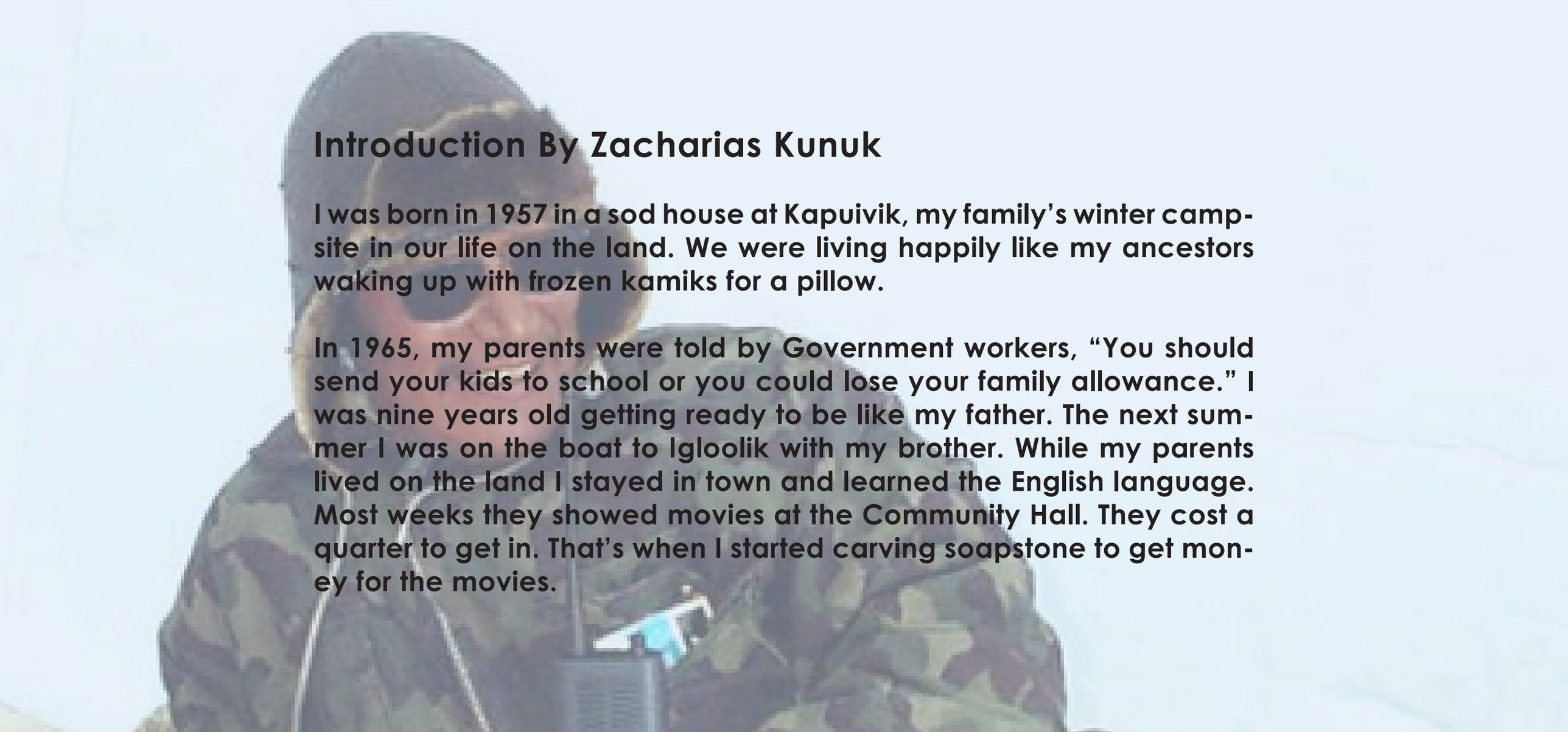
Inuit Community Filmmaking Mentoring Guide

by Zacharias Kunuk

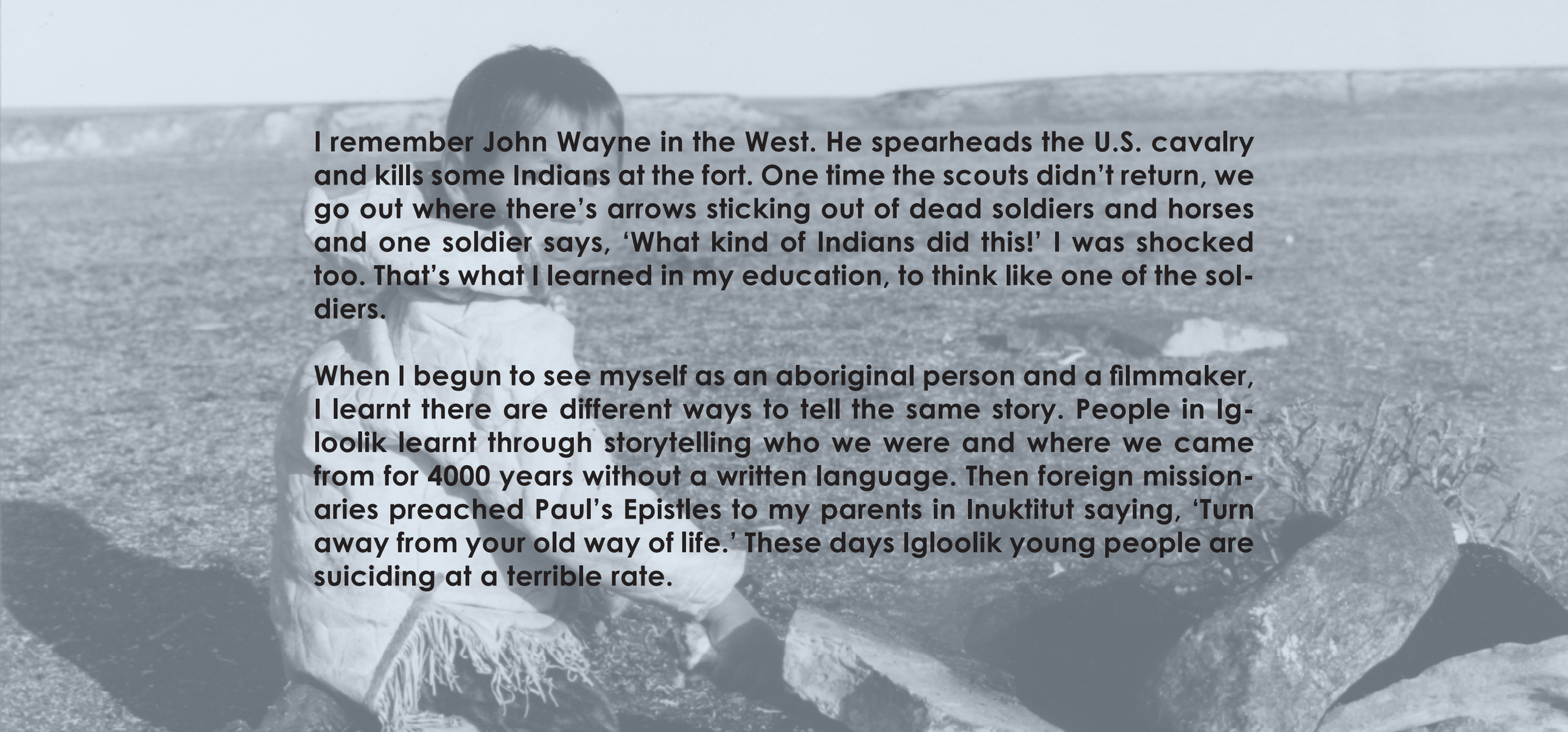
The Inuit Community Filmmaking Mentoring Guide was an idea Zacharias Kunuk and Jon Franz thought up as a way for Zacharias Kunuk to mentor young Inuit filmmakers in different communities, and provide them with a mentoring guide to filmmaking.



Introduction By Zacharias Kunuk

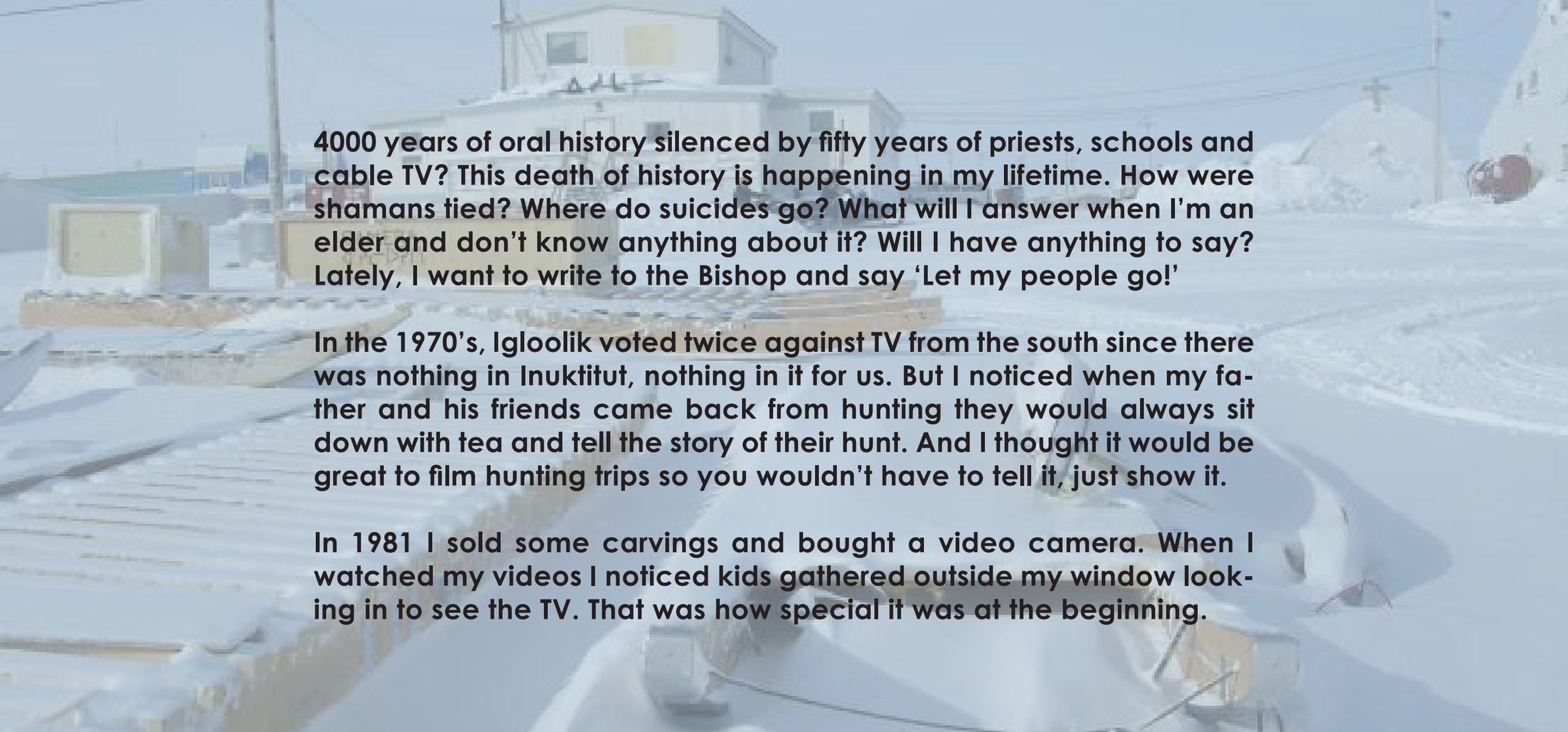
I was born in 1957 in a sod house at Kapuivik, my family's winter campsite in our life on the land. We were living happily like my ancestors waking up with frozen kamiks for a pillow.

In 1965, my parents were told by Government workers, "You should send your kids to school or you could lose your family allowance." I was nine years old getting ready to be like my father. The next summer I was on the boat to Igloolik with my brother. While my parents lived on the land I stayed in town and learned the English language. Most weeks they showed movies at the Community Hall. They cost a quarter to get in. That's when I started carving soapstone to get money for the movies.



I remember John Wayne in the West. He spearheads the U.S. cavalry and kills some Indians at the fort. One time the scouts didn't return, we go out where there's arrows sticking out of dead soldiers and horses and one soldier says, 'What kind of Indians did this!' I was shocked too. That's what I learned in my education, to think like one of the soldiers.

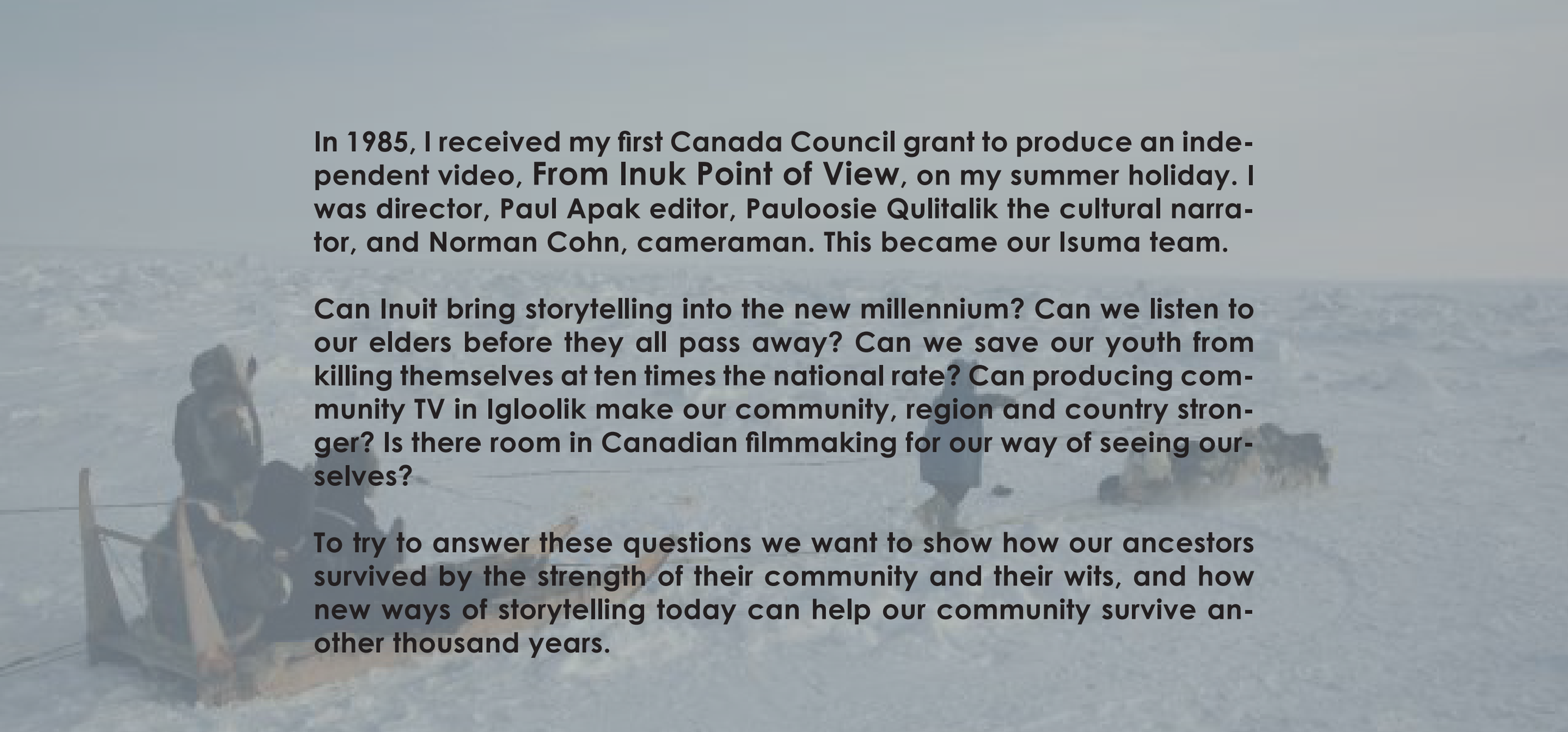
When I begun to see myself as an aboriginal person and a filmmaker, I learnt there are different ways to tell the same story. People in Igloolik learnt through storytelling who we were and where we came from for 4000 years without a written language. Then foreign missionaries preached Paul's Epistles to my parents in Inuktitut saying, 'Turn away from your old way of life.' These days Igloolik young people are suiciding at a terrible rate.



4000 years of oral history silenced by fifty years of priests, schools and cable TV? This death of history is happening in my lifetime. How were shamans tied? Where do suicides go? What will I answer when I'm an elder and don't know anything about it? Will I have anything to say? Lately, I want to write to the Bishop and say 'Let my people go!'

In the 1970's, Igloolik voted twice against TV from the south since there was nothing in Inuktitut, nothing in it for us. But I noticed when my father and his friends came back from hunting they would always sit down with tea and tell the story of their hunt. And I thought it would be great to film hunting trips so you wouldn't have to tell it, just show it.

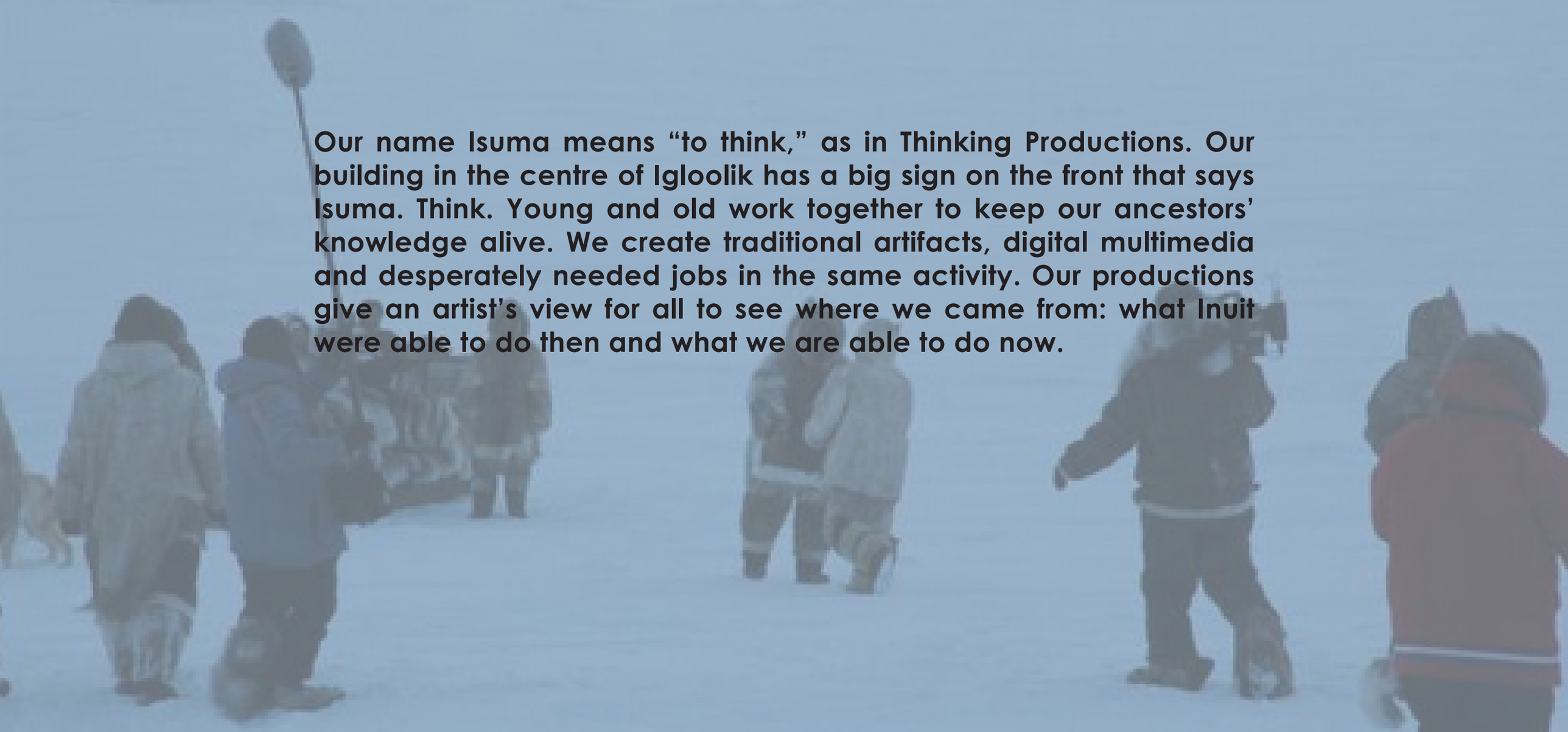
In 1981 I sold some carvings and bought a video camera. When I watched my videos I noticed kids gathered outside my window looking in to see the TV. That was how special it was at the beginning.



