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| **Leacock, Richard (1921-2011)** |
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| British-born documentary filmmaker Richard Leacock (1921-2011) was a pioneer in ideological and methodological approaches to early 1960s observational documentary, predicated on the use of the new, lightweight, handheld cameras and portable, synchronous, sound recording equipment associated with American direct cinema. |
| File: A Stravinsky Portrait.pdf  *A Stravinsky Portrait* frame grabs copyright Pennebaker Hegedus Films  British-born documentary filmmaker Richard Leacock (1921-2011) was a pioneer in ideological and methodological approaches to early 1960s observational documentary, predicated on the use of the new, lightweight, handheld cameras and portable, synchronous, sound recording equipment associated with American direct cinema. Leacock referred to his approach as the “Living Camera,” through which he sought to communicate what he expressed as, simply, “the feeling of being there.”  File: Jazz Dance.pdf  *Jazz Dance* frame grab copyright Matrixx Entertainment  Revolutionary technological breakthroughs developed by Leacock, producer Robert Drew, and filmmakers D. A. Pennebaker and Albert Maysles in the early 1960s allowed for sound and image to be recorded in complete synchronisation independent of any physical connectivity, and gave filmmakers a new way to observe and interact with the world. Leacock’s style went beyond candid observation by demanding a participative role in the unfolding action.  File: Happy Mother's Day.jpg  *Happy Mother’s Day* frame grabs copyright Pennebaker Hegedus Films  As demonstrated in his seminal *Happy Mother’s Day* (1964), the “Living Camera” bears the marks of physical contact with the pro-filmic world, and seeks communication with the film’s social actors - a process in which the recording of direct sound is crucial. In 1968, Leacock cofounded the MIT Film Section with fellow documentarian Ed Pincus. Upon retiring in 1989, Leacock relocated to Paris, where he continued to make films until his 2011 death.  File: One P.M.jpg  Leacock shooting material for *One P.M.* on the streets of New York; photograph copyright Anne Wiazemsky  **Select Filmography:**  *Canary Bananas* (1935)  *Louisiana Story* (1948, cinematography)  *Jazz Dance* (1954, cinematography)  *Toby and the Tall Corn* (1954)  *Primary* (1960, cinematography)  *On the Pole* (1960, cinematography)  *Yanki No!* (1960, cinematography)  *The Children Were Watching* (1961)  *Petey and Johnny* (1961, cinematography)  *Nehru* (1962, with Greg Shuker)  *The Chair* (1962, cinematography)  *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1963, cinematography)  *Happy Mother’s Day* (1963, with Joyce Chopra)  *Campaign Manager* (1964, with Noel E. Parmentel, Jr.)  *Ku Klux Klan: The Invisible Empire* (1965, with Noel E. Parmentel, Jr.)  *A Stravinsky Portrait* (1965, with Rolf Lieberman)  *Chiefs* (1968, with Noel E. Parmentel, Jr.)  *Monterey Pop* (1968, cinematography)  *One P.M.* (1972, cinematography) |
| Further reading:  (Bachmann)  (Blue)  (Leacock)  (Leacock, For an Uncontrolled Cinema)  (Mamber)  (Marcorelles)  (Naficy)  (O’Connell) |