

In Amateur Death

A Reflection on Snuff Movies

Enrico M. Riccobene

enrico.riccobene@phd.unict.it

The study of amateur cinema gives rise to ethical and aesthetic dilemmas that are well-known to anyone who has engaged in such research (see, for example, Caneppele 2022). However, there has been little attention paid to a particular and extreme type of film that, while sharing stylistic features and production methods with amateur cinema, differs significantly in content: snuff movies. The term *snuff movie* is used to describe films or videos that depict scenes of real violence, including torture, murder, and rape. Although the revulsion provoked by such imagery confines this genre to a limited audience, it is evident that interrogating the manifestations of violence when captured on film (even if done in an amateurish manner) can rekindle dormant discussions on the essence of the medium. Even if unconsciously, Pasolini begins his examination of the sequence plan from a snuff movie, the most famous of which is the Kennedy assassination filmed by Zapruder (Pasolini 1967). Furthermore, ethical concerns pertaining to death and cinema are extensively discussed by Bazin (Bazin 1951). More recently, Nancy has addressed the issue of violence in and of images (Nancy 2002). The three cases presented here illustrate the dilemmas underlying reflections on cinema, which have been accelerated by the exponential expansion of digital amateur cinema. With the spread of smartphones, any murder or suicide has the potential to become a snuff movie, as evidenced by the growth of dedicated telegram channels, which have replaced the older “shock sites” and the circulation of images in the obscure world of the deep web. These images are often leaked from judicial investigations. It is evident that these images are not intended for public viewing. Nevertheless, they exist, they spread, and they intrigue. This contribution is not intended as a definitive theorization of the snuff film, but rather as a starting point, a proposal that – starting from a review of some distinctive formal and productive features common to all the artefacts more or less correctly identified as *snuff films* – may initiate a reflection that contextualizes these products within the studies of amateur cinema, trying to trace the reasons why these stylistic peculiarities may correspond to a greater degree of realism in the perception of the “spectator”.

Keywords: Snuff Movies, Amateur Films, Death, Web, Pornography, Violence

In Amateur Death

A Reflection on Snuff Movies

Enrico M. Riccobene
enrico.riccobene@phd.unict.it

The study of amateur cinema gives rise to a number of ethical and aesthetic issues that are well-known to anyone who has engaged in such research. However, there has been a paucity of attention paid to a particular and extreme type of film that, while sharing stylistic features and production methods with amateur cinema, differs significantly in terms of content. This is the case with snuff movies.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, we will commence with an attempt at definition and subsequently reflect on the points of contact between amateur cinema production and a unique otherness, such as the one in question. Since it is indeed «a terrifying cultural phenomenon for which there is no proven starting point, merely speculation, conjecture, and confusion»¹ this contribution is not intended as a definitive theorization of the snuff film, but rather as a starting point, a proposal that – starting from a review of some distinctive formal and productive features common to all the artefacts more or less correctly identified as *snuff films* – may initiate a reflection that contextualizes these products within the studies of amateur cinema, trying to trace the reasons why these stylistic peculiarities may correspond to a greater degree of realism in the perception of the “spectator”.

1. What do we mean by Snuff Movies?

The first difficulty is to define the object around which a specific imaginary, linked to fiction and mainstream horror films, has been created. Films such as *Snuff* (M. Findlay, R. Findlay, H. Fredriksson, 1976), *Hardcore* (P. Schrader, 1979), *Cannibal Holocaust* (R. Deodato, 1980), *Benny's Video* (M. Haneke, 1992), *Strange Days* (K. Bigelow, 1995),

¹ N. Jackson, *Shot, cut, and slaughtered: the cultural mythology of Snuff*, in N. Jackson, S. Kimber, J. Walker, T. J. Watson (ed. by), *Snuff. Real death and screen media*, Bloomsbury Academic, London 2016, p. 1.

8mm (1999, J. Schumacher), to name but a few², have contributed to the codification and construction of a snuff aesthetic that refers to very precise stylistic recurrences, to which we shall return. But in order to really speak of snuff, formal-aesthetic elements are not enough. In defining the true snuff film, truth comes first and foremost into play.