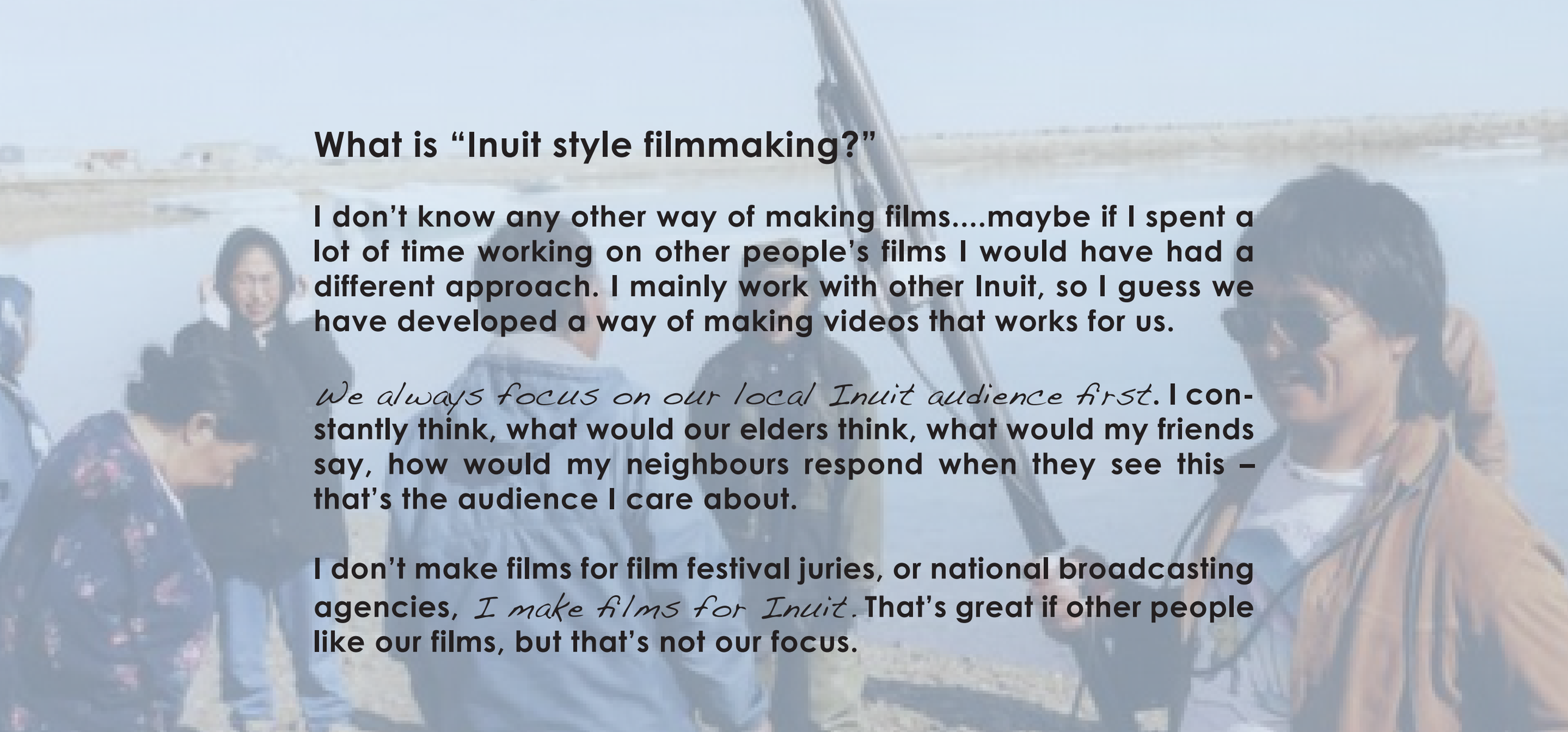
In 1985, I received my first Canada Council grant to produce an independent video, **From Inuk Point of View**, on my summer holiday. I was director, Paul Apak editor, Pauloosie Qulitalik the cultural narrator, and Norman Cohn, cameraman. This became our Isuma team.

Can Inuit bring storytelling into the new millennium? Can we listen to our elders before they all pass away? Can we save our youth from killing themselves at ten times the national rate? Can producing community TV in Igloolik make our community, region and country stronger? Is there room in Canadian filmmaking for our way of seeing ourselves?

To try to answer these questions we want to show how our ancestors survived by the strength of their community and their wits, and how new ways of storytelling today can help our community survive another thousand years.



Our name Isuma means “to think,” as in Thinking Productions. Our building in the centre of Igloolik has a big sign on the front that says Isuma. Think. Young and old work together to keep our ancestors’ knowledge alive. We create traditional artifacts, digital multimedia and desperately needed jobs in the same activity. Our productions give an artist’s view for all to see where we came from: what Inuit were able to do then and what we are able to do now.



What is “Inuit style filmmaking?”

I don’t know any other way of making films....maybe if I spent a lot of time working on other people’s films I would have had a different approach. I mainly work with other Inuit, so I guess we have developed a way of making videos that works for us.

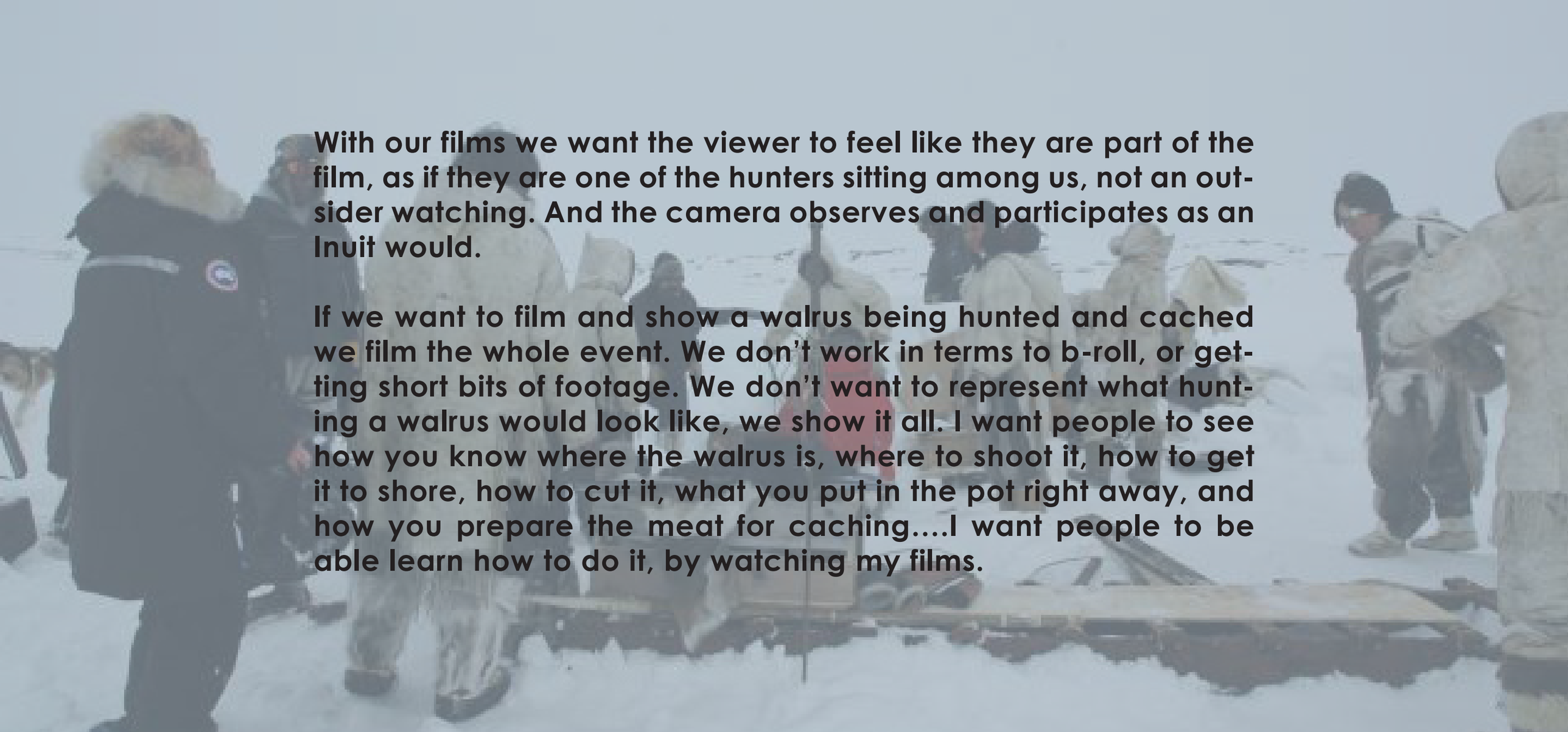
We always focus on our local Inuit audience first. **I constantly think, what would our elders think, what would my friends say, how would my neighbours respond when they see this – that’s the audience I care about.**

I don’t make films for film festival juries, or national broadcasting agencies, *I make films for Inuit.* **That’s great if other people like our films, but that’s not our focus.**

When I first saw that you could own a video camera I wanted to get my hands on one and see what I could do. I didn't really have any specific intention in mind, I just thought it was an interesting piece of technology and I wanted to see what it could do.

I just started observing and recording things around me. I would shoot for a long time in one spot, just look and observe. I would focus the camera on what seemed interesting to me, and just see what happened. To this day that's what I do, I film things that are interesting to me. *I take a camera with me everywhere I go.*

Whether it's a small video camera, a large professional camera, or an iPhone, it doesn't really matter, *just film with what ever you have, wherever you are.*



With our films we want the viewer to feel like they are part of the film, as if they are one of the hunters sitting among us, not an outsider watching. And the camera observes and participates as an Inuit would.

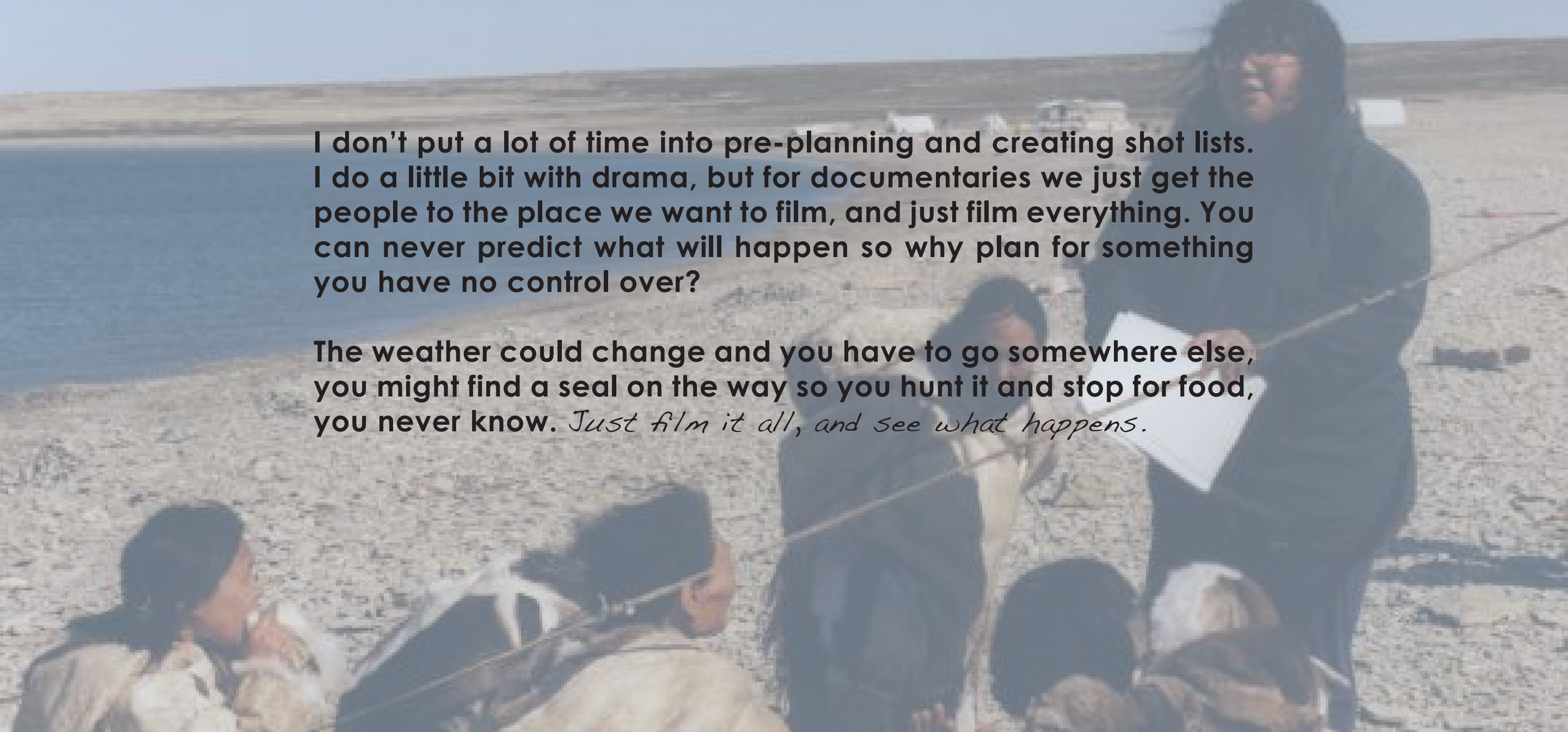
If we want to film and show a walrus being hunted and cached we film the whole event. We don't work in terms to b-roll, or getting short bits of footage. We don't want to represent what hunting a walrus would look like, we show it all. I want people to see how you know where the walrus is, where to shoot it, how to get it to shore, how to cut it, what you put in the pot right away, and how you prepare the meat for caching....I want people to be able learn how to do it, by watching my films.

That's a big difference I find between our movies and others, with our movies you can really see and learn how things are done. We still edit it and make something that can be watched on TV or DVD, but it will be as long as it needs to be, we give the act the time it needs to finish.

If it's worth filming it's worth seeing the details. If the footage is boring and you need to make a lot of short cuts and doing something to try and make it more interesting then it really is, then why are you filming it?

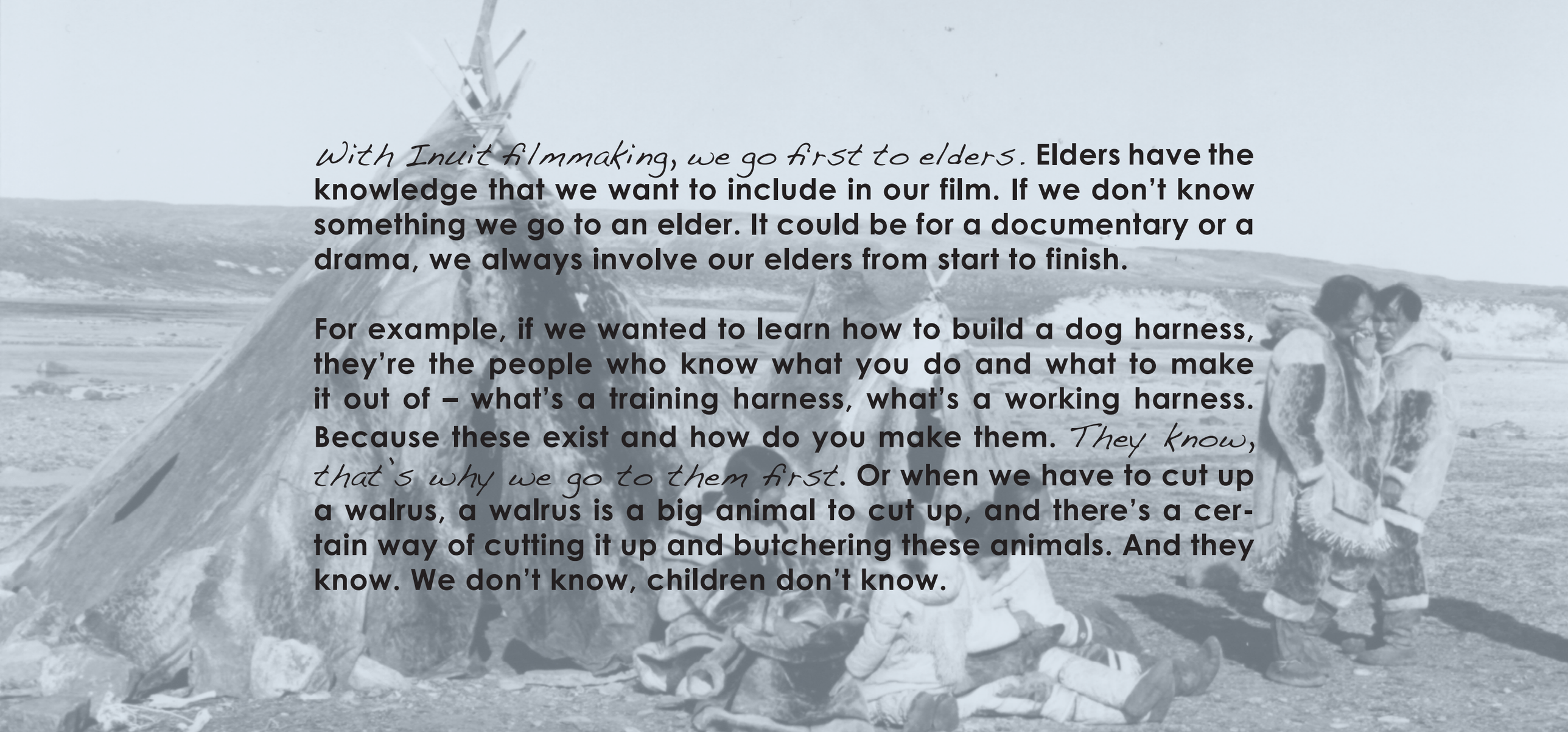
I like to keep my crew small and work with people I know and can trust. **Then we all work together to decide what we should do. My camera operator just knows what to do, we see the same things, and if he misses something I just point to it and he focuses on that.** *It's a very open and natural way to observe and film.*

It's the same way we would go on a hunting trip, you go hunting with people you know, and you know they can hunt, so you trust them. And if there is a new hunter in the group they will sit back and watch, and then when they feel they are ready they will join in and start to do something. You don't tell someone you are hunting with to grab that harpoon and throw it at that walrus, so I don't do that with my film crew.



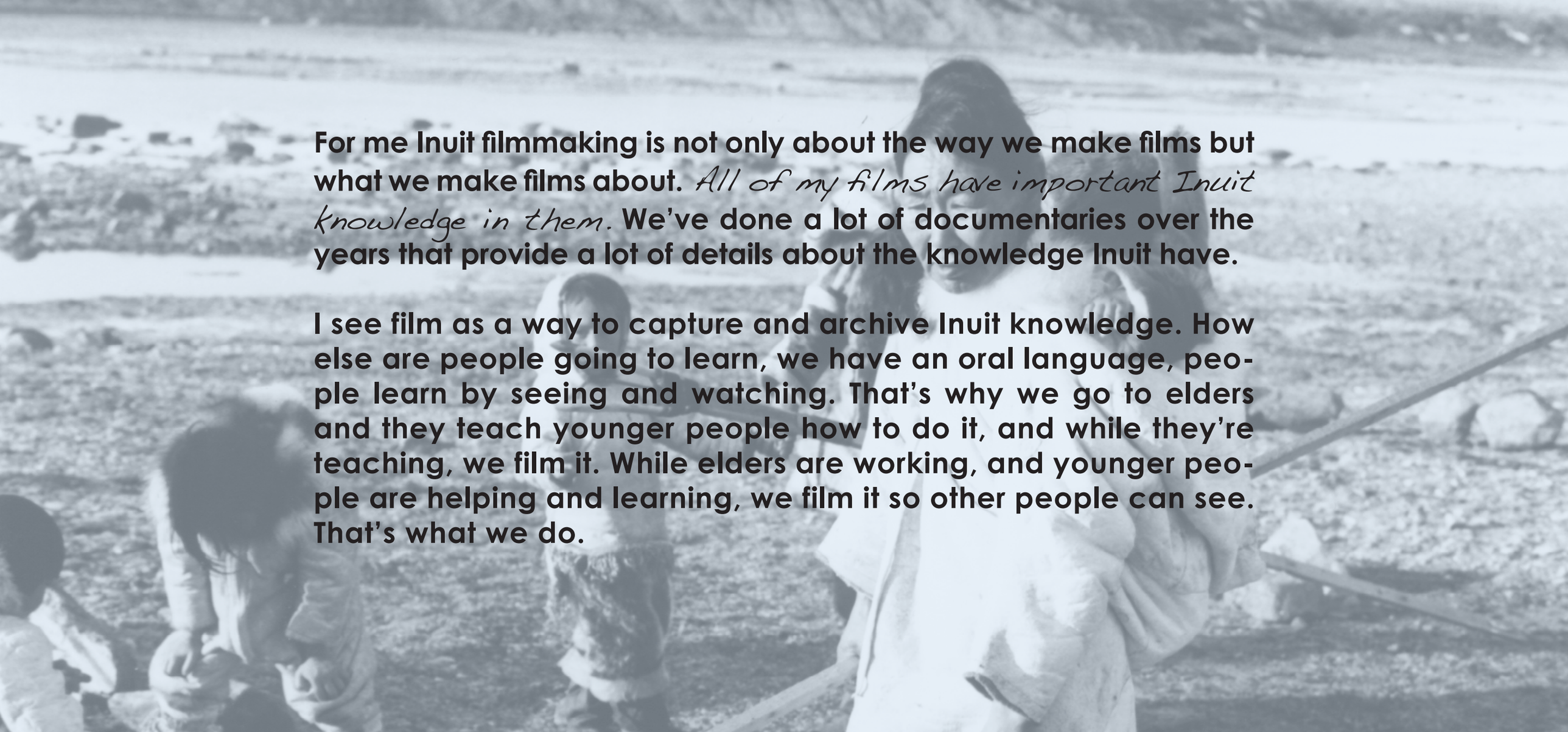
I don't put a lot of time into pre-planning and creating shot lists. I do a little bit with drama, but for documentaries we just get the people to the place we want to film, and just film everything. You can never predict what will happen so why plan for something you have no control over?

