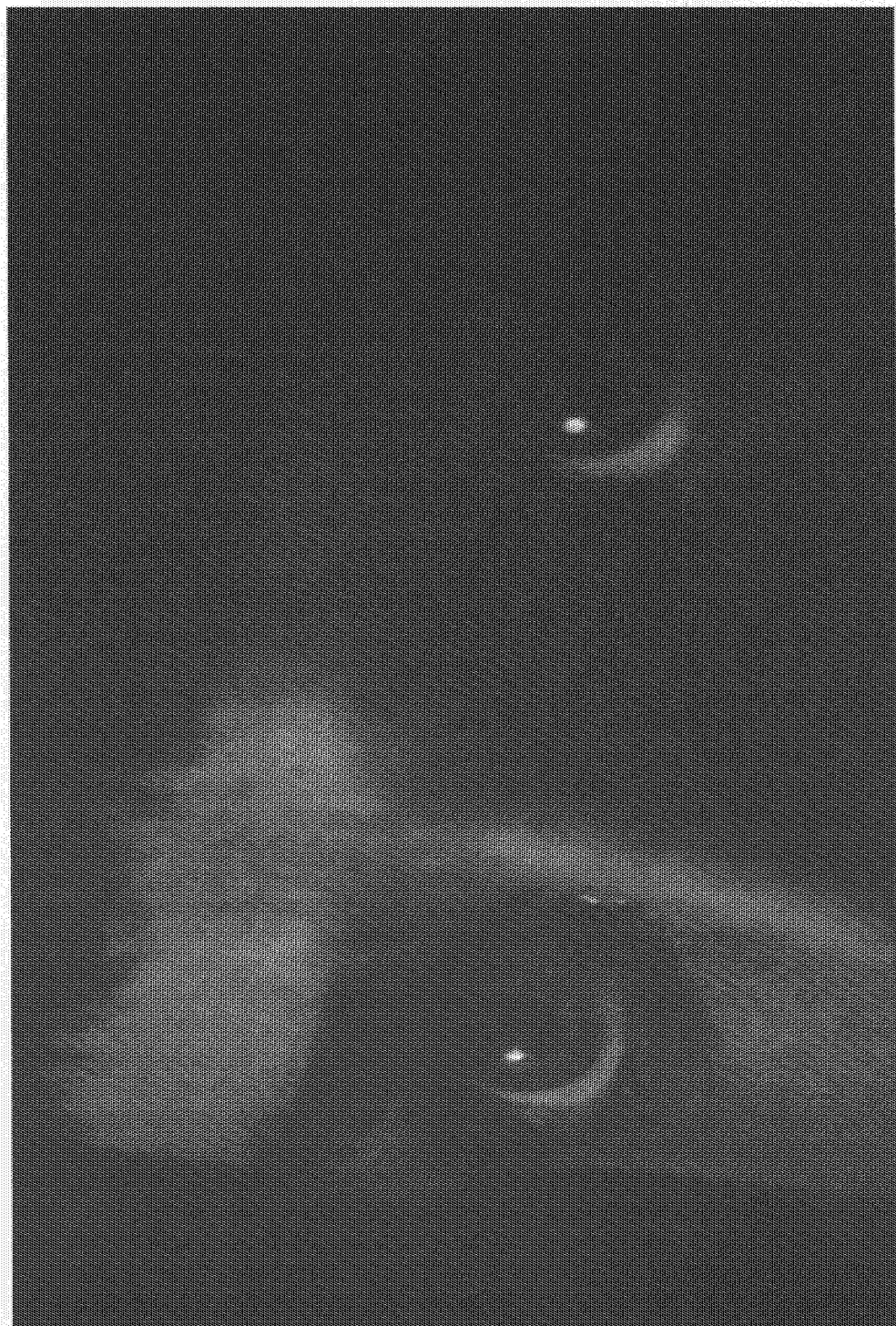


FIGURE 7 Fuller's abstracted shorthand for the terrors discovered after the liberation of Falkenau takes the form of a series of extreme close-ups of prisoners' eyes, far from the graphic iconography we get in *Verboten!*

prisoners—‘It’s very easy to remember those faces’— Fuller does not attempt to recreate a realist or sustained representation of those faces, which appear briefly and largely in shadow before the film moves on.