A snuff film is a feature film that depicts an actual murder, without the use of special effects, for entertainment or financially exploitative purposes. Snuff films rely on shock value to scare, disgust, and horrify the audience. Some snuff films exclusively feature a murder, but many also include acts of sexuality and sexual violence. Snuff films are believed to have originated as part of the early pornography industry; over time they have become more integrated with the rest of the film industry. Though many snuff films do exist, there has never been conclusive evidence that any of them are authentic and use more than special effects and editing to depict the killing on screen.³

One proposed system for classifying this phenomenon is that put forth by Giuseppe Previtali⁴, who, citing Hagin, defines snuff movies as «films in which a real murder is committed in front of the camera to entertain or make profit»⁵. He further states that «it is necessary for the circulation of these videos to take place clandestinely, for the enjoyment of a small group of paying viewers»⁶.

Building on these valid observations, Previtali calls into question the veracity of the assertion that objects consistently meet these characteristics. Indeed, despite decades of discussion, there is no definitive evidence that snuff movies exist. One of the earliest attestations of the term *snuff* in reference to this type of film dates back to 1971, in Ed Sanders' book *The Family: The Story of Charles Manson's Dune Buggy Attack Battalion*, but it is challenging to definitively ascertain examples that align with the aforementioned definition.

It is evident that there are numerous instances of films that employ techniques to create a realistic ambience in the depiction of acts of torture and death. For instance, the Italian *Mondo Movies* of the 1970s and the Japanese *Guinea Pig* series are cases in point. Additionally, there are films that portray real deaths and torture, yet they are not intended for

² For a more complete list of titles, see *ivi*, pp. 12-14.

³ The Sexperts, *Snuff Films*, in "Sexinfo Online", 01/12/2014, online: <https://sexinfoonline.com/snuff-films-2/>.

⁴ Cfr. G. Previtali, *L'ultimo tabù. Filmare la morte fra spettacolarizzazione e politica dello sguardo*, Meltemi, Milano 2020; G. Previtali, *Dimmi che non è vero. Lo snuff movie come limite del visivo*, in "Fata Morgana", 14, 2018.

⁵ B. Hagin, *Killed Because of Lousy Ratings. The Hollywood History of Snuff*, in "Journal of Popular Film and Television", 38/1, 2010, p. 44, as cited in G. Previtali, *Dimmi che non è vero*, cit., p. 54.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

the commercial or entertainment purposes that define a snuff movie. One might consider the execution footage disseminated by the Islamic State, as discussed by Previtali; the pervasive circulation of images captured during contemporary armed conflicts, in the age of Telegram; the broadcasting of live deaths on television or social media; or the collection of horrifying footage and videos, as seen in compilations such as the notorious *Faces of Death* and *Traces of Death*, or the controversial *Pain Olympics* video competition promoted by BME magazine.

Effectively, the snuff movie would be at the ideal intersection of these two trends. One illustrative example that might address this positioning is the video infamously known by the title *3 Men 1 Hammer*. The video, filmed in Ukraine in 2007, depicts the brutal and violent execution of Sergei Yatsenko, a 48-year-old Ukrainian man, by means of a hammer. This was perpetrated by two young men, Igor Suprjuk and Viktor Sajenko, who were responsible for the deaths of numerous individuals. In presenting this as an emblematic example of a video misclassified as a snuff movie, Previtali fails to consider one of the hypotheses, which has never been proven, that the two had planned a series of similar murders to meet the demands of an unknown web buyer. The other reason Previtali excludes *3 Men 1 Hammer* from this classification is the film's far-from-contained circulation. However, this argument fails to consider that the film's release occurred at a later time and in a different context than its eventual planned destination, as a result of the media uproar caused by the case.

The veracity of these hypotheses is, however, irrelevant to our objective, which is to adopt an alternative perspective on the problem. Our interest is not in establishing whether such films exist or not, but in identifying the reasons why their existence is becoming increasingly probable as video shooting and distribution technologies evolve and become more widely used. We are also interested in the ways in which the production and aesthetics of amateur cinema are involved in these dynamics and the ethical consequences of this discourse.

2. Production issues

The first death captured in moving images that I was able to intercept is that of the unfortunate inventor Franz Reichelt, who in 1912, during the testing of a parachute system he invented, threw himself from the Eiffel Tower. This moment was immortalized by the

cameramen present on site to witness the event. From this moment, there is a continuous line through the advent and spread of the first amateur filming technologies to the theorization of the existence of the Snuff Movie phenomenon.