The weather could change and you have to go somewhere else, you might find a seal on the way so you hunt it and stop for food, you never know. *Just film it all, and see what happens.*



With Inuit filmmaking, we go first to elders. **Elders have the knowledge that we want to include in our film. If we don't know something we go to an elder. It could be for a documentary or a drama, we always involve our elders from start to finish.**

For example, if we wanted to learn how to build a dog harness, they're the people who know what you do and what to make it out of – what's a training harness, what's a working harness. Because these exist and how do you make them. *They know, that's why we go to them first.* **Or when we have to cut up a walrus, a walrus is a big animal to cut up, and there's a certain way of cutting it up and butchering these animals. And they know. We don't know, children don't know.**



For me Inuit filmmaking is not only about the way we make films but what we make films about. *All of my films have important Inuit knowledge in them.* **We've done a lot of documentaries over the years that provide a lot of details about the knowledge Inuit have.**

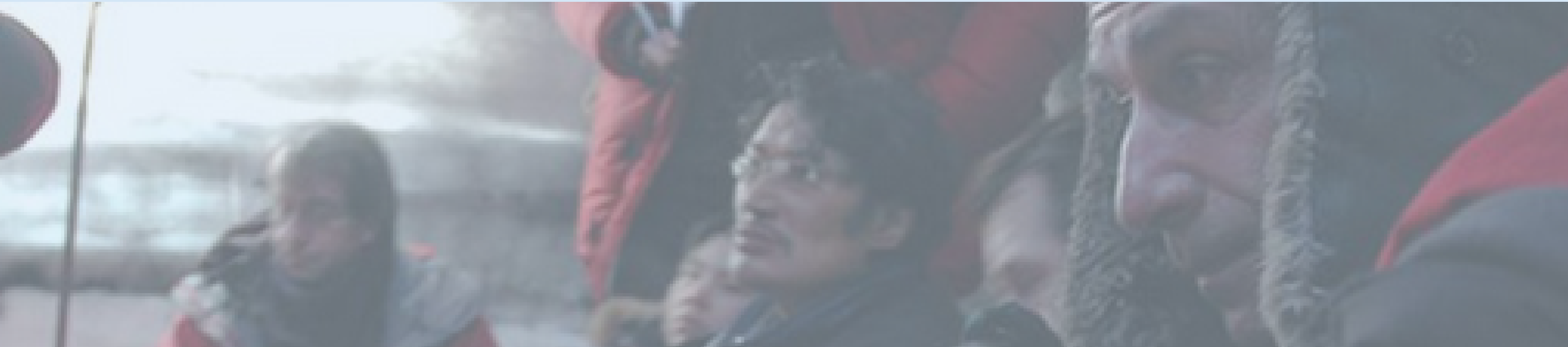
I see film as a way to capture and archive Inuit knowledge. How else are people going to learn, we have an oral language, people learn by seeing and watching. That's why we go to elders and they teach younger people how to do it, and while they're teaching, we film it. While elders are working, and younger people are helping and learning, we film it so other people can see. That's what we do.

The Art of Community Based Filmmaking

(originally published in Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner, published by Coach House and Isuma, 2002)

by Norman Cohn

(co-founder of Igloolik Isuma Productions)



I am Isuma's fourth and only non-Inuit partner. I came to Igloolik in the mid-80's to meet Zach and Apak, whose early videos I had seen by accident in Montreal. I was looking for a context in which to work that was more serious than the exclusively self-referential world of contemporary video art. I found partners with similar vision and shared goals despite wide cultural differences. I stayed to live and co-found Igloolik Isuma Productions.

As a marriage of art and politics, Isuma's videomaking synthesizes several related themes in a new way. First, Inuit oral storytelling is a sophisticated mix of fact, fiction, performance, improvisation, past and future which has maintained Inuit culture successfully through art from stone age to information age. Second, being colonized offers artists a fertile reality for original progressive self-expression. Third, the invention of low-cost video at the end

of the 1960's enabled people from Harlem to the arctic to use TV as a tool for political and social change in local communities. Fourth, after thirty years 'alternative' film and video finally moved from the margins to the mainstream as techniques pioneered by filmmakers like John Cassavetes, Peter Watkins and Leacock-Pennebaker, and by guerilla video groups like Ant Farm, TVTV and Vidéographe now show up in the 1990's as shaky-camera bank commercials.

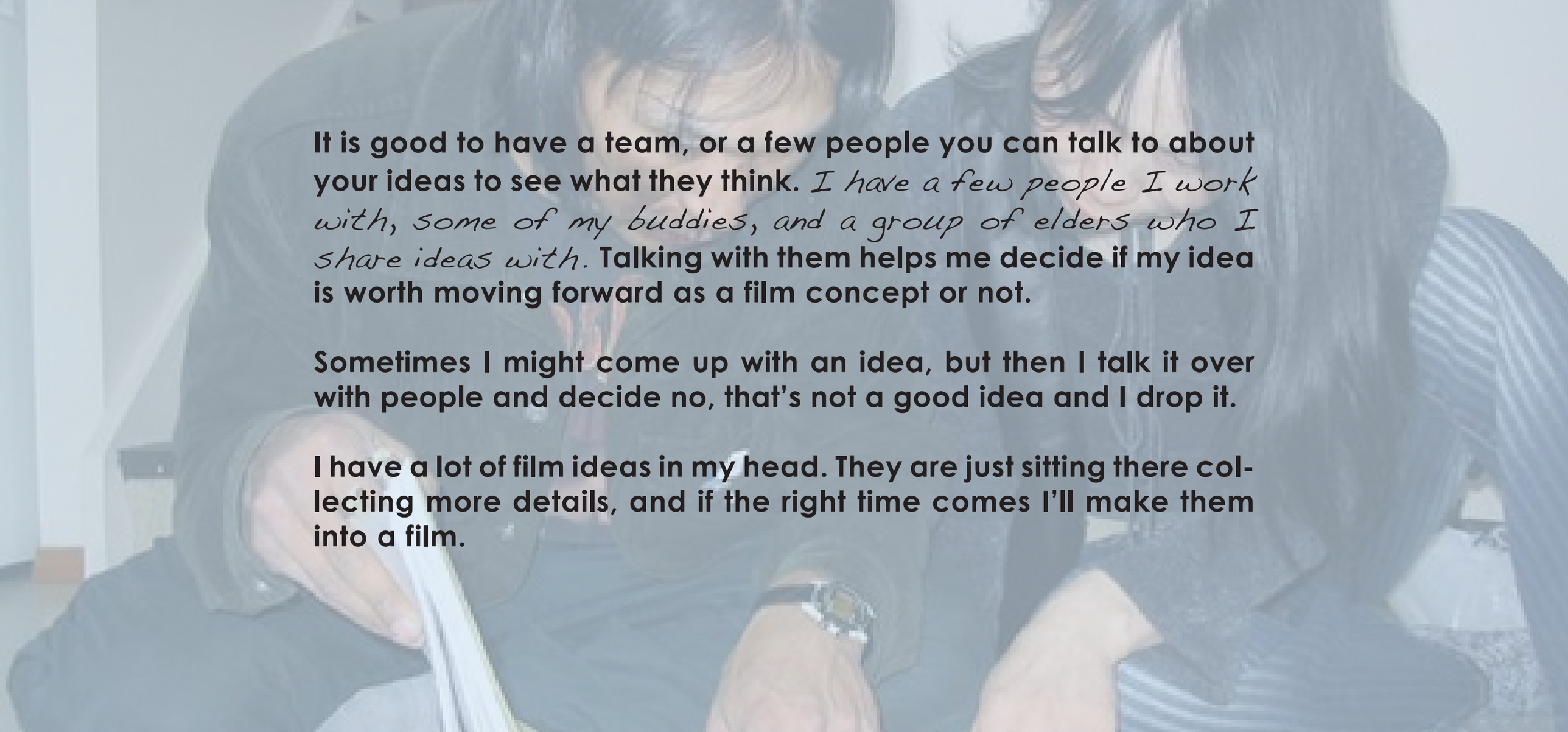
For four millennia Inuit have refined cooperation as a medium of production and survival, valuing consensus and continuity over individuality and competition. As a collective Igloolik Isuma Productions arrives at the millennium practicing respectful cooperation as a formal element of our media art. We implant these values - our collective process - in our filmmaking practice; com-

munity support and participation are qualities of production we make visible on the screen. We extend these same values to cross-cultural collaboration. As artists bridging the past and future we practice a third way, different from either the Inuit way or the Government way, two solitudes separated by centuries of fear and mistrust since Columbus and Frobisher 'discovered' the New World. Inuit skills of working together join with southern ideas of community videomaking in a new model of professional production that can change TV.

Coming up with an idea

There are a lot of stories out there... **sometimes when we're out hunting, telling stories to each other, and I hear this new interesting story, I think that would make a great film. Then when I get back to the office I think about it and start talking to my team about it to see what we think.** *I always start with something I am interested in.* **Making a film takes a long time.**

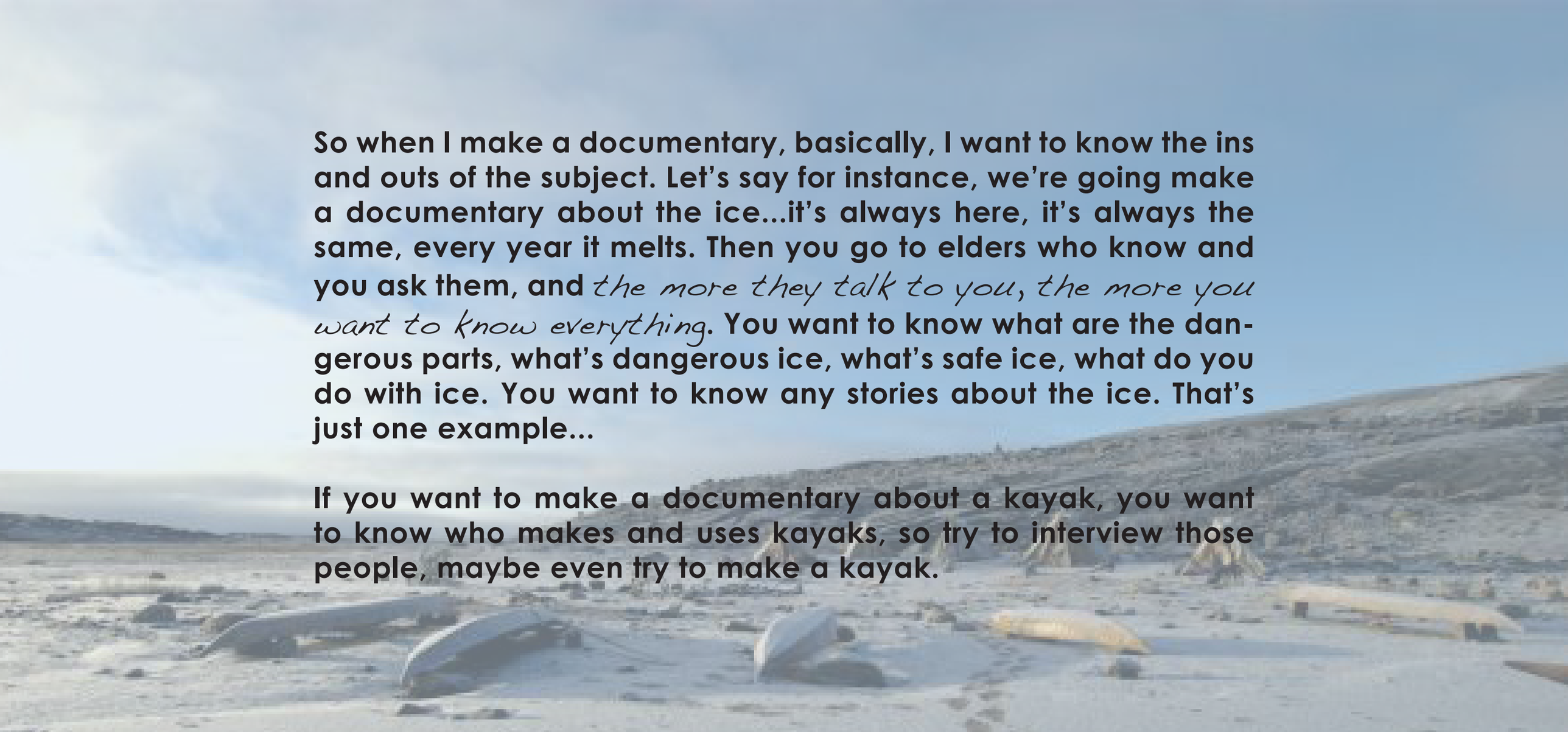
From start to finish it can take about two years to make a film, so if you are not interested in the topic, it's going to be a long two years. When you are interested in the topic it's not really like work, it's like wow, I'm learning so much this is really interesting, what else can I learn. It's a fun thing to do.



It is good to have a team, or a few people you can talk to about your ideas to see what they think. *I have a few people I work with, some of my buddies, and a group of elders who I share ideas with.* **Talking with them helps me decide if my idea is worth moving forward as a film concept or not.**

Sometimes I might come up with an idea, but then I talk it over with people and decide no, that's not a good idea and I drop it.

I have a lot of film ideas in my head. They are just sitting there collecting more details, and if the right time comes I'll make them into a film.



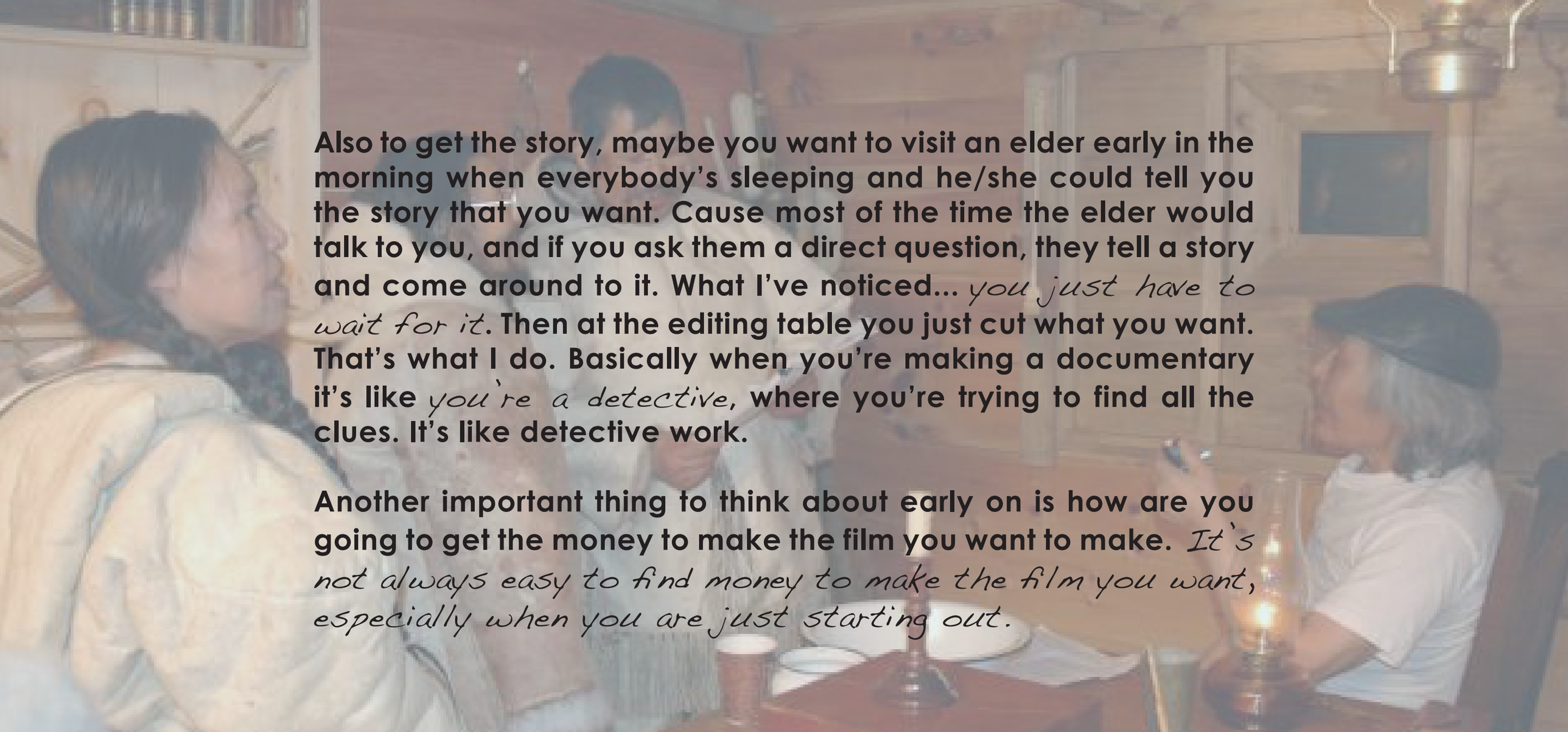
So when I make a documentary, basically, I want to know the ins and outs of the subject. Let's say for instance, we're going make a documentary about the ice...it's always here, it's always the same, every year it melts. Then you go to elders who know and you ask them, and *the more they talk to you, the more you want to know everything.* **You want to know what are the dangerous parts, what's dangerous ice, what's safe ice, what do you do with ice. You want to know any stories about the ice. That's just one example...**

If you want to make a documentary about a kayak, you want to know who makes and uses kayaks, so try to interview those people, maybe even try to make a kayak.

That's how I approach it ... I would *choose a subject*, **then you do** *research* **and you** *shoot* **a subject, and find out what it's used for.**

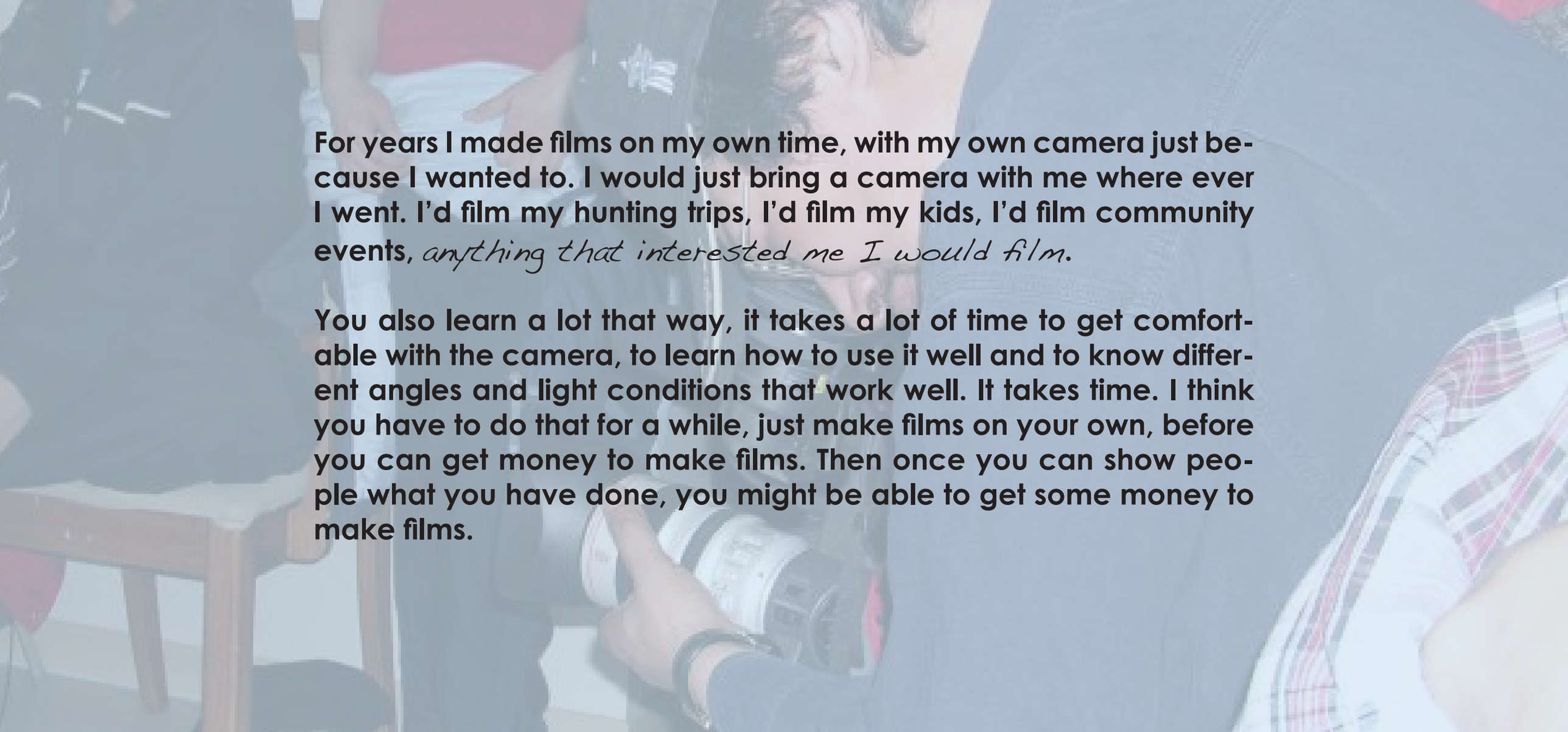
I went to school and learned about Africa, and all about animals that I'll never hunt in my life. But then, right on my land, all these animals: seals, walrus, polar bears, caribou, wolves, foxes, weasels, lemmings, birds come every spring, lay eggs. Different types of birds... then you want to know what they're used for. So that's what I make films about, I film things I want to know more about.