This concise scene is really the only time the camp’s prisoners are represented, alive or dead, with two important exceptions that enable personal redemptive moments: first as skeletal remains in the crematorium encountered by Griff, and last in the form of a young boy whom the Sergeant attempts to restore to health. Indeed, if Fuller found the conditions at Falkenau ‘too much to bear’ (*ATF* 215), perhaps he also found it too much to re-present in this most personal of cinematic contexts. Fuller’s oft-cited line about the impossibility of adequate cinematic realism—that ‘To make a real war movie would be to occasionally fire at the audience from behind the screen during a battle scene’ (*The Big Red One*, 435)—is worth remembering here, for Fuller spares his audience—and perhaps himself—of having to re-witness (and in Fuller’s case re-enact) the traumatic spectacle of the Holocaust’s aftermath almost altogether (what might Fuller have described as an adequate way to make a ‘real Holocaust movie’?).

Fuller replaces the realist study of the war’s consequences that he authored at Falkenau in 1945 with two emotionally resonant, decidedly Hollywood moments that provide a surprisingly tidy—if also emotionally brutal—closure to this story of the first infantry division during the war. Fuller’s editorial decisions in *The Big Red One*—his elisions and additions—speak to the director’s own questions, which open this section. These decisions, however, also reveal Fuller’s assumptions regarding his audience’s familiarity with what I have here been calling the Holocaust’s iconic images to fill in the blanks left by his film. Rather than ‘the bodies,’ which are unknown, discarded sites of trauma, Fuller capitalizes on the immensely personal violence of witnessing itself. Entering the crematorium and discovering skeletal remains in the ovens is a shocking experience for Griff, but it also allows him to resolve his hesitation to kill, which is established earlier in the film. Griff finds a German soldier hiding and compulsively shooting an empty gun in one of the ovens. Griff not only kills the German, whose eyes are shown in an extreme close-up reverse shot that echoes that of the camp’s prisoners, but Griff shoots him repeatedly, punishing the perpetrators of the war’s atrocities in one symbolic sweep through this vengeful, if narratively justified, act.³⁵ This is quite a different—and, of course, more immediately rewarding—outcome when compared to the one Fuller filmed, in which bystanders are asked to witness and to participate in a mannered closure to the irrational, chaotic Final Solution. But it is also one that allows Fuller to express the fury that results from witnessing such a scene, albeit from a position of moral certainty, that of the ‘heroic liberator.’³⁶

There is, however, one member of this division who attempts—and fails—to create his own personal version of redemption. The only other camp survivor that the film represents is a young boy whom the hardened, war-weary Sergeant tries to nurse back to health (Figure 8). The film devotes a significant portion of its final scenes to this relationship, doomed to end with the Sergeant’s tender efforts dashed when the fragile child succumbs to the death that seems destined for him. But the tragedy of the boy’s passing does not negate the incident’s oddly poetic sentiment, its tidiness as a symbol for the closure of the war, one which Fuller substitutes for alternative images of the graphic inhumanity and unsure future left in the wake of the Nazi’s



FIGURE 8 The Sergeant attempts to save the only survivor of Falkenau represented in *The Big Red One*.

concentration camps. Although it may be a failed attempt at recuperating or representing the losses enacted throughout the film, this moment also leaves the audience with its only image of the liberated dead.

When viewed in the context of Fuller's Falkenau footage, these two narrative moments function as condensations of what Fuller was well aware of as the realities of the camp liberations. Fuller was fully cognizant that his representation of the camp in *The Big Red One* was fundamentally inadequate, certainly in terms of its mimetic function. Discussing his conversation with a young Israeli man who was hired to play the SS soldier hiding in the crematorium oven tells us something about both the bizarre context of the camp's recreation in Israel and the significant gap between fictional recreation and reality in the Falkenau sequence:

The kid confessed that he didn't know that the camps were as horrible as the set we'd recreated. Taking him aside during a break, I explained how the real camp we liberated at Falkenau was much, much worse. I told him about the smell of death that permeated the place, about the emaciated corpses. He was stunned. What the hell were they teaching those kids at school? Certainly not reality.

(ATF 478)

It is interesting that Fuller has created both a horrific simulated camp experience that jolts the actor into a realization about history and that he feels compelled to narrate how the real Falkenau was 'much, much worse' in order to 'stun' the actor into a better understanding of that history. Fuller's clearly pained sense of the inadequacy of public knowledge about the Holocaust, reflected in his question about the young

man's education, also suggests the degree to which his film was caught between the worlds of commerce, entertainment, and a personal, moral sense of obligation to educate. Fuller seems quite aware that some things are impossible, likely even undesirable, to replicate with complete fidelity.