Amateur cinema emerged as an evolution of commercial and industrial cinema with the advent of so-called reduced formats, which allowed filmmakers greater freedom from the constraints of set dynamics.

We have previously defined snuff movies. We will now define what is meant by the term *amateur cinema*, with reference to the definition provided by Patricia Zimmerman.

MOST SIMPLY, PROFESSIONALISM suggests performing a task for financial return, and amateurism indicates doing something for pleasure, for the sheer love of it, as its Latin root – *amare* – denotes. However, these rather value-laden, popular distinctions conceal much more complex social relations: while the professional conducts activities for work, an amateur labors away from work, in free time or leisure time. In amateurism as a social and historical phenomenon, work and free time are not locked into simple binary oppositions; rather, the absence of one defines and imbricates the other.⁷

Although the initial portion of this definition appears to conflict with the preceding discussion on snuff movies, it becomes evident that the concept of amateurism does not inherently negate the possibility of profit, provided that the author's primary objective is not the pursuit of financial gain. In such instances, the author's status would be that of a professional. It can be concluded that the eventual author of snuff films would not be considered a professional, but rather an amateur in a perverse interpretation of the term. In her historical analysis of film amateurism, the author identifies the key technological developments that have shaped the evolution of filmmaking practices over the past century. She highlights the rise of 9.5 mm and 16 mm formats, which gained significant traction due to their affordability and accessibility, becoming the dominant systems in the industry.

3. Aesthetic issues: why do we think some movies might be snuff movies?

The two systems were standardized and commercialized in 1922 and 1923, respectively. From the outset, the paucity of resources made it challenging to contemplate the potential for artifices and effects that could “falsify” the content of the footage. Furthermore, the

⁷ P. R. Zimmermann, *Reel families. Social History of Amateur Film*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1995.

technologies enabled a gradual transition away from the “set”, which contributed to the emergence of aesthetics typically associated with amateur images and an enhanced sense of realism. However, it was particularly in the context of World War II that the author identifies a pivotal shift in the public perception of the heightened realism of images captured in these formats, due to the specific ways in which these technologies were employed during this historical period.

The camera itself displaced thought and narrative and bloomed into an aggressive recording instrument that directly experienced the war, foreshadowing the participatory realism that would later surface in actual film imagery. The aesthetic linked with nuclear families perished from the primarily technological determinations of the war.⁸

Consequently, «the proliferation of documentary films during World War II trained audiences to digest a rawer, less-polished cinematic realism»⁹.

This aesthetic perception is therefore a cultural acquisition, representing a leap forward from Bazinian ontological realism. In this context, the latter is no longer linked to the physical-chemical materiality of the shooting medium, but to the stylistic peculiarities of this type of shooting. Consequently, the issue at hand is one of style, as defined by Susan Sontag¹⁰.

The images are characterized by a lack of stability, poor resolution, and low-quality visuals. They are frequently blurred, under or overexposed, and zoomed in and out abruptly, with subjects poorly framed. These stylistic traits serve to distinguish the “amateur style”.

These are those «linguistic-discursive strategies capable of proposing (and at the same time constructing) a certain spectatorial project, a certain predisposition toward the image» that Previtali alludes to in his analysis of *Mondo Movies*. These stylistic features are also present in “candidate” snuff movies, such as the aforementioned *3 Men 1 Hammer*. Given that the objective of the snuff movie, as previously defined, is to achieve the most realistic effect, it seems inevitable that it will be influenced by the aesthetic approach inherited from amateur cinema.

4. Ethical issues: violence and death shooting

⁸ Ivi, p. 97.

⁹ Ivi, p. 91.

¹⁰ Cfr. S. Sontag, *On Style*, in ead., *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 1966.

The transition from 16 mm to 8 mm (1932) and then to Super8 (1965)¹¹, resulted in the introduction of increasingly inexpensive filming systems to the market, thereby facilitating the democratization of amateur filmmaking. This diffusion continued to grow exponentially with the transition to video, first with the VHS standard, which was the most widely used, making its debut in 1976, and finally with digital, with DV and MiniDV hitting the market in the mid-1990s¹². In the present era, the global proliferation of smartphones has resulted in 85.76% of the world's population possessing a device suitable for amateur filmmaking at all times¹³ –often characterized by the aforementioned “style”. Consequently, the economic and technological disparity between those who can afford and manage such tools and those who cannot has been significantly reduced, leading to an increase in the number of images captured. These images encompass a diverse range of forms.