That's how I do it, *I try to capture what I see, and to do that you have to be there, you have to put yourself into what is interesting.*



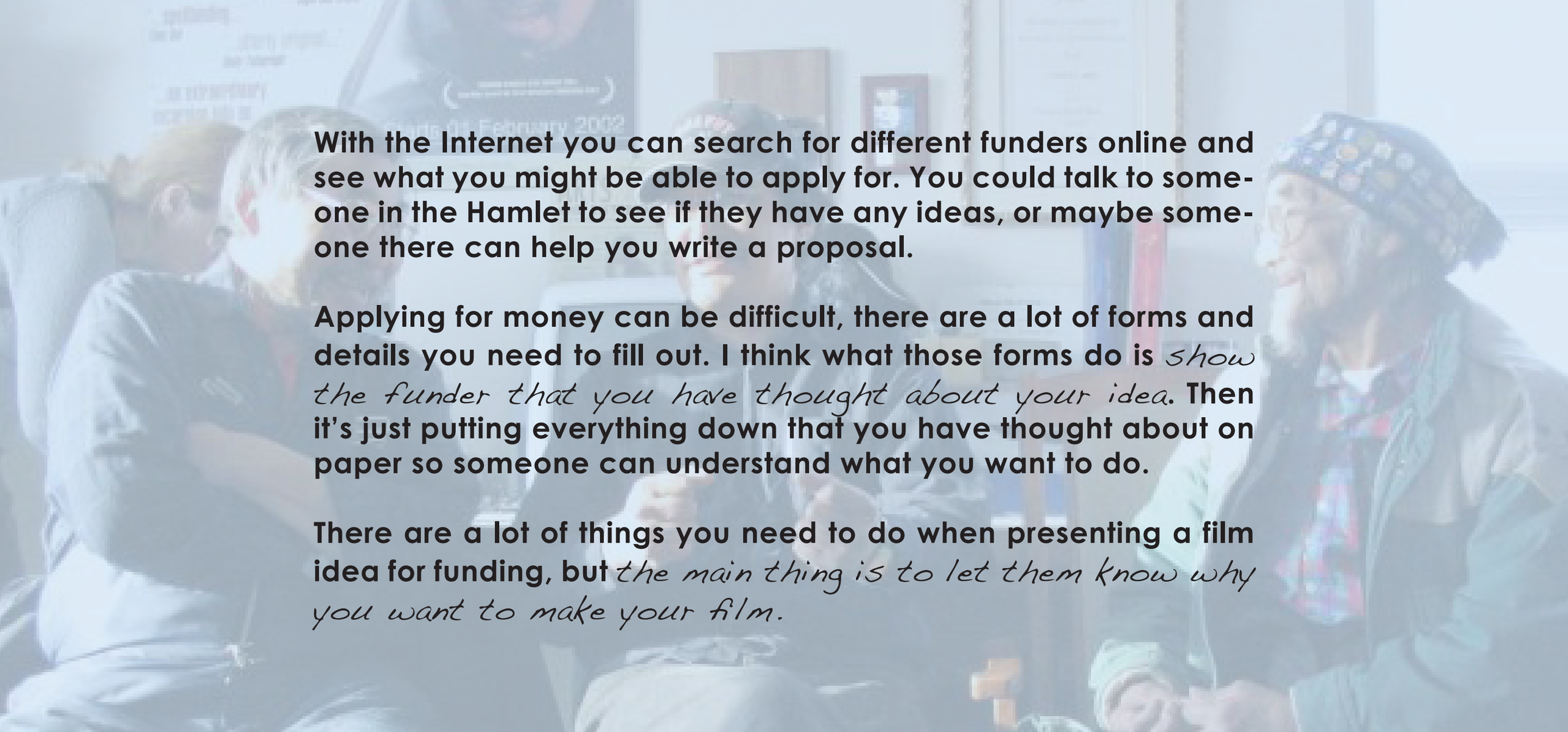
Also to get the story, maybe you want to visit an elder early in the morning when everybody's sleeping and he/she could tell you the story that you want. Cause most of the time the elder would talk to you, and if you ask them a direct question, they tell a story and come around to it. What I've noticed... *you just have to wait for it*. **Then at the editing table you just cut what you want. That's what I do. Basically when you're making a documentary it's like** *you're a detective*, **where you're trying to find all the clues. It's like detective work.**

Another important thing to think about early on is how are you going to get the money to make the film you want to make. *It's not always easy to find money to make the film you want, especially when you are just starting out.*



For years I made films on my own time, with my own camera just because I wanted to. I would just bring a camera with me where ever I went. I'd film my hunting trips, I'd film my kids, I'd film community events, *anything that interested me I would film.*

You also learn a lot that way, it takes a lot of time to get comfortable with the camera, to learn how to use it well and to know different angles and light conditions that work well. It takes time. I think you have to do that for a while, just make films on your own, before you can get money to make films. Then once you can show people what you have done, you might be able to get some money to make films.



With the Internet you can search for different funders online and see what you might be able to apply for. You could talk to someone in the Hamlet to see if they have any ideas, or maybe someone there can help you write a proposal.

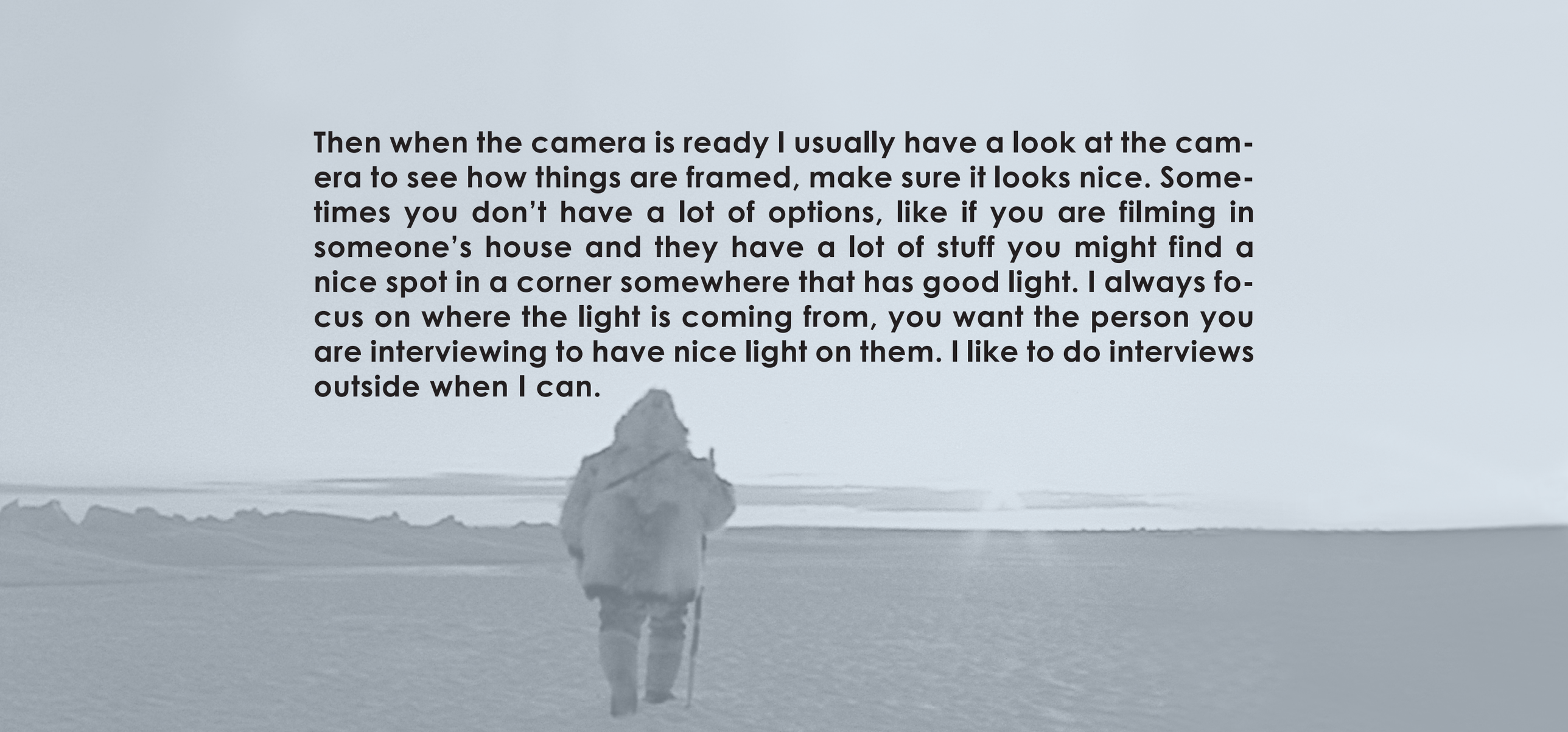
Applying for money can be difficult, there are a lot of forms and details you need to fill out. I think what those forms do is *show the funder that you have thought about your idea.* **Then it's just putting everything down that you have thought about on paper so someone can understand what you want to do.**

There are a lot of things you need to do when presenting a film idea for funding, but *the main thing is to let them know why you want to make your film.*

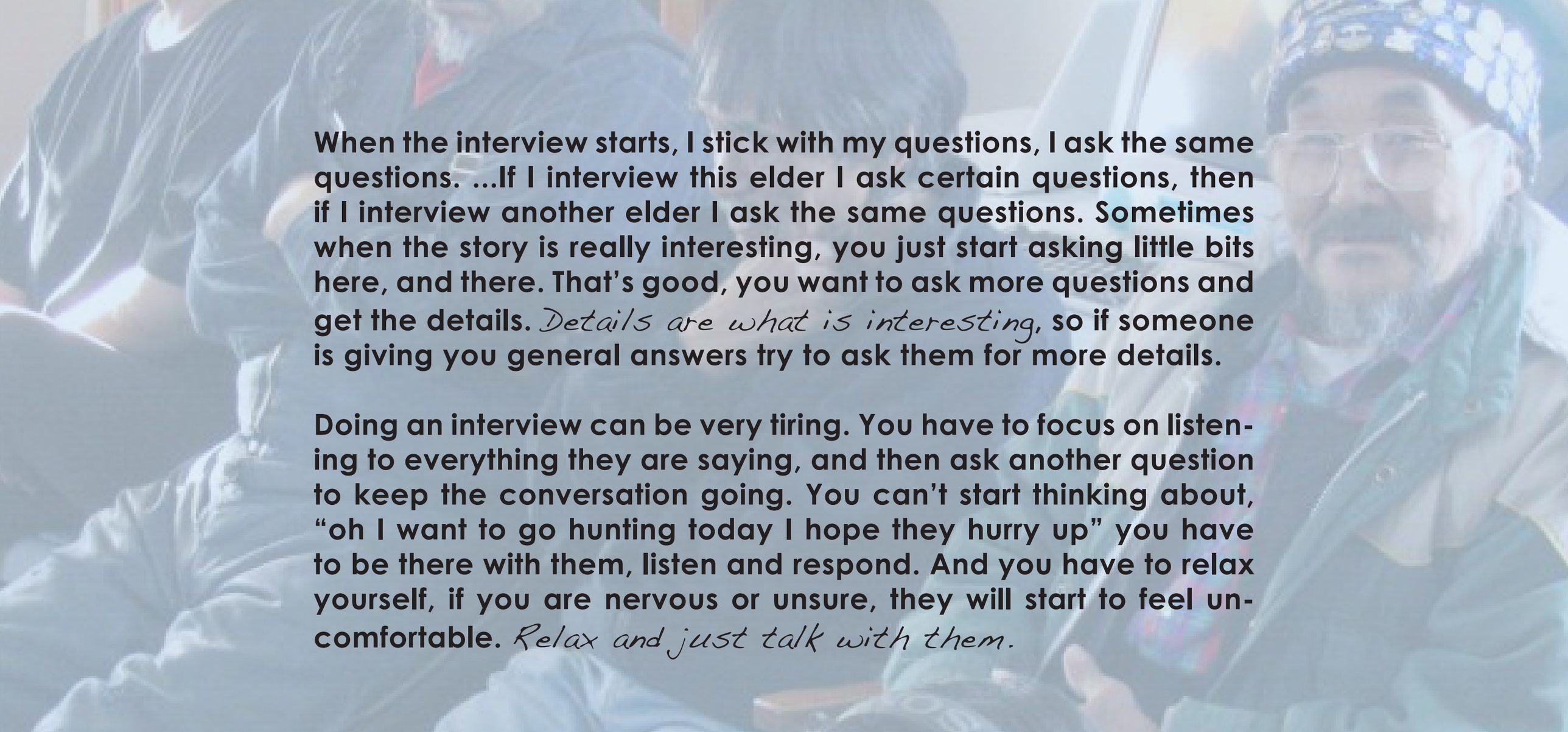
Conducting documentary interviews

When you're doing a story, people have to know, why you're doing this story. **You need to tell the person you are interviewing that the film is about so they understand what you are going to talk about. And you also need to have a release form signed. That is an important agreement where they sign off giving you permission to use and edit the material you record.**

When the camera and sound people are getting set up I usually let them do their thing and I start to talk to the person I am going to interview. I don't want to ask them any of my questions, we're just chatting. Sometimes people get nervous with the camera, I want to make them feel more relaxed.

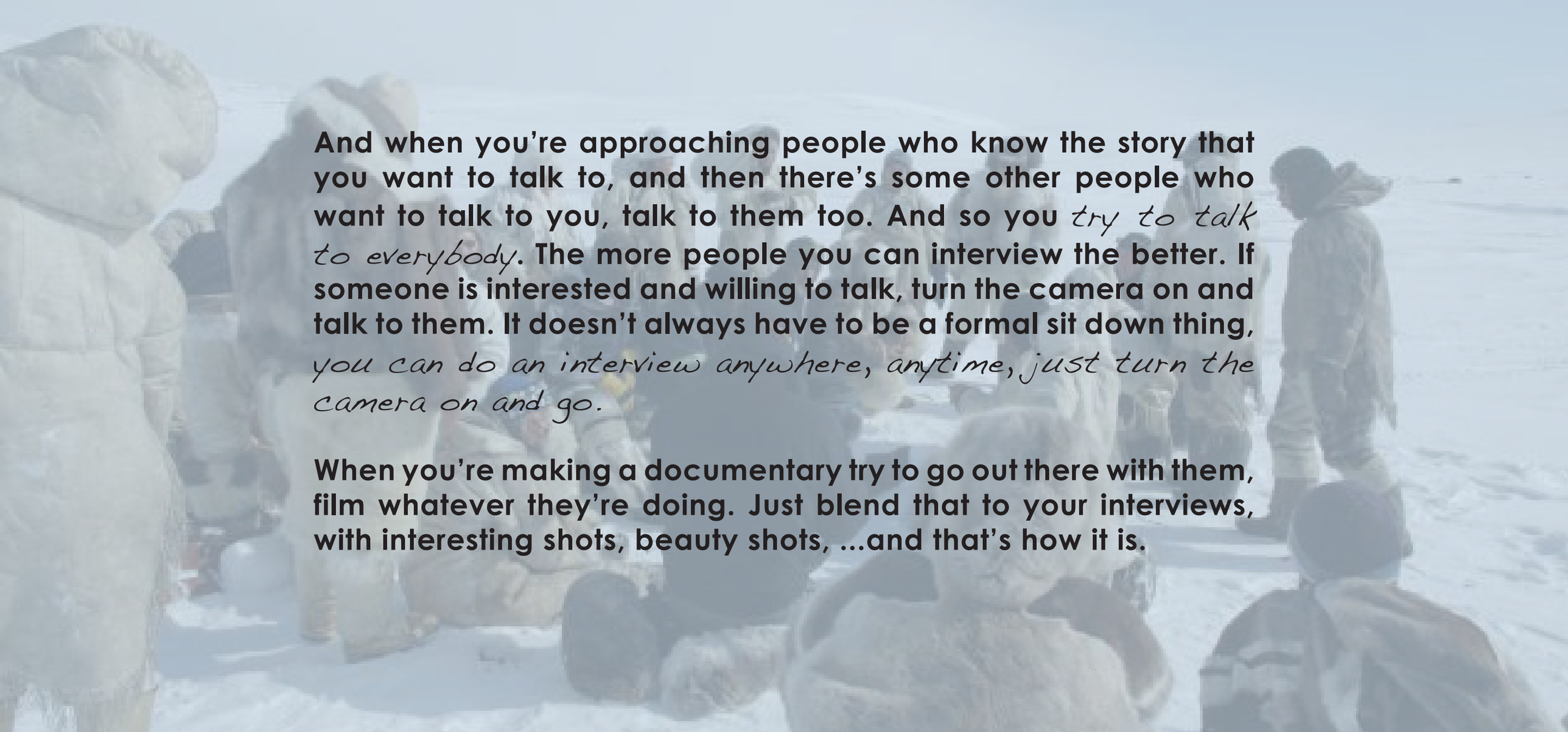


Then when the camera is ready I usually have a look at the camera to see how things are framed, make sure it looks nice. Sometimes you don't have a lot of options, like if you are filming in someone's house and they have a lot of stuff you might find a nice spot in a corner somewhere that has good light. I always focus on where the light is coming from, you want the person you are interviewing to have nice light on them. I like to do interviews outside when I can.



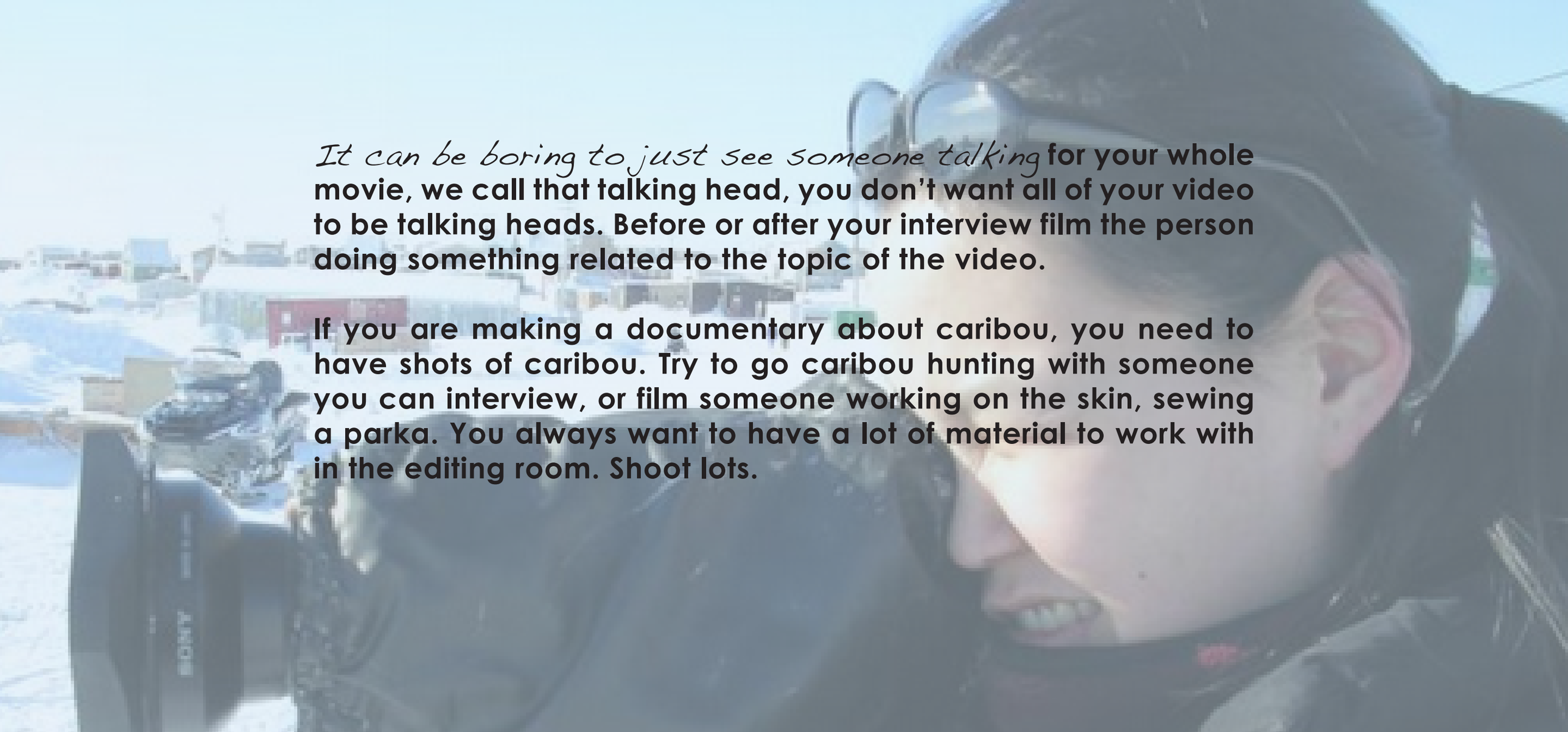
When the interview starts, I stick with my questions, I ask the same questions. ...If I interview this elder I ask certain questions, then if I interview another elder I ask the same questions. Sometimes when the story is really interesting, you just start asking little bits here, and there. That's good, you want to ask more questions and get the details. *Details are what is interesting,* **so if someone is giving you general answers try to ask them for more details.**

Doing an interview can be very tiring. You have to focus on listening to everything they are saying, and then ask another question to keep the conversation going. You can't start thinking about, "oh I want to go hunting today I hope they hurry up" you have to be there with them, listen and respond. And you have to relax yourself, if you are nervous or unsure, they will start to feel uncomfortable. *Relax and just talk with them.*



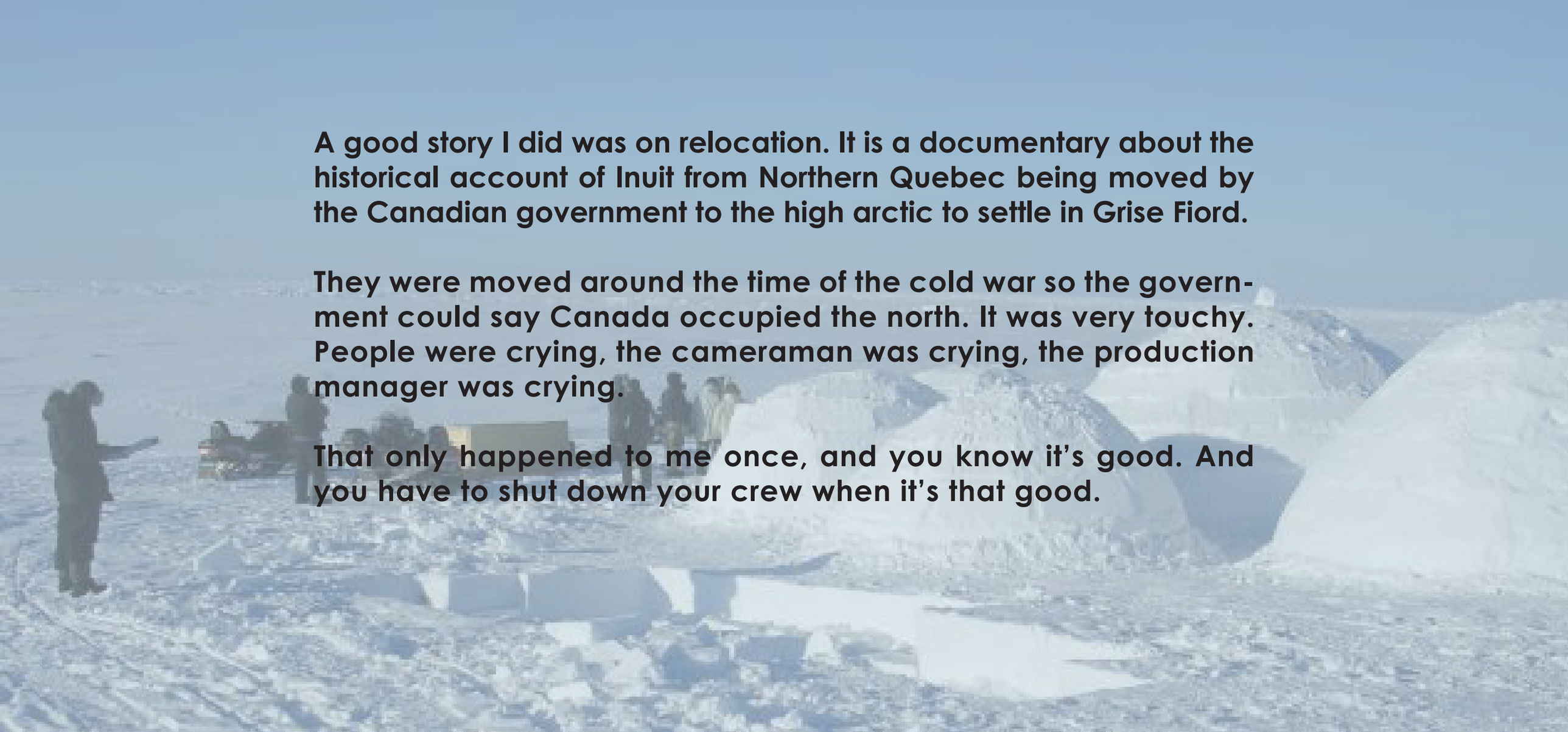
And when you're approaching people who know the story that you want to talk to, and then there's some other people who want to talk to you, talk to them too. And so you *try to talk to everybody*. **The more people you can interview the better. If someone is interested and willing to talk, turn the camera on and talk to them. It doesn't always have to be a formal sit down thing,** *you can do an interview anywhere, anytime, just turn the camera on and go.*

When you're making a documentary try to go out there with them, film whatever they're doing. Just blend that to your interviews, with interesting shots, beauty shots, ...and that's how it is.