Following the logic of this moral framework, Gary Weissmann has discussed Steven Spielberg's statement 'that in making *Schindler's List* he drew a line between what is viewable and what is not viewable.'³⁷ Weissmann concludes that the actual events of the Holocaust were deemed by Spielberg as not viewable but the filmic re-creation of them as viewable, which Weissmann claims is a morally tenuous position. Using the observations made about the film by Spielberg, who considers the Holocaust 'much too impossible and obscene to picture,' alongside documentarian Claude Lanzmann's critique of Spielberg's film, Weissmann concludes that Spielberg draws a kind of moral line in which certain 'events from the Holocaust should be rendered as filmic images' while others should not.³⁸ Certainly, as Weissmann points out, 'there is a sense that it is obscene to re-create too much,' but it is also the case that the desire 'for the most realistic, most convincing representation of atrocities . . . puts some atrocities beyond the limits of what can be shown—so that, in effect, they disappear from 'history'.³⁹

The Big Red One, I would argue, enacts just such a disappearance, taking in some ways the opposite representational approach from *Schindler's List*, a film specifically about the Holocaust and not, like *The Big Red One*, about the war as a whole. While *Schindler's List* may, as Weissmann argues, 're-create the Holocaust as a spectacle that can be witnessed and mourned,'⁴⁰ Fuller's film curiously deprives its audience of that sense of witnessing the spectacular trauma and drama that he documented in 1945 and which circulated widely in newsreel films in the spring of the same year. Instead, Fuller grants his audience intimate, even manageable moments of witnessing. Fuller is not exactly revising history in *The Big Red One*, but he is controlling his representation of it, much as he controlled Franz's spectatorial response to it in *Verboten!* In both instances he finds, it seems, a distancing cinematic vocabulary with which to make sense out of the nonsensical Nazi universe, perhaps as much for himself as for his audience. And if Fuller is absolving himself of the documentarian's responsibilities, refusing to include archival footage or to reenact it to create a more historically accurate picture of the way May 1945 looked to his division, he still seems invested in the authority granted him by his personal experience to determine *how* to tell the world about the camps.

The Big Red One might, then, be understood as a kind of selective reenactment that uses the past and yet refuses strict fidelity to the director's actual experience. Fuller's reenactment does not enter the territory of graphic representation, but only in this finale to the film, which deals explicitly with the camps. Elsewhere, for example, we see guts spilling out on the battlefield in an attempt to reveal the unglamorous, unheroic nature of war. But to veer into this mimetic territory in relationship to the camps does appear to cross a line that Fuller was, at this point in his career, unwilling to breach. Claude Lanzmann has argued, in relation to *Schindler's List*, that 'reconstruction is tantamount to fabricating archives.'⁴¹ Fuller's revision of his own archival history in *The Big Red One* is less a fabrication than a refusal to reiterate—and consequently, one might argue, to exploit—these traumas in their most readily recognizable form. Fuller reenters the territory of his own traumatic encounter with



FIGURE 9 Revisiting the act of filming in a profoundly different context: Sam Fuller makes a cameo appearance with his 16-mm camera in the reconstructed re-release of *The Big Red One*. In the aftermath of the Holocaust in a fashion that leaves untouched the actual record of that suffering, that 16-mm footage or some approximation of it that implicates Fuller's presence by returning him to the scene of the crime. As Fuller explains in his autobiography:

Somehow, I'd survived those horror-filled years of total war. The only way to live with those goddamned memories and keep my sanity was to talk about them, write about them, and, finally, three and a half decades later, make a motion picture about them. (ATF 480–481)

Fuller's desire to narrate his experience as a form of therapy reminds us of both the personal nature of Fuller's film-making and of the psychological scars he bore. For Fuller, 'coming to grips' with the war and with the Holocaust meant turning his memories into a story.⁴² In this light, it is highly suggestive that the recently released 'reconstructed' version of *The Big Red One* (2004) restores a scene to the film in which Fuller himself makes a cameo appearance as a 'U.S. War Correspondent' (so reads his arm patch) shooting a 16-mm camera (Figure 9).⁴³ The war correspondent appears in the section of the film entitled 'Germany October 1944,' seven months prior to the liberation of Falkenau. It is fascinating that Fuller opted to make his appearance in the guise of an official documentarian of the war (certainly he could have taken on any number of other roles), essentially reoccupying the same position—but with official sanction—as he did almost forty years prior. However, what this correspondent captures in this brief sequence is not the horror of battle or the aftermath of the Nazi

camp, but rather the innocuous and incidental happenings of downtime: soldiers and German kids who come before the lens and, often at the correspondent's urging, smile and wave.⁴⁴