It is noteworthy that a number of the most notable instances of fatal gun violence in history were captured on camera by individuals with no intention of doing so. We may consider the most emblematic of cases: the film of Kennedy's assassination shot by Ukrainian-born tailor Abraham Zapruder. This prompted Pasolini, among others, to question the nature of cinema (and death in cinema) from an amateur film¹⁴. The ethical issue of real death in cinema is a recurring theme (one of the most notable elaborations is Bazin's)¹⁵. However, for a film to be classified as a snuff movie, it is not sufficient that death occurs; there must also be violence in the death. As Nancy posits, it is precisely in the violence that the veracity of these images lies.

It is important to highlight the ambiguity on which all direct or indirect approval of violence feeds. There is no doubt that truth itself – what might be called, dare I say, the true truth [*la véritable vérité*] – is violent in its own way. It cannot irrupt without tearing apart an established order.¹⁶

¹¹ P. R. Zimmermann, *Reel families. Social History of Amateur Film*, cit.

¹² Cfr. C. Solarino, *Video produzione digitale. Il segnale, le apparecchiature, gli studi*, Vertical, Milano 1999.

¹³ Statics by Bankmycell.com (source: <https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/how-many-phones-are-in-the-world>).

¹⁴ Cfr. P. P. Pasolini, *Osservazioni sul piano sequenza*, in id., *Empirismo eretico*, Garzanti, Milano 1972.

¹⁵ Cfr. A. Bazin, *Death Every Afternoon*, in I. Margulies (ed. by), *Rites of Realism. Essays on Corporeal Cinema*, Duke University Press, Durham 2003.

¹⁶ J.-L. Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. by J. Fort, Fordham University Press, New York 2005, p. 17.

In Nancy's reflection on the veracity of violence and the violence of veracity, as a preliminary consideration to an examination of the violence and veracity of images (in their totality), additional elements are identified that are conducive to analytical inquiry.

Violence always makes an image of itself, and the image is what, of itself, presses out ahead of itself and authorizes itself. It is this fundamental character of the image that should concern us, rather than the mimetic character that the *doxa* attaches, above all, to the term *image*. Even when the image is mimetic, it must fundamentally, by itself and for itself, count for more than an image; otherwise, it will tend toward being nothing but a shadow or a reflection [...].¹⁷

In a similar manner to the aforementioned image, truth «is also, essentially, self-manifestation. Truth cannot be simply “being”, and in a sense it *is* not at all, since its being is entirely in its manifestation. Truth shows or demonstrates itself»¹⁸.

As mentioned above, the theoretical inclusion of snuff movies within the context of a specific film production, rather than merely the *Mondo Movies*, has been posited in numerous horror films that employ snuff imagery. This leads us to conclude that there is an aesthetic veracity to such films. In light of these considerations – even if it is evident that Nancy is not explicitly discussing cinema, but rather the image in its various forms – it is nevertheless straightforward to comprehend how the subject under examination is constituted as a boundary object for reflection on the relationship between images, truths and violence. A true image of a true violence: «The violence of art differs from that of blows, not because art remains in fiction, but on the contrary because it touches the real». Especially in this sense, violent death constitutes «a special crisis in believability, a threshold of realism and its own critique»¹⁹. Consistent with what has been observed so far:

[Snuff] Acts on the fiction/reality dichotomy that has always been the basis of cinema's fascination [...] it could be considered a subgenre of realism: because it is based on the idea that if the death of a real person can be put on film, then truth has reached its pinnacle, and cinema its maximum visible potential²⁰.

This analysis allows us to identify the reasons that drive so many people to enjoy these contents, as well as their ethical-ontological “legitimacy”. This leads us to conclude that

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 20.

¹⁸ Ivi, p. 21.

¹⁹ C. Russell, *Narrative Mortality*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis-London 1995, p. 23, as cited in N. Jackson, *Shot, cut, and Slaughtered*, cit., p. 3.