It can be boring to just see someone talking **for your whole movie, we call that talking head, you don't want all of your video to be talking heads. Before or after your interview film the person doing something related to the topic of the video.**

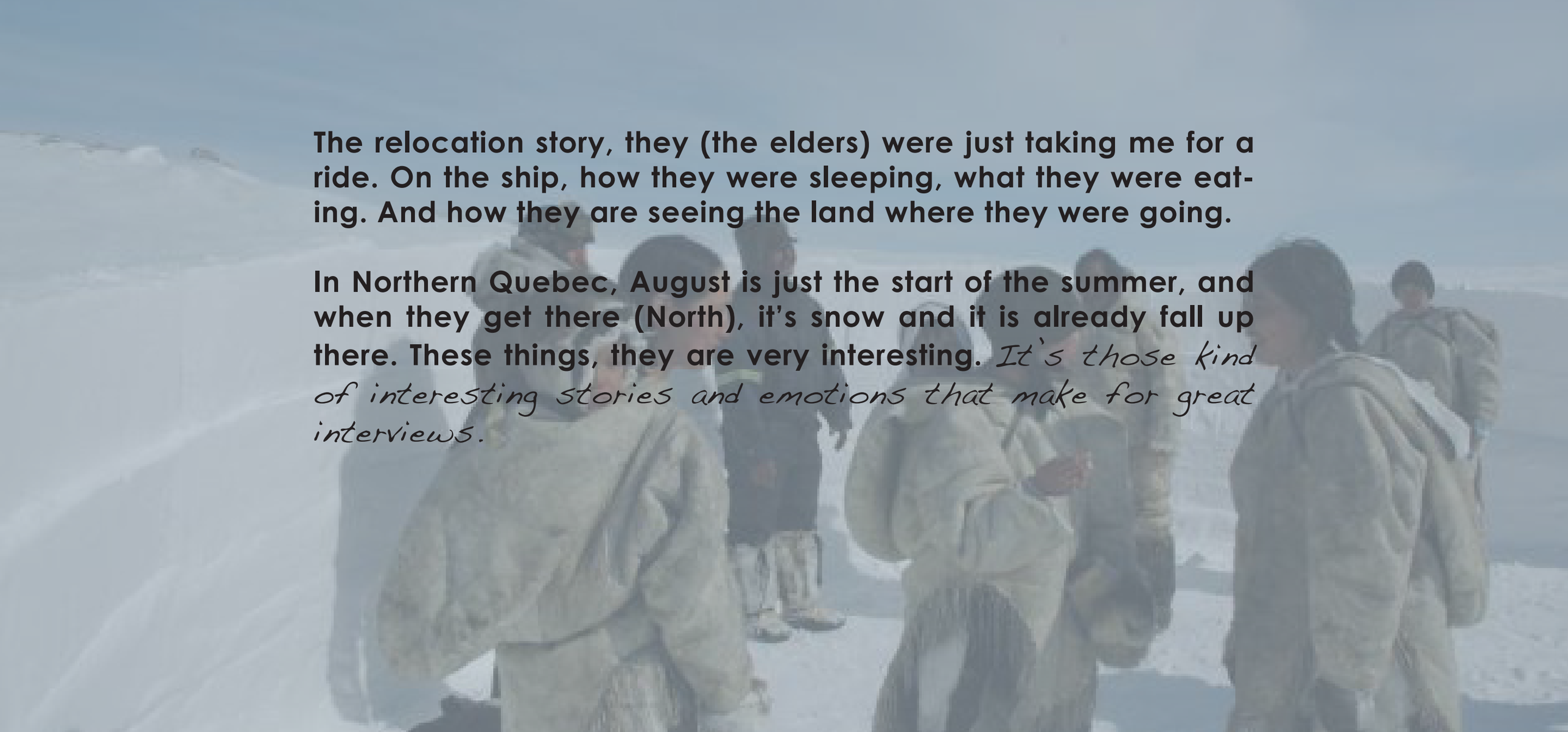
If you are making a documentary about caribou, you need to have shots of caribou. Try to go caribou hunting with someone you can interview, or film someone working on the skin, sewing a parka. You always want to have a lot of material to work with in the editing room. Shoot lots.



A good story I did was on relocation. It is a documentary about the historical account of Inuit from Northern Quebec being moved by the Canadian government to the high arctic to settle in Grise Fiord.

They were moved around the time of the cold war so the government could say Canada occupied the north. It was very touchy. People were crying, the cameraman was crying, the production manager was crying.

That only happened to me once, and you know it's good. And you have to shut down your crew when it's that good.



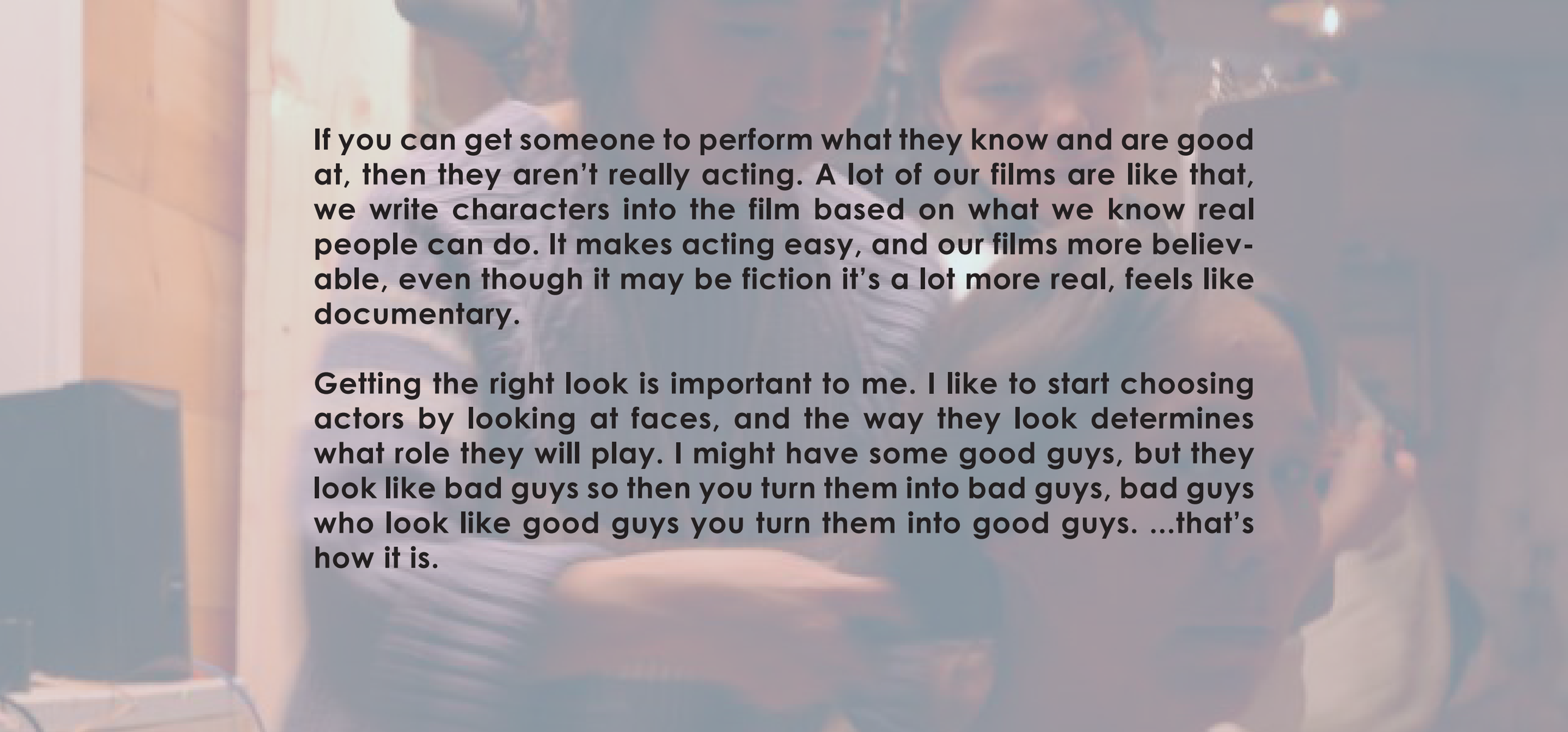
The relocation story, they (the elders) were just taking me for a ride. On the ship, how they were sleeping, what they were eating. And how they are seeing the land where they were going.

In Northern Quebec, August is just the start of the summer, and when they get there (North), it's snow and it is already fall up there. These things, they are very interesting. *It's those kind of interesting stories and emotions that make for great interviews.*

Developing dramatic film characters

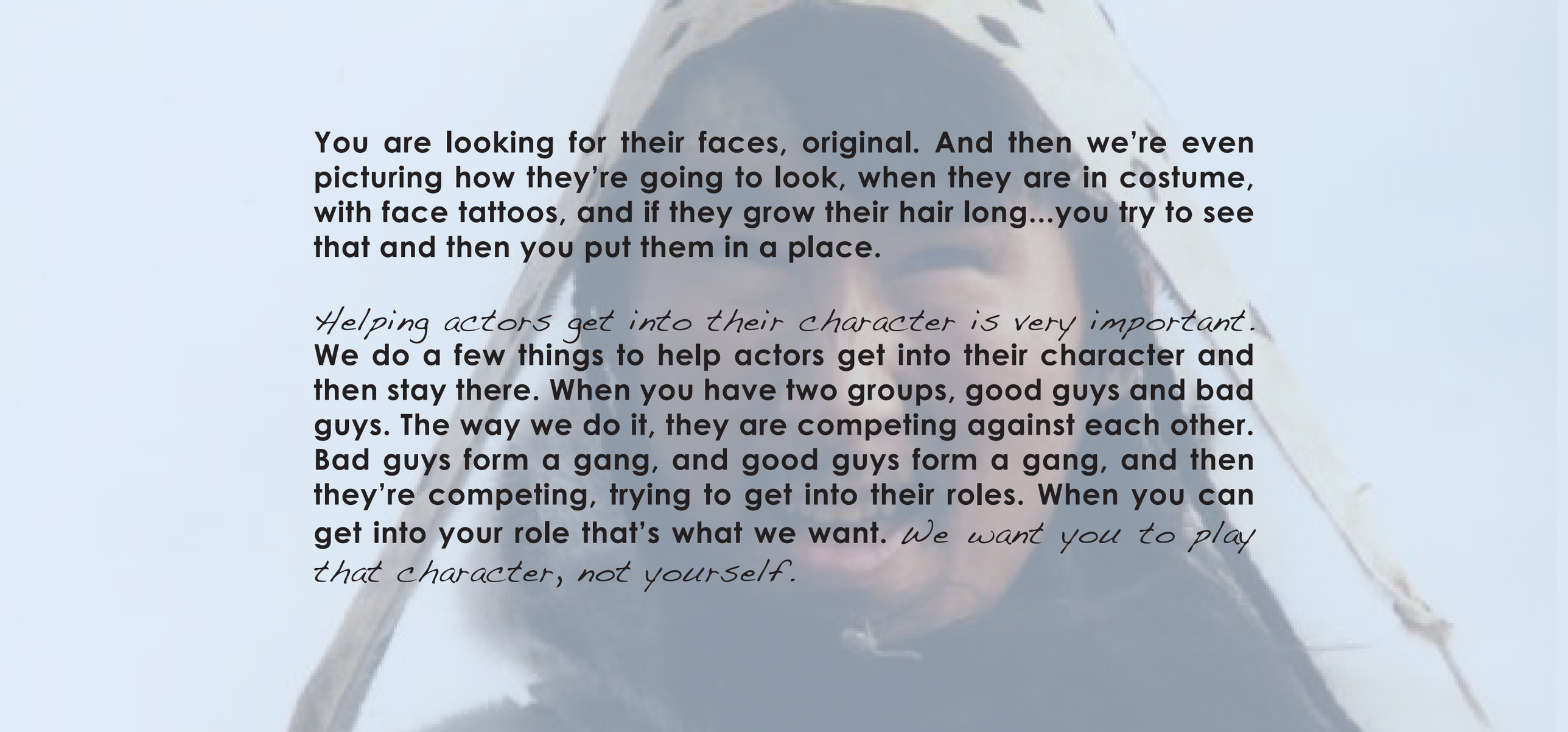
We don't work with professional actors, not in the sense that they are formally trained and have full time acting jobs. Anyone can act, you don't need to go to school to learn how to act, you just have to be able to get into your character, if you can do that, you can act.

We almost always hire local Inuit from Igloolik where we shoot most of our films. I've tried working with other actors from other countries or regions but it doesn't work out as well as hiring locally. *I like working with people I know.* **When I pick an actor I already know something about them. I might want to hire them because I know they are a good hunter and I need a hunter in a movie, then they are perfect.**



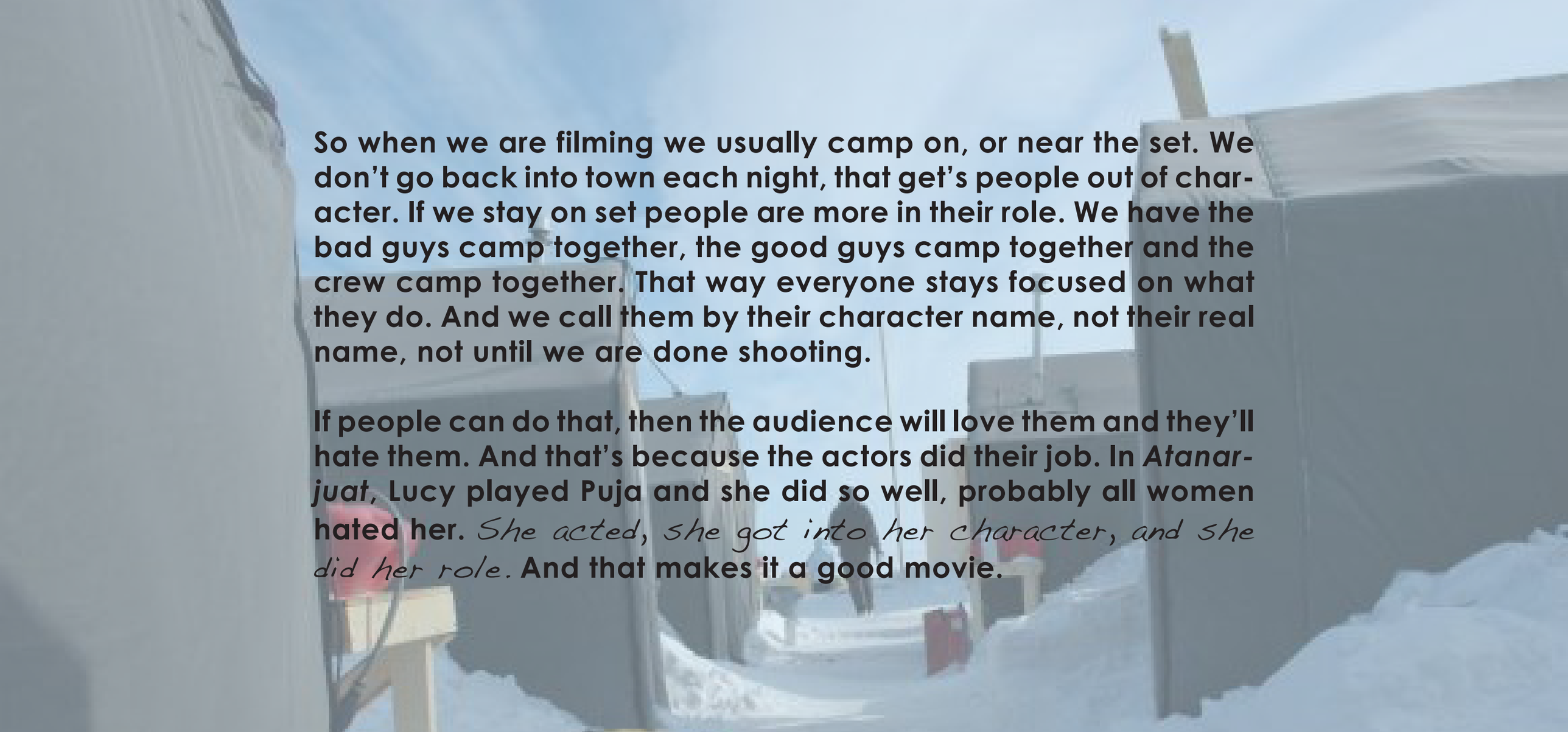
If you can get someone to perform what they know and are good at, then they aren't really acting. A lot of our films are like that, we write characters into the film based on what we know real people can do. It makes acting easy, and our films more believable, even though it may be fiction it's a lot more real, feels like documentary.

Getting the right look is important to me. I like to start choosing actors by looking at faces, and the way they look determines what role they will play. I might have some good guys, but they look like bad guys so then you turn them into bad guys, bad guys who look like good guys you turn them into good guys. ...that's how it is.



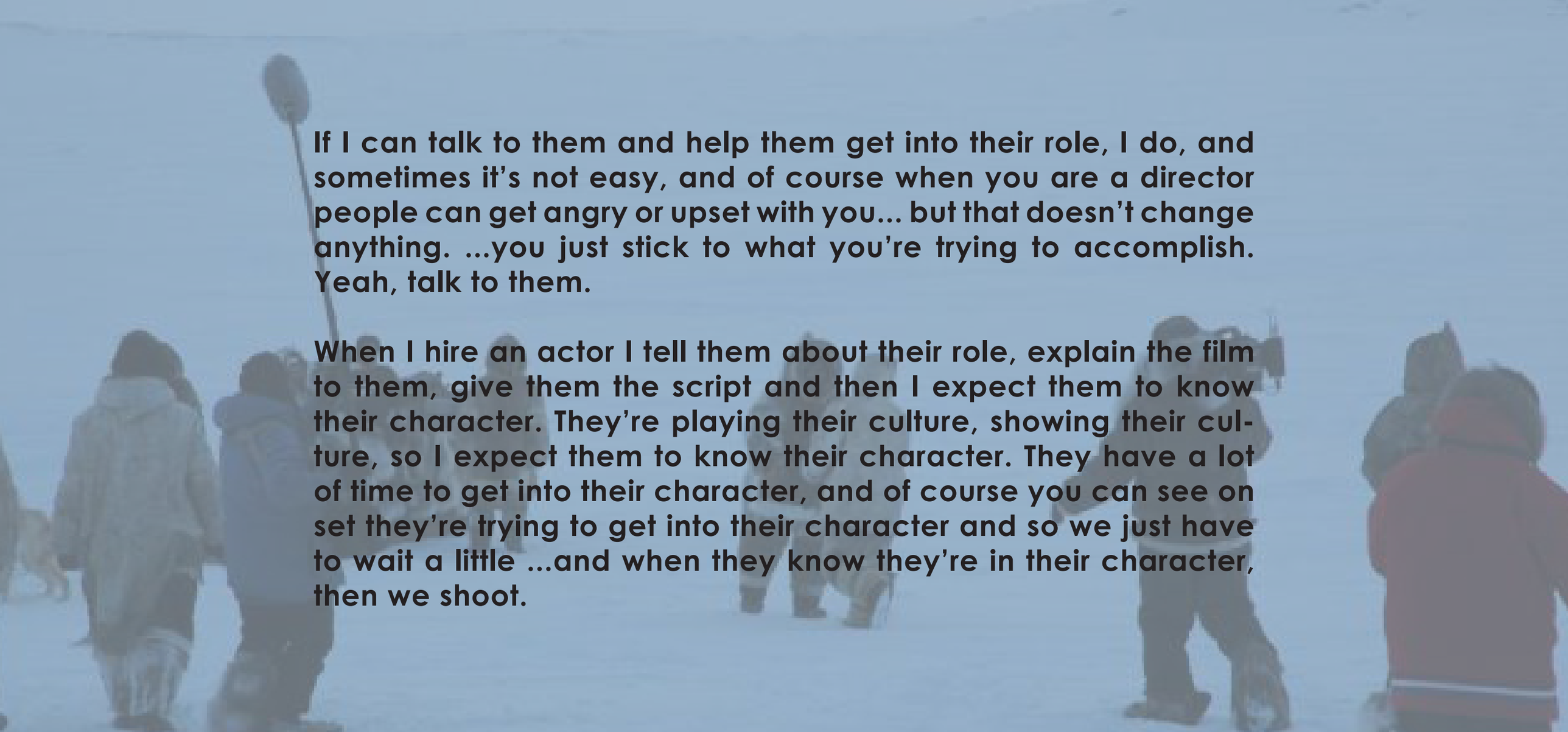
You are looking for their faces, original. And then we're even picturing how they're going to look, when they are in costume, with face tattoos, and if they grow their hair long...you try to see that and then you put them in a place.