The scene fluctuates between color—representing the diegetic world of *The Big Red One* in which Fuller as the correspondent is pictured filming—and black and white stock, representing the 16-mm film being shot. The most interesting of the subjects of this 16-mm camera are a pair of German boys who are playing in SS helmets and who frolic in front of a large banner that is later interpreted by an onlooker as reading: 'In spite of devils and death and the cries of our enemies we will swing together and Germany will be free. Adolph Hitler.' The kids are ignorantly and perhaps, given Fuller's career-long representation of children, innocently operating inside of Nazi ideology, even while surrounded by American GIs. They are playing soldiers in a fantasy of Germany that we are well aware is, like the young camp survivor at film's end, doomed. Resonating with a moment in Fuller's Falkenau footage in which a young boy shoots a toy gun at the American convoy accompanying the corpses to the gravesite through the camp's neighboring town, Fuller here presents a detour from the battle-focused trajectory of the film's narrative to provide a moment of ideological irony, one invoked by the juxtaposition of play soldiering with the banner's metaphor of fascistic and implicitly genocidal swinging together.

Fuller's virtual elision in *The Big Red One* of the horrific discoveries and the purportedly redemptive ritual depicted in his 'first movie' is certainly a revision of his iconography of memory as we have access to it both in print and on film. Understood as a document of selective reenactment, *The Big Red One's* final images suggest Fuller's understanding of the challenges facing the film-maker bent on representing the trauma of war and this war's most difficult representational subjects. It may also reflect Fuller's awareness of the possible dangers associated with the kind of documentary footage he so liberally used in *Verboten!* As Toby Haggith has argued in relation to the wide circulation of film footage taken at Bergen-Belsen by the British Army's Film and Photographic Unit, repeated images of the tens of thousands of dead and diseased at the camp risked demeaning and dehumanizing

Holocaust survivors in the mind of the viewer . . . There is also a danger that the viewer becomes hardened and even brutalised by the endless views of naked, emaciated corpses, the anonymity of the bodies distancing us from what the Holocaust meant in human terms.⁴⁵

Perhaps an awareness of precisely this potential of numbing his spectator and dehumanizing the camp's victims (think of the Israeli censor's reaction to *Verboten!*) lies behind this significant omission in *The Big Red One*, for certainly Fuller's 16-mm Falkenau film must be understood as representing a concerted attempt to rehumanize both the dead and the survivors of that camp, however difficult or perhaps even impossible a mission that might have been.

That Fuller reconstructed himself in *The Big Red One* as an official Signal Corps cinematographer shooting documentary footage (a role which, I should add, was suppressed in the original release) suggests a reimagining of his role as spectator and recorder of events where both functions are, by virtue of the banality of the images, stripped of their potential danger. Narrative is Fuller's salvation, his mechanism for

'coming to grips' with the memory itself and controlling its reception. 'Telling the world,' for Fuller, and 'living with it himself' meant creating distance from that original cinematic artifact and packaging the memory within narratives whose outcomes—both spectatorial and otherwise—were, as much as is possible, under the director's control. Despite Fuller's ardent desire to avoid risking any potential misinterpretation of that primal cinematic evidence, the duty to bear witness ultimately swayed him to unearth his 16 mm record of Falkenau in an attempt to combat such Holocaust 'minimizers', and therefore deniers, as France's Jean-Marie Le Pen.⁴⁶ Participating in the making of Emil Weiss's 1988 documentary allowed Fuller an opportunity to show and to comment reflexively on – perhaps even to testify on behalf of – images that had, if only surreptitiously, always been a part of his personal cinematic history.

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude goes to Christa Lang Fuller, who facilitated my exploration of Sam Fuller's 16-mm 'home movies' at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy Film Archive. Thanks to the Archive's director, Michael Pogorzelski, and to Snowden Becker for archival assistance that has gone well beyond the call of duty. Special thanks to Jonathan Auernbach, Frances Guerin, Devin Orgeron, and Maria Pramaggiore for their comments on drafts of this article, and to Emil Weiss, who provided me a copy of *Falkenau, The Impossible*.