²⁰ R. Curti, T. La Selva, *Sex and violence. Percorsi nel cinema estremo*, Lindau, Torino 2007, as cited in M. Lino, *Le urgenze del visivo maschile: retoriche del male gaze nella cultura dello snuffe dell'hard-core tra cinema e letteratura*, in “Between”, 4/7, maggio 2014.

it is not only possible, but probable, that snuff movies exist, and that they exist in an aesthetic configuration that is as realistic as possible. This configuration may be described as “amateur style”.

The discussion of imagery is closely related to this last consideration. In the words of Edgar Morin «the image is not only the nexus between the real and the imaginary, but the radical and simultaneous constitutive act of the real and the imaginary»²¹. It can be argued that cinema (all of it) is a matrix of imagery. While Morin’s research is primarily concerned with the cinematic representation of fiction, the considerations he raises are applicable to all forms of the seventh art, including amateur productions and, by extension, snuff movies. The evidence presented will support this assertion.

It is evident that films of an extreme nature which utilize “snuff imagery” have alternative distribution channels. Without delving into the intricacies of the Deep Web, we shall limit our discussion to the surface of the Internet. The advent of the Internet has transformed the distribution of fake snuff movies, as evidenced by the shift from a circuit of magazines and VHS distributions in the 1980s²², to the current web-based ecosystem. This transformation has implications for both the production of such films and their ultimate consumption. Since the early 2000s, numerous websites have emerged that cater to the dissemination and enjoyment of disturbing audiovisual content, often referred to as “shock sites”²³. Some of the most notable examples include Ogrish.com, GoreGrish.com, and BestGore.com, which are exclusively dedicated to gore-splattered videos and have amassed a considerable global following. Other channels of dissemination include Facebook groups, although this avenue has become less prevalent in recent years due to changes in censorship policies. Additionally, forums such as 4chan and Reddit have been utilized, but their role has also diminished. Of particular significance are messaging services, such as WhatsApp and, more notably, Telegram, which have become prominent conduits for the dissemination of such content. The latter has, regrettably, attracted considerable attention in recent years due to its permissive approach, which facilitates the

²¹ E. Morin, *The Cinema, or the Imaginary Man*, transl. by L. Mortimer, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2005, p. 223.

²² D. Kereks, D. Slather, *Killing for Culture: An Illustrated History of Death Film from Mondo to Snuff*, Creation Books, London 1994.

²³ L. Anderson, *Snuff: Murder and torture on the internet, and the people who watch it*, in “TheVerge.com”, 13/06/2012, online: <https://www.theverge.com/2012/6/13/3076557/snuff-murder-torture-internet-people-who-watch-it>.

dissemination of extreme and objectionable content, including live footage from conflict zones²⁴, revenge porn²⁵ and child pornography²⁶. The mode of circulation is reminiscent of that of home movies, although with due ethical differences. However, as production increases, so too does distribution, resulting in a greater number of users who, consequently, have access to such imagery. While the profile of the user of gore content (as opposed to pornography) may not align with those who engage in similar practices, it is inevitable that when the curiosity inherent in watching and seeking the extreme limit of watching²⁷ is combined with a pornographic perversion or a particular psychic condition, the imagery generated and evoked by these contents can lead to attempts at emulation, whether conscious or otherwise. Returning to the case of *3 guys 1 hammer*, its widespread dissemination is precisely due to its leaking from the records of the trial of the two murderers, and its landing in some of these channels.

In 2012, an individual submitted a video for upload to BestGore.com, entitled *I Lunatic I Icepick*²⁸. The video, captured with a low-resolution digital camera, potentially a webcam, depicts the murder and subsequent acts of necrophilia, dismemberment, and cannibalism perpetrated by an unidentified individual against a young man of Asian ethnicity. The victim was initially gagged and restrained on a bed. It was subsequently established that the individual responsible for uploading the video and perpetrating the crime were one and the same person: Luka Magnotta (born Eric Clinton Kirk Newman). Magnotta was subsequently apprehended and charged with the murder of 24-year-old university student Jun Lin. It subsequently emerged that the video had been preceded by a number of posts on various online forums, which were probably authored by Magnotta

²⁴ M. Borak, *Telegram has become a window into war*, in “TheVerge.com”, 07/07/23, online: <https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/7/23786422/telegram-russia-war-news-blogging-censorship-disinformation>.