Helping actors get into their character is very important. **We do a few things to help actors get into their character and then stay there. When you have two groups, good guys and bad guys. The way we do it, they are competing against each other. Bad guys form a gang, and good guys form a gang, and then they're competing, trying to get into their roles. When you can get into your role that's what we want.** *We want you to play that character, not yourself.*



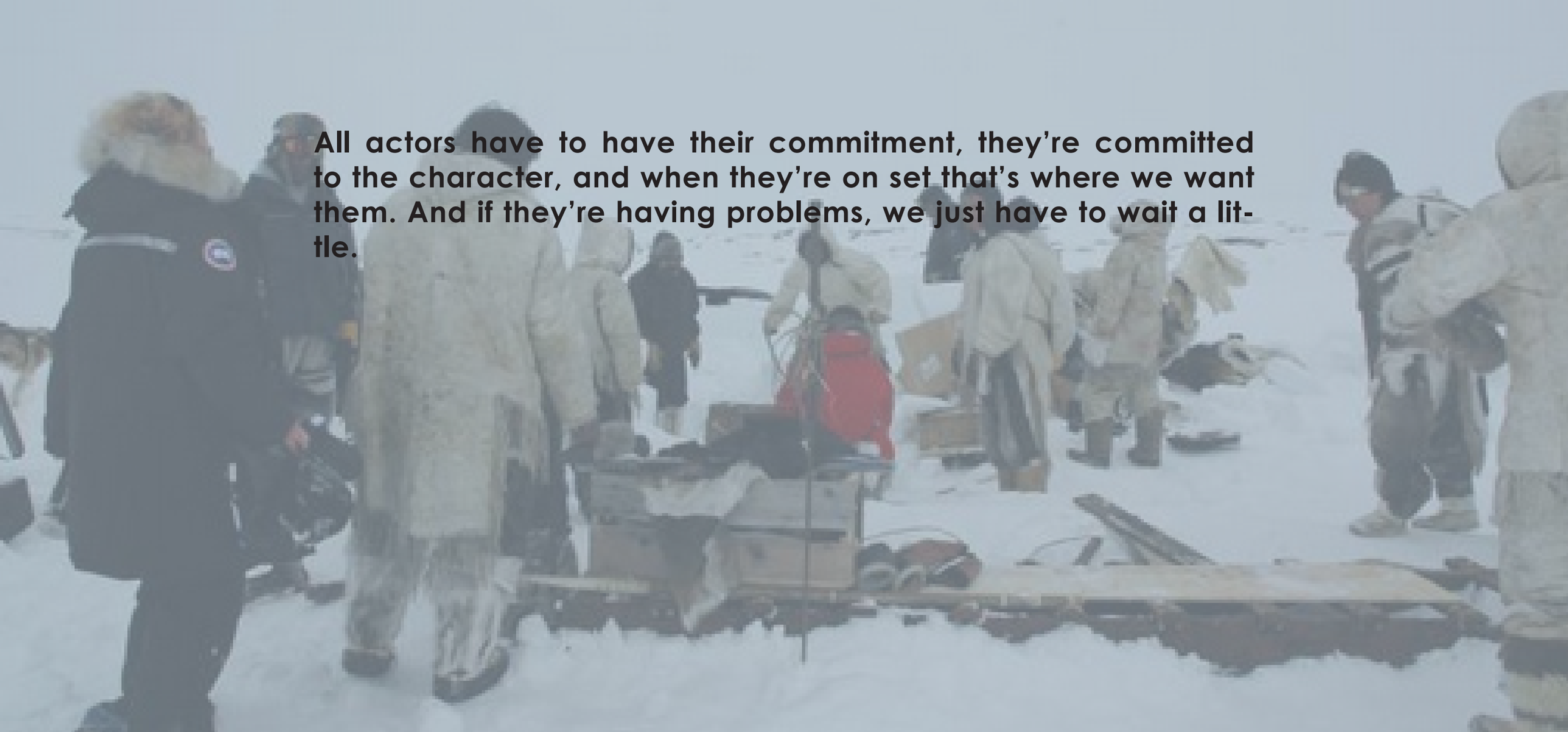
So when we are filming we usually camp on, or near the set. We don't go back into town each night, that get's people out of character. If we stay on set people are more in their role. We have the bad guys camp together, the good guys camp together and the crew camp together. That way everyone stays focused on what they do. And we call them by their character name, not their real name, not until we are done shooting.

If people can do that, then the audience will love them and they'll hate them. And that's because the actors did their job. In *Atanarjuat*, Lucy played Puja and she did so well, probably all women hated her. *She acted, she got into her character, and she did her role.* And that makes it a good movie.

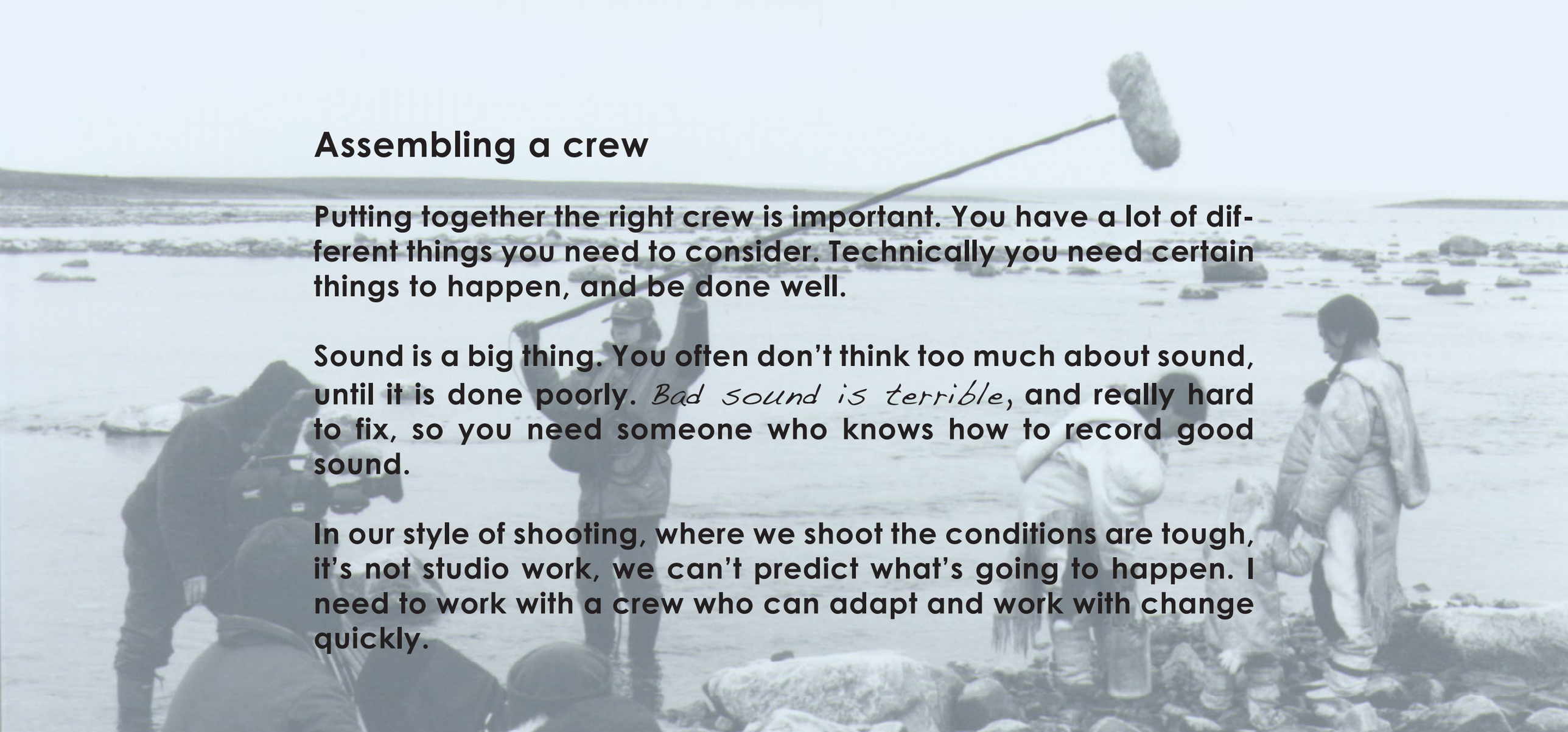


If I can talk to them and help them get into their role, I do, and sometimes it's not easy, and of course when you are a director people can get angry or upset with you... but that doesn't change anything. ...you just stick to what you're trying to accomplish. Yeah, talk to them.

When I hire an actor I tell them about their role, explain the film to them, give them the script and then I expect them to know their character. They're playing their culture, showing their culture, so I expect them to know their character. They have a lot of time to get into their character, and of course you can see on set they're trying to get into their character and so we just have to wait a little ...and when they know they're in their character, then we shoot.



All actors have to have their commitment, they're committed to the character, and when they're on set that's where we want them. And if they're having problems, we just have to wait a little.

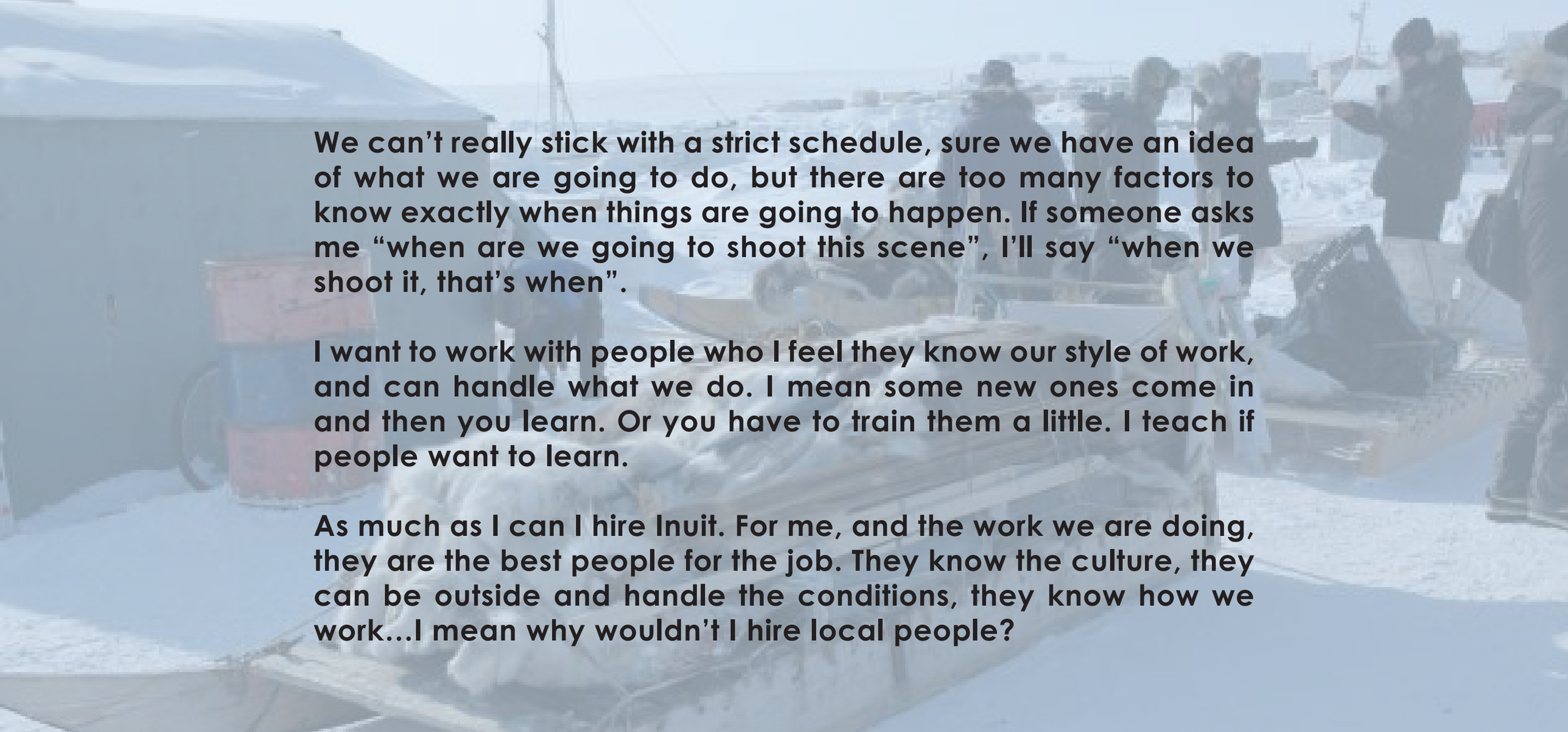


Assembling a crew

Putting together the right crew is important. You have a lot of different things you need to consider. Technically you need certain things to happen, and be done well.

Sound is a big thing. You often don't think too much about sound, until it is done poorly. *Bad sound is terrible*, **and really hard to fix, so you need someone who knows how to record good sound.**

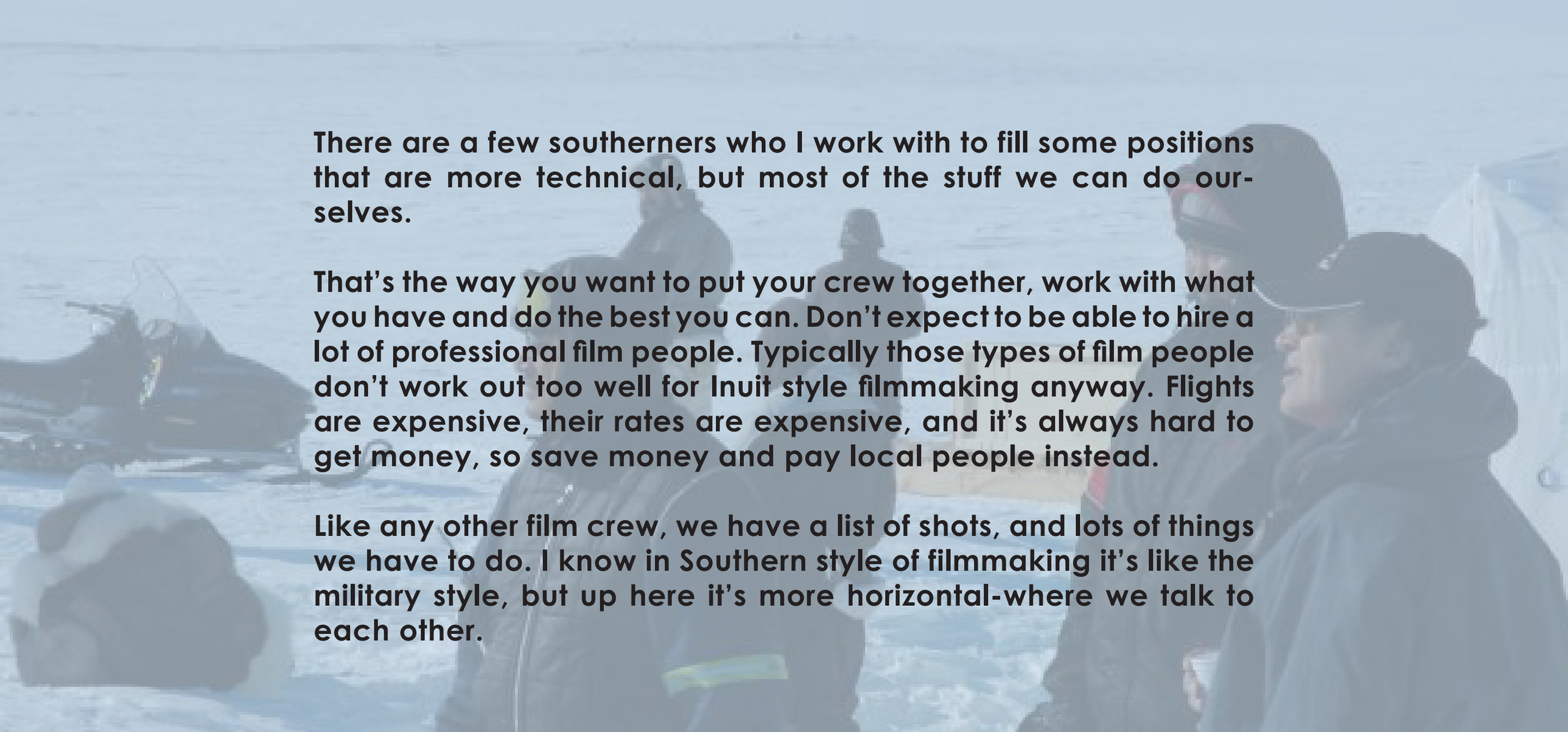
In our style of shooting, where we shoot the conditions are tough, it's not studio work, we can't predict what's going to happen. I need to work with a crew who can adapt and work with change quickly.



We can't really stick with a strict schedule, sure we have an idea of what we are going to do, but there are too many factors to know exactly when things are going to happen. If someone asks me "when are we going to shoot this scene", I'll say "when we shoot it, that's when".

I want to work with people who I feel they know our style of work, and can handle what we do. I mean some new ones come in and then you learn. Or you have to train them a little. I teach if people want to learn.

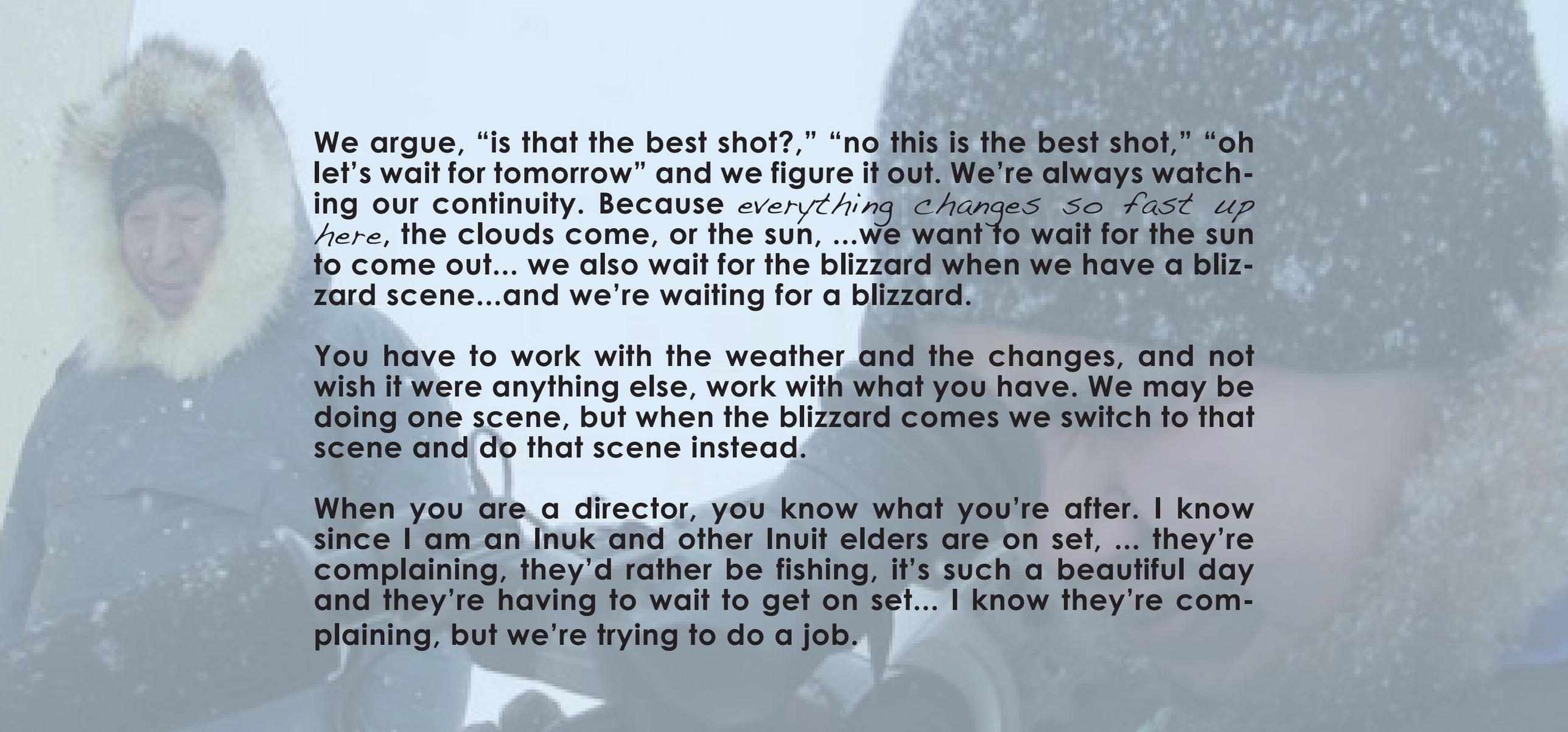
As much as I can I hire Inuit. For me, and the work we are doing, they are the best people for the job. They know the culture, they can be outside and handle the conditions, they know how we work...I mean why wouldn't I hire local people?



There are a few southerners who I work with to fill some positions that are more technical, but most of the stuff we can do ourselves.

That's the way you want to put your crew together, work with what you have and do the best you can. Don't expect to be able to hire a lot of professional film people. Typically those types of film people don't work out too well for Inuit style filmmaking anyway. Flights are expensive, their rates are expensive, and it's always hard to get money, so save money and pay local people instead.