Notes

- 1 The quote in the title of this article is from the 'Falkenau' chapter of Sam Fuller's posthumously published autobiography, *A Third Face* [hereafter *ATF*] (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 213–214. I use the term 'Holocaust' in the title of this essay to signify the Nazi's systematic attempt to persecute, contain, and eradicate European Jews. However, due to the ambiguity concerning the religious and ethnic identities of many of the inmates at Falkenau—Fuller describes them as 'a tragic mix of Jews, Czechs, Poles, Russians, Gypsies, and antifascist Germans' (*ATF* 215) –I also use the term with an awareness that Fuller encountered and addressed the broader campaign against individuals and groups whom the Nazi's perceived as inferior or dangerous, and therefore as subject to persecution and internment.
- 2 Fuller's original 16-mm film made at Falkenau has been deposited by Christa Lang Fuller at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy Film Archives. I have discussed this 16-mm film in detail in *Liberating Images: the politics of witnessing in Sam Fuller's amateur war movie, Film Quarterly*, 60(2) (Winter 2006), 38–47.
- 3 According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia, 'On May 8, 1945, units of the 1st liberated Zwodau and Falkenau an der Eger, both subcamps of the Flossenbürg concentration camp. Both camps were located on territory that today is in the Czech Republic . . . Falkenau housed 60 prisoners.' See <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10006132>. The SS began a forced evacuation of around 22,000 prisoners from Flossenbürg

on April 20, 1945, in a 'death march from the main camp toward Dachau in Germany,' just three days before U.S. troops liberated the camp (<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005537>). In an email dated May 29, 2007, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Senior historian Peter Black clarifies that Flossenbürg—an SS concentration camp established in May of 1938 near stone quarries—had subcamps in the annexed Sudetenland as well as in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and that Falkenau is some 9–12 miles north northeast of Flossenbürg. But there remains significant confusion when trying to pin down details about the camp that Fuller's division liberated. In a June 14, 2007 email, Peter Black affirmed that the 1st Division liberated a facility in Falkenau on May 8, 1945, but according to USHMM records the facility held only female prisoners from Zwodau, a women's subcamp of Flossenbürg. However, there is not a single woman prisoner—alive or dead—in Fuller's footage. Black further explained that Falkenau camp appears to have been liquidated in July 1944, but that 'the documentary record breaks down in Zwodau after the middle of April 1945,' noting that it is possible that other agencies—like the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office)—or even civilian authorities may have run a camp in the Falkenau area that has not been adequately documented. It is clear that the complex network of subcamps, especially at the chaotic close of the war, requires ongoing investigation and that every artifact that surfaces—such as Fuller's 16-mm film—offers a missing piece of the puzzle.

- 4 The quote is from Emil Weiss's *Falkenau: The Impossible* (France, 1988), a documentary in which Fuller discusses his 16-mm Falkenau footage. The only available film copy of Weiss's documentary in North America resides at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy Film Archive; Emil Weiss was kind enough to send me a copy of the film. My viewing of Weiss's film has unearthed a bit of a mystery: Fuller's 16-mm 'V-E + 1' film, contained within Weiss's, begins with handwritten black titling on white paper, whereas the copy on deposit at AMPAS begins with shots of commercially produced, but still amateur-style, white lettering. At some point Fuller must have re-shot the title sequence, but it is unclear when this happened or what happened to the presumably original handwritten title sequence.
- 5 Hanna Caven discusses the outrage expressed by some of the liberators at Belsen over the dehumanizing implications of bulldozing bodies into mass graves. It should be noted that the liberation of Belsen transpired before the unconditional surrender of German forces, and that the 10,000 plus dead found by liberating soldiers there does not compare with the comparatively modest scale of Falkenau. Caven asserts that burying these 'forgotten dead' was part of a larger attempt to mentally rehabilitate the survivors, to establish 'some sense of moral order' from the chaos of the camp. For a thorough account of the Belsen liberation, see Hanna Caven, *Horror in our time: images of the concentration camps in the British media, 1945*, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 21 (2001), 214ff.
- 6 For more on the witnessing rituals taking place at liberated concentration camps and on the politics of photographing and disseminating images of these acts see Robert Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the liberation of Nazi concentration camps* (New York, Oxford, 1985); Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: views of war and violence* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1996); Susan Carruthers, *Compulsory viewing: concentration camp film and German re-education*,

