



# Intelligence Work: The Politics of American Documentary (Film and Culture Series)

*Jonathan Kahana*

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*Intelligence Work* establishes a new genealogy of American social documentary, proposing a fresh critical approach to the aesthetic and political issues of nonfiction cinema and media. Jonathan Kahana argues that the use of documentary film by intellectuals, activists, government agencies, and community groups constitutes a national-public form of culture, one that challenges traditional oppositions between official and vernacular speech, between high art and popular culture, and between academic knowledge and common sense. Placing iconic images and the work of celebrated filmmakers next to overlooked and rediscovered productions, Kahana demonstrates how documentary collects and delivers the evidence of the American experience to the public sphere, where it lends force to political movements and gives substance to the social imaginary.

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