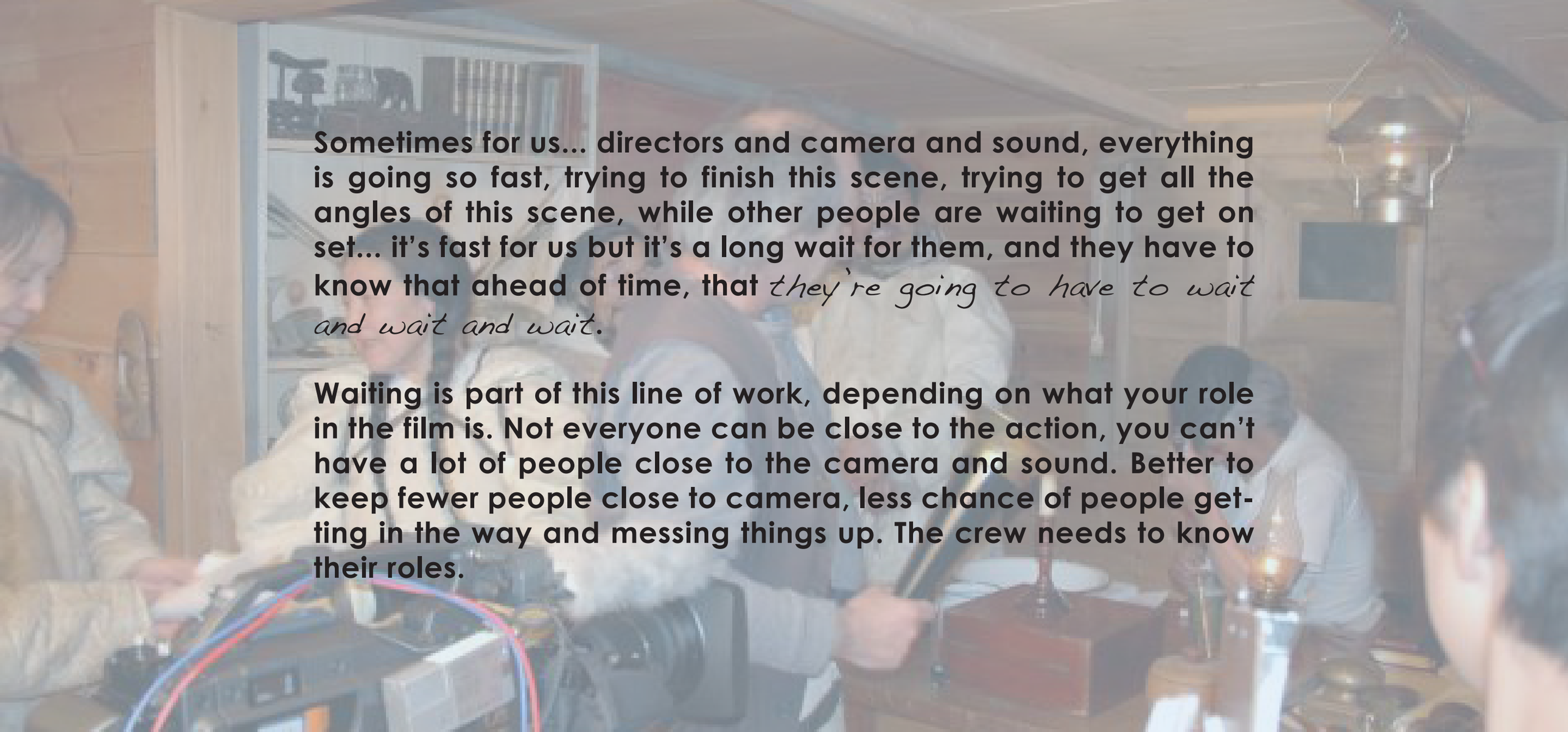
Like any other film crew, we have a list of shots, and lots of things we have to do. I know in Southern style of filmmaking it's like the military style, but up here it's more horizontal-where we talk to each other.



We argue, “is that the best shot?,” “no this is the best shot,” “oh let’s wait for tomorrow” and we figure it out. We’re always watching our continuity. Because *everything changes so fast up here*, the clouds come, or the sun, ...we want to wait for the sun to come out... we also wait for the blizzard when we have a blizzard scene...and we’re waiting for a blizzard.

You have to work with the weather and the changes, and not wish it were anything else, work with what you have. We may be doing one scene, but when the blizzard comes we switch to that scene and do that scene instead.

When you are a director, you know what you’re after. I know since I am an Inuk and other Inuit elders are on set, ... they’re complaining, they’d rather be fishing, it’s such a beautiful day and they’re having to wait to get on set... I know they’re complaining, but we’re trying to do a job.



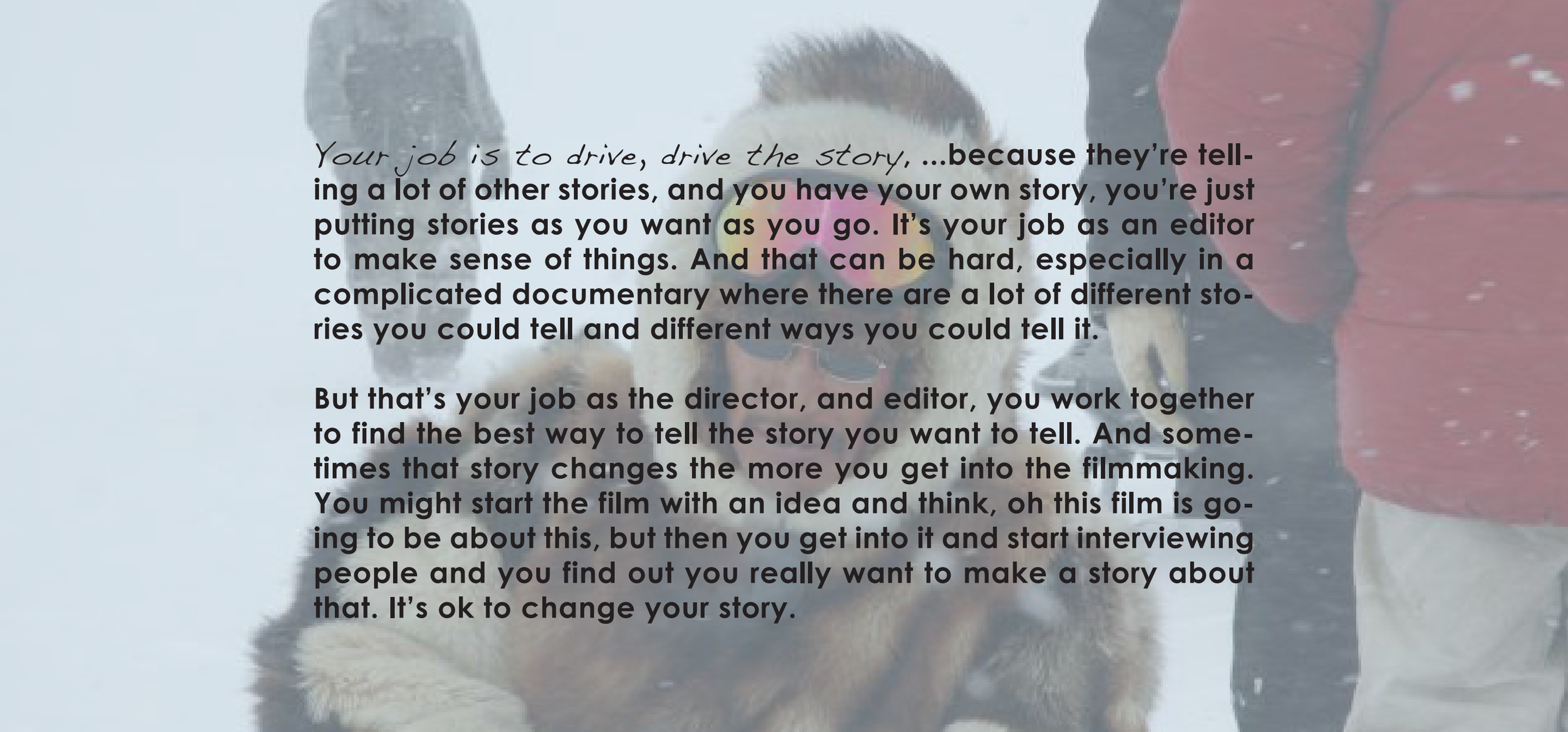
Sometimes for us... directors and camera and sound, everything is going so fast, trying to finish this scene, trying to get all the angles of this scene, while other people are waiting to get on set... it's fast for us but it's a long wait for them, and they have to know that ahead of time, that *they're going to have to wait and wait and wait.*

Waiting is part of this line of work, depending on what your role in the film is. Not everyone can be close to the action, you can't have a lot of people close to the camera and sound. Better to keep fewer people close to camera, less chance of people getting in the way and messing things up. The crew needs to know their roles.

Editing

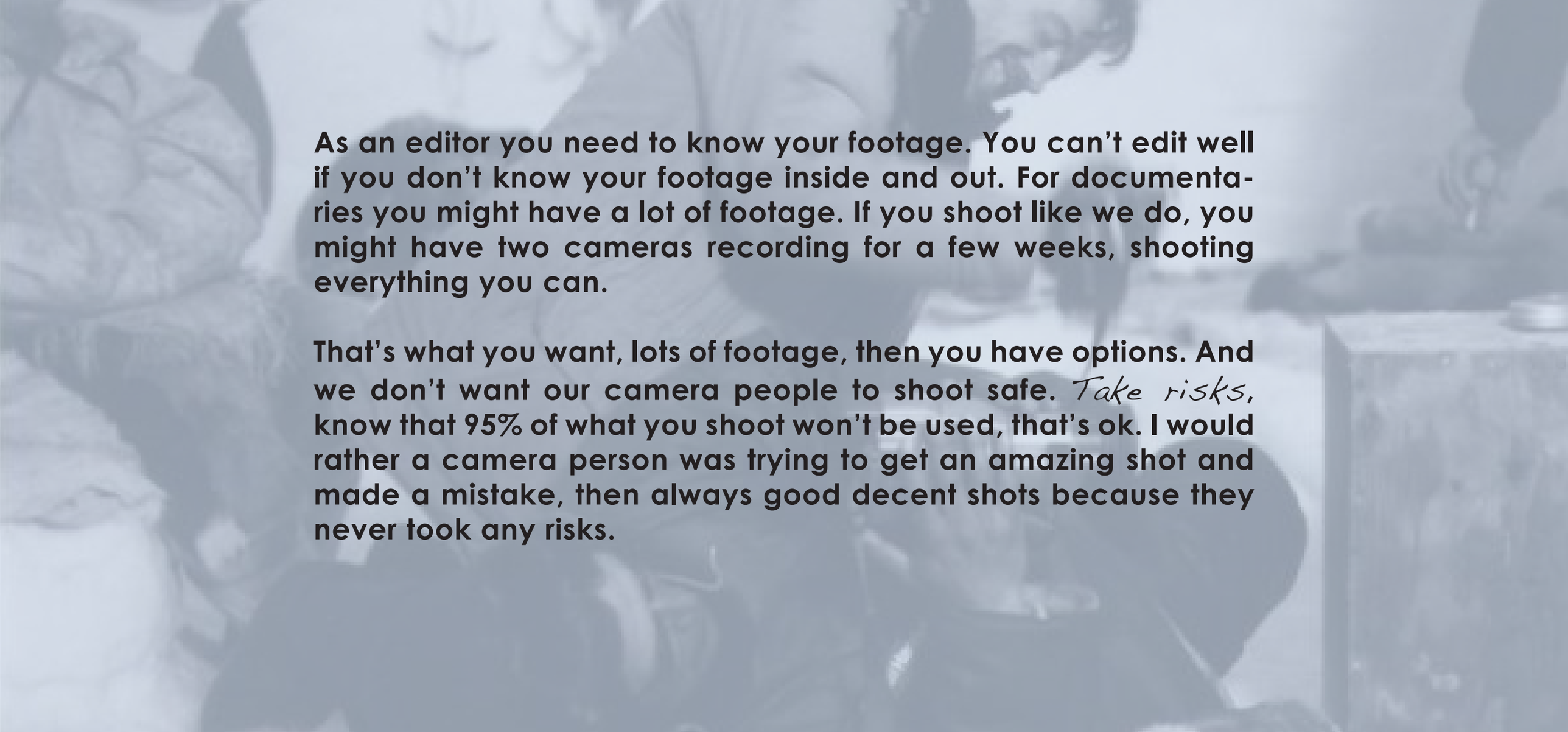
Editing is great, it's a lot of fun. **It's like you just spent all this time and energy collecting lots of material and now you get to see what the film will look like. Just play with it. Nowadays we can. When we started, we couldn't. Then we used to record the tape, edit in tape, and we couldn't make hardly any mistakes, as otherwise we had to do it all over again. That's how we did it.**

We know the story, and we want the story to kick in. *Who's telling the story?* **So one person tells a story, tells the same story as another but from that view, and another tells from that view. And just go... They just take you for a ride in the documentary...**



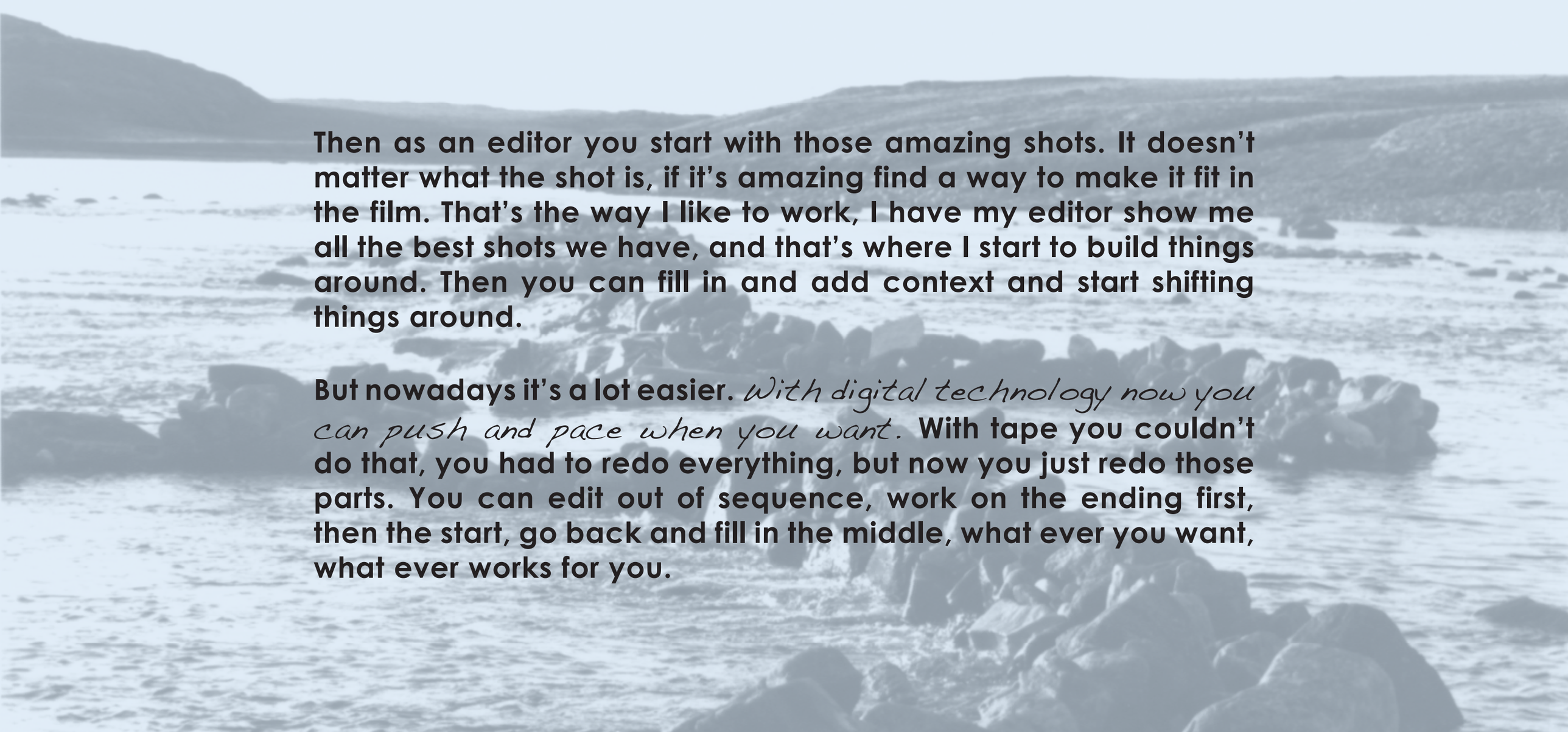
Your job is to drive, drive the story, **...because they're telling a lot of other stories, and you have your own story, you're just putting stories as you want as you go. It's your job as an editor to make sense of things. And that can be hard, especially in a complicated documentary where there are a lot of different stories you could tell and different ways you could tell it.**

But that's your job as the director, and editor, you work together to find the best way to tell the story you want to tell. And sometimes that story changes the more you get into the filmmaking. You might start the film with an idea and think, oh this film is going to be about this, but then you get into it and start interviewing people and you find out you really want to make a story about that. It's ok to change your story.



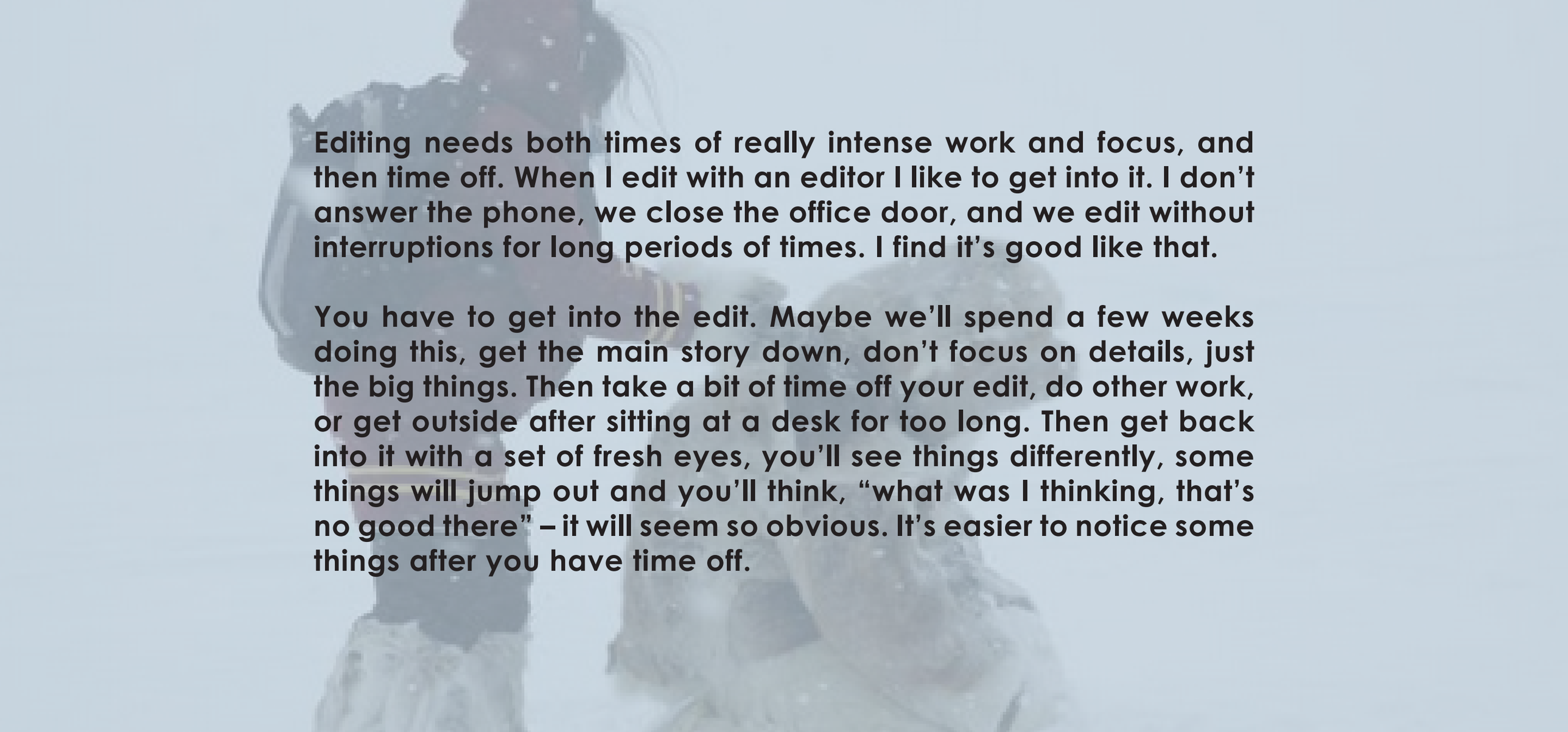
As an editor you need to know your footage. You can't edit well if you don't know your footage inside and out. For documentaries you might have a lot of footage. If you shoot like we do, you might have two cameras recording for a few weeks, shooting everything you can.

That's what you want, lots of footage, then you have options. And we don't want our camera people to shoot safe. *Take risks*, know that 95% of what you shoot won't be used, that's ok. I would rather a camera person was trying to get an amazing shot and made a mistake, then always good decent shots because they never took any risks.