- Millennium*, 30(3) (2001), 733–759; Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust Interpretations of the Evidence* (New York, I.B. Tauris, 2004); Carol Zemel, Emblems of atrocity: Holocaust liberation photographs, in Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (eds) *Image and Remembrance: representation and the Holocaust* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2003); and Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: televising the Holocaust* (New York, Oxford, 1999).
- 7 In his discussion of the use of documentary footage at the Nuremberg trials, Lawrence Douglas makes the point that the compiled documentary film, *Nazi Concentration Camps*, used at the tribunal actually ‘provides few clues as to who is responsible for the atrocities in a more tangible, i.e., juridical, sense’ and that therefore ‘the film fails to clarify more specific questions of legal responsibility.’ Lawrence Douglas, *Film as witness: screening Nazi Concentration Camps before the Nuremberg Tribunal*, *Yale Law Journal*, 105 (November 1995), 473.
- 8 Stella Bruzzi comes to a similar conclusion about the ‘Zapruder film’ of John F. Kennedy’s assassination: ‘the non-fictional image’s mimetic power cannot stretch to offering a context or an explanation for the crude events on the screen.’ Furthermore, ‘The Zapruder film shows us everything and it shows us nothing; it is explicit but cannot conclusively confirm or deny any version of the assassination.’ *New Documentary: a critical introduction* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998), 16 and 18.
- 9 For example, in Fuller’s ‘Falkenau’ chapter of *ATF* he discusses other discoveries at the camp that are not included in this film, most notably the crematorium and mounds of human teeth, eyeglasses, and artificial limbs (*ATF* 214).
- 10 Saul Friedlander, *Probing the Limits of Representation* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992), 17.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 I want to make it clear that I do not think that Fuller witnessed the Holocaust, per se, but rather some very specific effects of the Holocaust and the larger Nazi campaign, and these under particular circumstances as an American soldier involved in the liberation of the camps. Any liberating soldier’s experience of the camps or the treatment of its prisoners would differ tremendously from the experience of camp prisoners, or Nazi soldiers, or civilians for that matter.
- 13 In keeping with Fuller’s journalistic and personally experiential *modus operandi*, *Verboten!* is ‘ripped from the headlines of that time’ (*AFT* 369) and *The Big Red One* is based on Fuller’s war experiences, albeit recast in semi-autobiographical form. Fuller kept detailed journals during the war, including sketches and story ideas that he used throughout his career, and his films are almost always based on real-world events, his own or someone else’s.
- 14 Note that the chief counsel at Nuremberg was Robert H. Jackson, not Charles H. Jackson.
- 15 Given Fuller’s generous inclusion of documentary footage in *Verboten!*, it is curious that Stanley Kramer’s later film, *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), has been so widely acclaimed and debated for its seven-minute newsreel footage sequence which, Alan Mintz has argued, ‘was the first time in general American mass culture in which the terrible things that had been done to the Jews of Europe were being publicly acknowledged.’ Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, 2001), 103. In *A Third Face*, Fuller explains that Columbia distributed *Verboten!* ‘and did pretty well with the