²⁵ S. Fontana, *Dentro il più grande network italiano di revenge porn, su Telegram*, in “Wired.it”, 03/04/2020, online: <https://www.wired.it/internet/web/2020/04/03/revenge-porn-network-telegram/>; A. Di Landro, *Stupro a Palermo, In duemila su Telegram per arrivare al video: «Se qualcuno ce l'ha pago bene»*, in “Corriere.it”, 23/08/2023, online: https://www.corriere.it/cronache/23_agosto_23/stupro-palermo-telegram-video-e7669e16-4126-11ee-9770-ee723dce5687.shtml.

²⁶ G. Venturini, *Pedofili si scambiano su telegram foto di bambini e neonati: 29 persone identificate, tra queste anche medici*, in “Fanpage.it”, 23/11/2023, online: <https://www.fanpage.it/milano/pedofili-si-scambiano-su-telegram-foto-di-bambini-e-neonati-29-persone-identificate-tra-queste-anche-medici/>.

²⁷ In the aforementioned Anderson’s article, the following is stated: «Anybody’s who’s ever rubbernecked at an accident (which is to say everybody) knows it’s human nature to want to see gore». But one need only consider the narrative techniques employed by the media in the coverage of crime cases, as well as the recent success of certain “true crime” series, to recognize the exploitation of this curiosity. Cfr. A. Cava, *Noir TV: la cronaca nera diventa format televisivo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2013.

²⁸ L. Anderson, *Snuff: Murder and torture on the internet, and the people who watch it*, cit.

himself²⁹. These posts not only demonstrated his intention to carry out the act but also revealed his underlying motivation for producing the video: the dissemination of the content online. Magnotta had previously created other videos that were similarly disturbing, although in those instances, the victims had been limited to animals. From the title selected by the author, it is evident that the work makes reference to the film *3 Guys 1 Hammer* (which was itself inspired by the more famous and less disturbing film *2 Girls 1 Cup*). This marks a significant turning point in the discourse surrounding snuff films. In conclusion, the aesthetic solutions employed in *1 Lunatic 1 Icepick* are, as might be expected, those typically associated with amateur cinema. Despite the aforementioned indication that the existence of snuff movies is to be accepted as a given, the same production, aesthetic, and ethical peculiarities remain evident.

5. How to stand in front of these objects?

The question thus arises as to how the scholar should approach these objects. They are extreme and disturbing, both in terms of their aesthetic impact and their ethical implications. In addition to the aesthetic analysis proposed here, it is perhaps more important than ever to question the nature of the gaze, including the gaze of the author and that of the user of these images.

The taboo of torture and death in cinema, as well as that of pornographic sex, breaks its own seal to be used as a visual spectacle of entertainment, behind which lie at least two urgencies of the male to satisfy his own sociocultural and sexual primacy. The first urgency is scopic: it concerns the male need to “be able to see more” of the woman’s body, to be able to see her in her objectivity as a victim in order to enter into the fullness of her carnality; the second urgency is socio-cultural: it refers to the use of an extreme visual code to reestablish the dominance of the masculine in the face of the deconstructive action of feminism and to which is added the risk of homoeroticization and demasculinization in the face of declinations of pornography according to homosexual orientations and feminine aesthetics [...].³⁰

The necessity to address this perspective is becoming increasingly apparent, particularly in light of the evidence presented, which suggests a correlation between the imagery evoked by these contents and the growing ease of production and distribution, strongly linked to the debate on

²⁹ G. McGregor, *References to snuff video made online 10 days before suspected date of slaying*, in “Ottawa Citizen”, 01/06/2012, online: https://web.archive.org/web/20181006130441/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/References_to_murder_video_online_10_days_before_body_parts_discovered/6714681/story.html.

³⁰ M. Lino, *Le urgenze del visivo maschile: retoriche del male gaze nella cultura dello snuff e dell'hard-core tra cinema e letteratura*, cit.

amateur cinema. It is therefore plausible to suggest that the desire to “emulate” or implement the myth of the snuff movie, as outlined, may soon manifest in action. Therefore, there is an urgent need to give more space to the debate on this issue, starting from a new perspective that – as far as can be seen – uses the tools and methodologies of amateur film studies, also from a sociological perspective, in order to try to understand this phenomenon better.