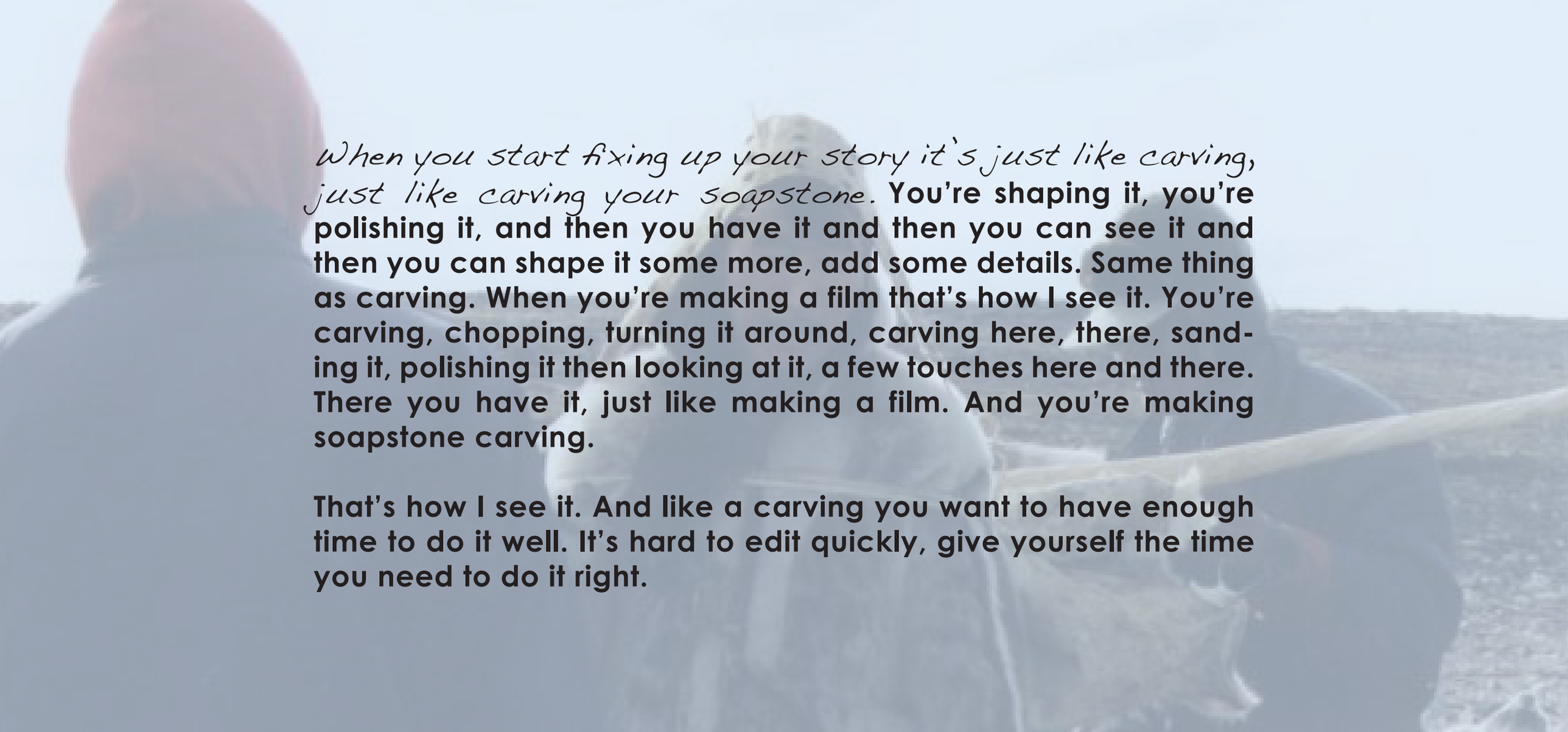
Then as an editor you start with those amazing shots. It doesn't matter what the shot is, if it's amazing find a way to make it fit in the film. That's the way I like to work, I have my editor show me all the best shots we have, and that's where I start to build things around. Then you can fill in and add context and start shifting things around.

But nowadays it's a lot easier. *With digital technology now you can push and pace when you want.* **With tape you couldn't do that, you had to redo everything, but now you just redo those parts. You can edit out of sequence, work on the ending first, then the start, go back and fill in the middle, what ever you want, what ever works for you.**



Editing needs both times of really intense work and focus, and then time off. When I edit with an editor I like to get into it. I don't answer the phone, we close the office door, and we edit without interruptions for long periods of times. I find it's good like that.

You have to get into the edit. Maybe we'll spend a few weeks doing this, get the main story down, don't focus on details, just the big things. Then take a bit of time off your edit, do other work, or get outside after sitting at a desk for too long. Then get back into it with a set of fresh eyes, you'll see things differently, some things will jump out and you'll think, "what was I thinking, that's no good there" – it will seem so obvious. It's easier to notice some things after you have time off.



When you start fixing up your story it's just like carving, just like carving your soapstone. **You're shaping it, you're polishing it, and then you have it and then you can see it and then you can shape it some more, add some details. Same thing as carving. When you're making a film that's how I see it. You're carving, chopping, turning it around, carving here, there, sanding it, polishing it then looking at it, a few touches here and there. There you have it, just like making a film. And you're making soapstone carving.**

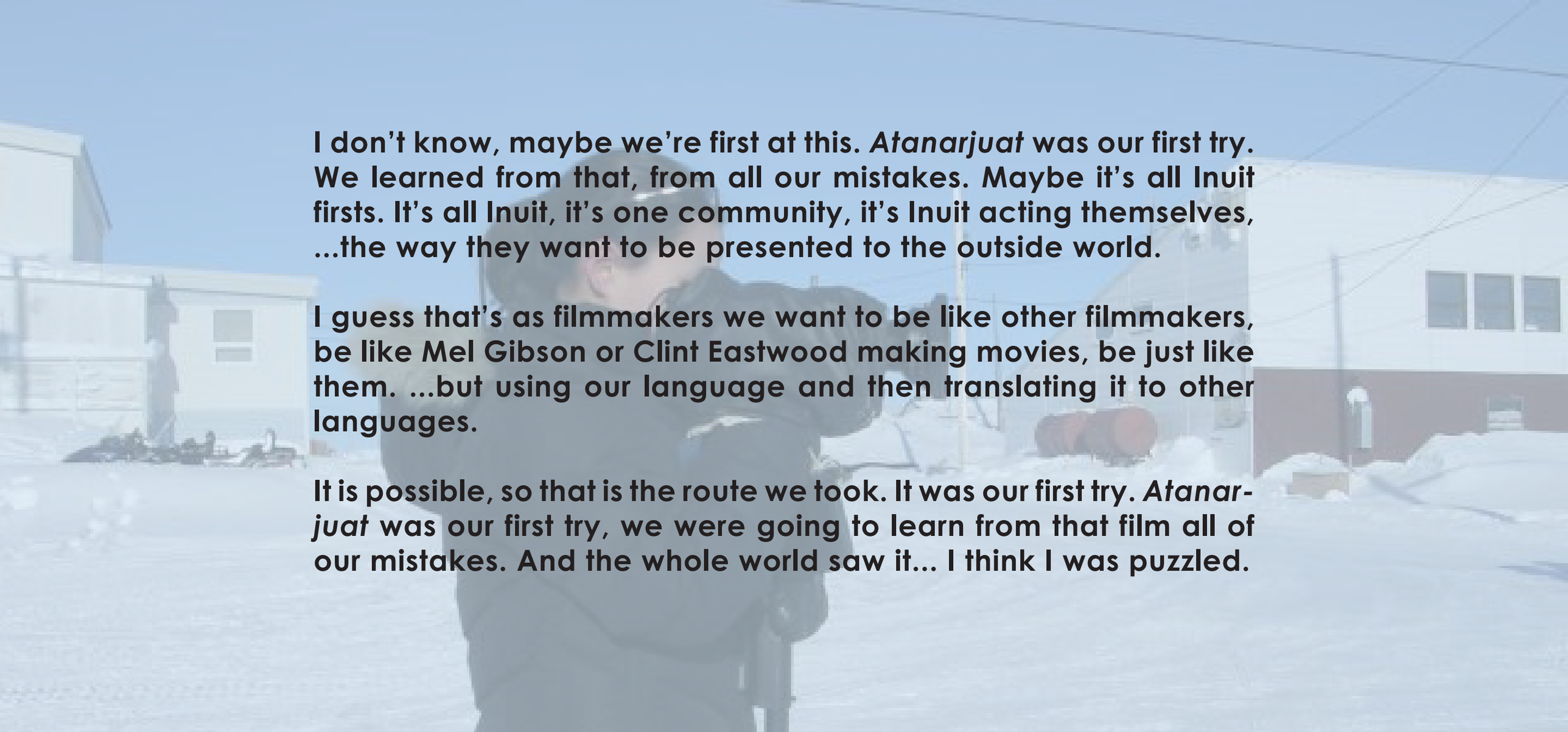
That's how I see it. And like a carving you want to have enough time to do it well. It's hard to edit quickly, give yourself the time you need to do it right.

Audience and authenticity

Our audience are Inuit, **I like to use them first, because they're going to judge you first and tell you "no this, we don't do that, we don't do this", because I like to get that out of the way, so that's why we use elders.**

To get it correct, because our first audience are Inuit, ...we make a slight mistake... they'll see. We use our Inuit audience to see our films first, and then we open it up to the rest of the world.

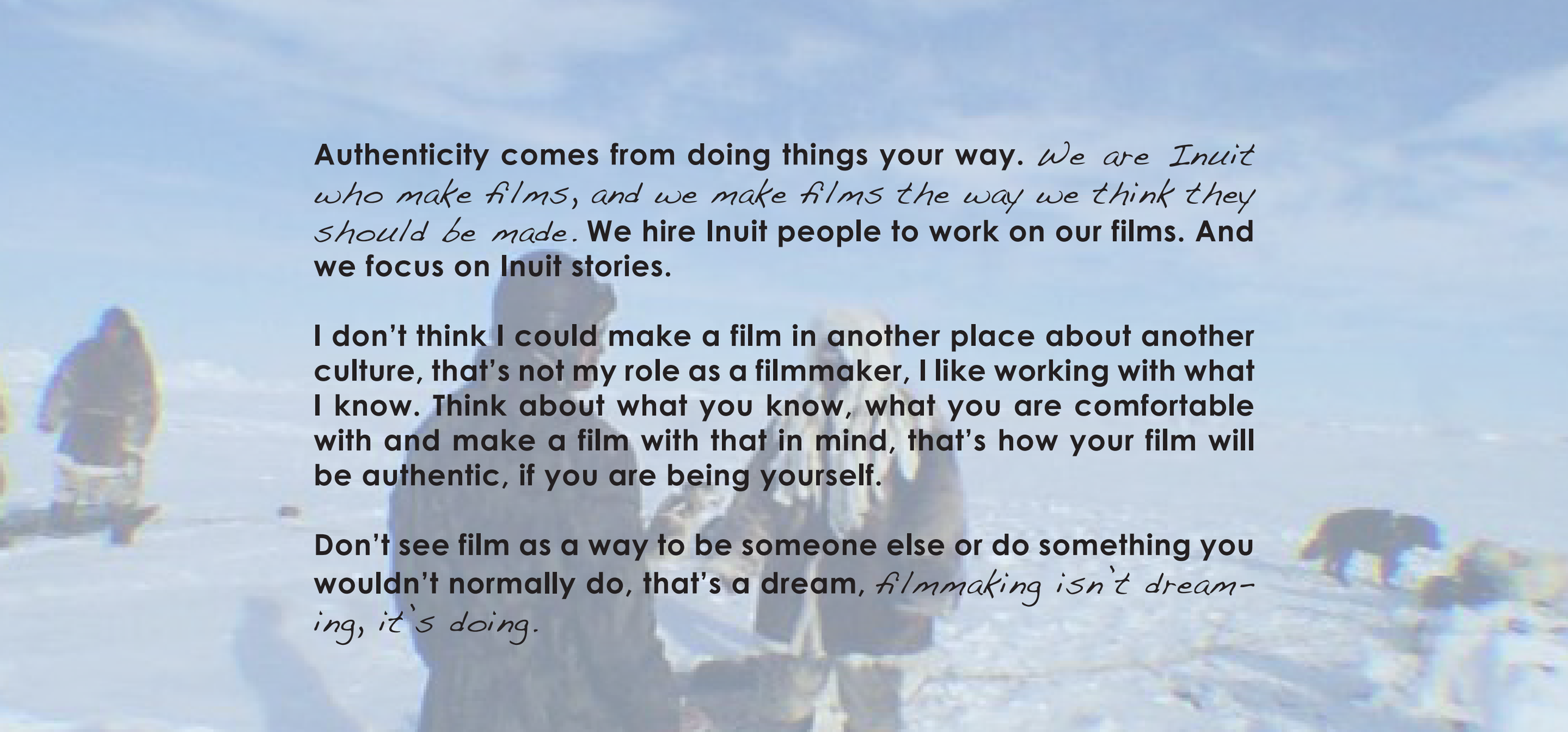
When we started filming, all of our documentaries were on how to make things, how to do this and how do they do that, and then we learned more and made drama.



I don't know, maybe we're first at this. *Atanarjuat* was our first try. We learned from that, from all our mistakes. Maybe it's all Inuit firsts. It's all Inuit, it's one community, it's Inuit acting themselves, ...the way they want to be presented to the outside world.

I guess that's as filmmakers we want to be like other filmmakers, be like Mel Gibson or Clint Eastwood making movies, be just like them. ...but using our language and then translating it to other languages.

It is possible, so that is the route we took. It was our first try. *Atanarjuat* was our first try, we were going to learn from that film all of our mistakes. And the whole world saw it... I think I was puzzled.



Authenticity comes from doing things your way. *We are Inuit who make films, and we make films the way we think they should be made.* **We hire Inuit people to work on our films. And we focus on Inuit stories.**

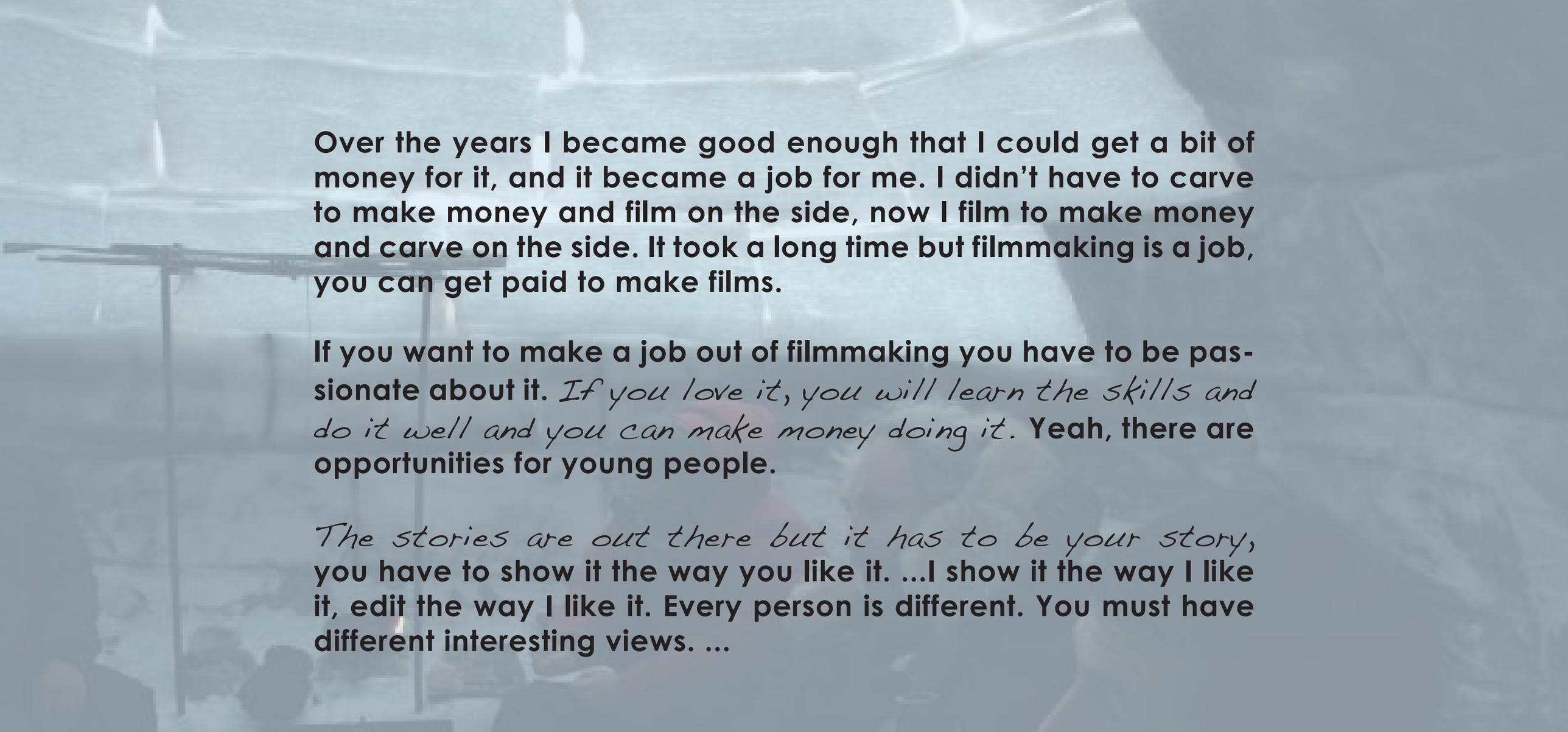
I don't think I could make a film in another place about another culture, that's not my role as a filmmaker, I like working with what I know. Think about what you know, what you are comfortable with and make a film with that in mind, that's how your film will be authentic, if you are being yourself.

Don't see film as a way to be someone else or do something you wouldn't normally do, that's a dream, *filmmaking isn't dreaming, it's doing.*

Advice to filmmakers

First of all you have to have your own interests in filmmaking. *Know why you want to make films.* **I never got into making films for any external reason, I got into it because I was curious, and then I found it is a great way to learn, and to create and share interesting stories.**

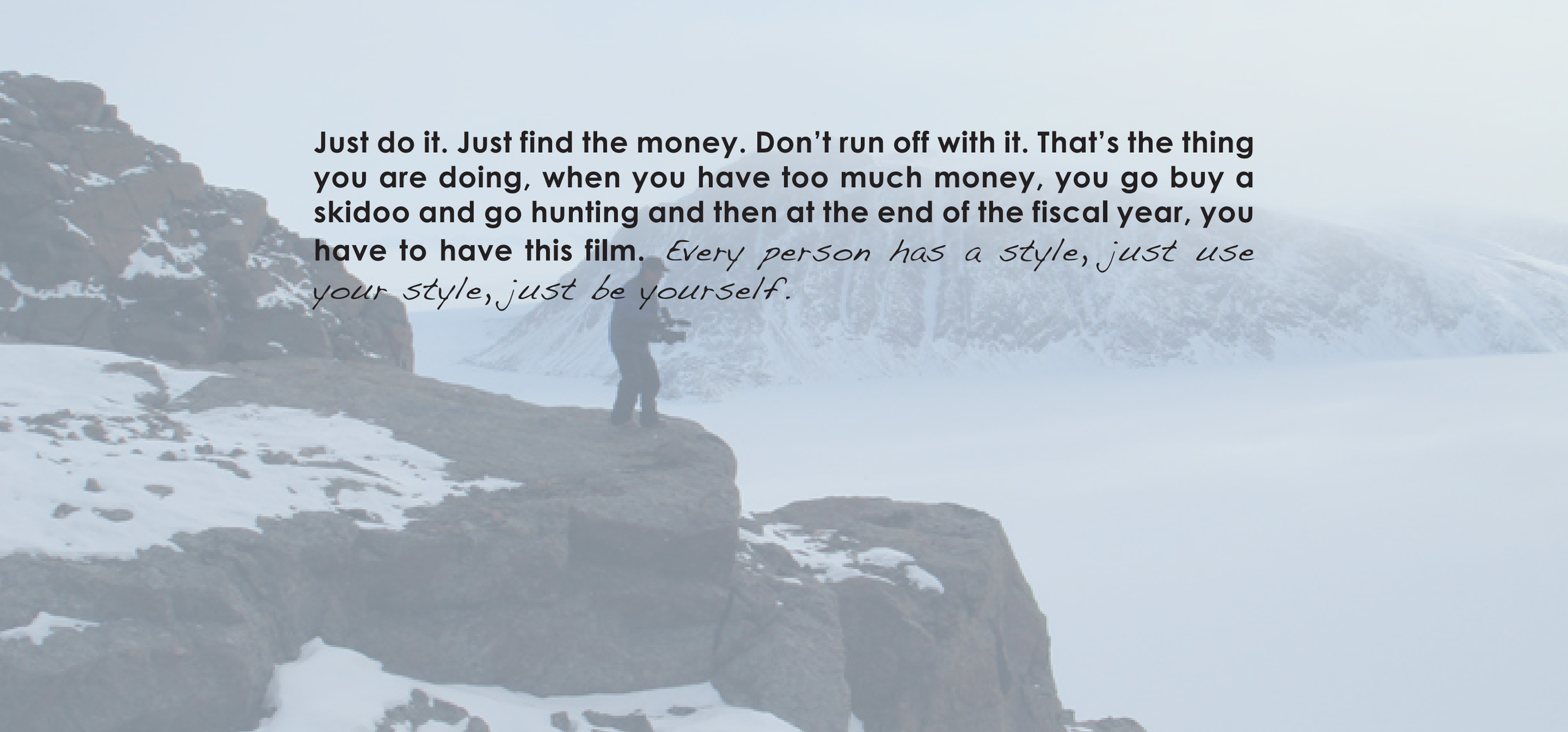
I love listening and talking with elders and finding out things about Inuit ways that I never knew. For me filmmaking is a way to explore Inuit culture. And then with film I can share what I learn with others, I can show my children, and they can show their children, and they can learn how to make an igloo, or cache walrus meat, or hear stories about real shamans.



Over the years I became good enough that I could get a bit of money for it, and it became a job for me. I didn't have to carve to make money and film on the side, now I film to make money and carve on the side. It took a long time but filmmaking is a job, you can get paid to make films.

If you want to make a job out of filmmaking you have to be passionate about it. *If you love it, you will learn the skills and do it well and you can make money doing it.* **Yeah, there are opportunities for young people.**

The stories are out there but it has to be your story, **you have to show it the way you like it. ...I show it the way I like it, edit the way I like it. Every person is different. You must have different interesting views. ...**



Just do it. Just find the money. Don't run off with it. That's the thing you are doing, when you have too much money, you go buy a skidoo and go hunting and then at the end of the fiscal year, you have to have this film. *Every person has a style, just use your style, just be yourself.*