- picture at the box office' (*ATF* 372), which means that Fuller was really the first film-maker to present this material in a mainstream film. However, Fuller's film cannot be compared in terms of its familiarity to American audiences to Kramer's highly visible, star-studded tale about the trials. See also Lawrence Douglas, *Film as witness*, for a brief discussion of the use of footage from *Nazi Concentration Camps*, made for the Nuremberg trials, in Kramer's film, 477.
- 16 Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: the demands of Holocaust representation* (London, University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 99.
 - 17 Lawrence Douglas, *Film as witness*, 472.
 - 18 Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: views of war and violence* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1996), 6.
 - 19 Although I am unsure of the sources of Fuller's documentary footage beyond what he states in *A Third Face*, readers should consult Frances Guerin's 'The energy of disappearing: problems of recycling Nazi amateur film footage', *Screening the Past* (<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/stp17/newfirstrelease/fr17/FGfr17.html>) for a discussion of the use of Nazi film footage in popular culture and the various ideological implications of such uses. Guerin's discussion of the oscillation between 'film as record and as representation' is especially relevant here.
 - 20 Hanna Caven, *Horror in our time*, 239.
 - 21 From the Core Collection at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures, Los Angeles, CA. Unpagged review of *Verboten! Motion Picture Herald*, March 21, 1959.
 - 22 All of the reviews cited in this paragraph are from the Core Collection at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures, Los Angeles, CA. None of them are pagged.
 - 23 Anti-Nazi 'Verboten' is Banned in Israel, *Hollywood Reporter*, June 7, 1960, unpagged. From the Core Collection at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures, Los Angeles, CA.
 - 24 There were, in fact, significant concerns about ensuring that the liberation footage being shot by official Allied photographers appeared untampered with to combat possible future claims of fakery or special effects. See, for example, the affidavits that appear in Stevens's *Nazi Concentration Camps* and the letters surrounding the making of the film that was broadcast as *Frontline: Memory of the Camps* that are reproduced in Elizabeth Sussex, 'The Fate of F3080', *Sight and Sound*, 53(2) (Spring 1984), 92–97.
 - 25 Robert H. Jackson, quoted from the Tribunal proceedings by Lawrence Douglas, *Film as witness*, 450.
 - 26 See *ATF* for Fuller's explanation of this witnessing and of the frustrating proximity of the townspeople to the camp, 213–218.
 - 27 As will be discussed momentarily, the phrasing here invokes Fuller's statement about his intentions in making *The Big Red One* (*ATF* 475).
 - 28 As Fuller explains to Jim Jarmusch in *Tigrero* (1994), his personal 16-mm footage ends up in a number of his films. Fuller explains that he would often put a 'W' in his scripts signifying 'a weird flavor of the film' which meant that he would insert his own previously shot, idiosyncratic footage. Fuller discusses in some detail his use of color footage he shot in the 1950s in Brazil in his black-and-white film *Shock Corridor* (1963).

- 29 Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998), 1.
- 30 For a journalistic discussion of the shoot in Israel, see Daniel Selznick, An Old Pro on the Go Again, *New York Times Magazine*, May 4, 1980, pp. 48ff.
- 31 Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: questions of meaning in contemporary culture* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1994), 113.
- 32 The exception to this is, of course, the World War I sequence with which the film begins.
- 33 Sam Fuller, *The Big Red One* (New York, Bantam, 1980), 434–435.
- 34 See Cornelia Brink for a useful discussion of the history of the term ‘icon’ and its relationship to concentration camp photography. Cornelia Brink, Secular icons: looking at photographs from Nazi concentration camps, *History and Memory*, 12(1) (Spring– Summer 2000).
- 35 It is worth noting that in *A Third Face* Fuller discusses this as a factual incident that he witnessed (214–215). The same goes for the Sergeant’s attempted rescue mission after the liberation, which occurred with a young girl instead of a young boy (217–218).
- 36 Carol Zemel uses this term in Emblems of atrocity: Holocaust liberation photographs, in Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobwitz’s *Image and Remembrance* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2004), 206.
- 37 Gary Weissman, A fantasy of witnessing, *Media, Culture and Society*, 17 (1995), 294.
- 38 Ibid., 294.
- 39 Ibid., 294 and 304.
- 40 Ibid., 306.
- 41 Claude Lanzmann, Why Spielberg Has Distorted the Truth, *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* (April 3, 1994), p. 14.
- 42 Fuller explains that making *The Big Red One* was ‘how I ultimately came to grips with my experience’ (ATF 122).
- 43 *The Big Red One* was drastically cut by the studio for its original release. For years, Fuller lamented this truncation of his epic vision of the war and Richard Schickel’s reconstructed version adds over forty minutes to the original release print based upon Fuller’s shooting script and rediscovered vault materials.
- 44 Fuller’s reels of 16-mm footage from the war contain a good deal of similar clowning around, which is logical given the practicalities of when a soldier like Fuller would have had the time to shoot footage. Additionally, in his Falkenau reel there is a moment at which a group of American soldiers all look up at the camera and Fuller explains in Weiss’s documentary that he ‘just told them to look at the camera,’ similarly directing the gazes and faces of his subjects. In the reconstructed release of *The Big Red One* the Fuller character keeps asking people to perform for the camera, in one instance instructing a little girl to look at *his* camera instead of at the 35mm that is clearly hovering in the non-diegetic space alongside him.
- 45 Toby Haggith, Filming the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen, *Holocaust and the Moving Image: representations in film and television since 1933* (London, Wallflower, 2005), 34.
- 46 See ATF 510–511 for Fuller’s discussion of his decision to share his 16-mm Falkenau footage with documentary film-maker Emil Weiss.

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