

Jenny Perlin

Transcript, 2006

16mm film (black & white, silent, 4 minutes) and
16mm film transferred to DVD (color, sound,
11:25 minutes)

Transcript evolved from Perlin's research on the Perlin Papers, an archive at Columbia University of now-public FBI documents from the 1940s through the early 1970s. The archive is named for the artist's distant relative, Marshall Perlin, a lawyer who forced the U.S. government to release the previously confidential papers. It contains 250,000 documents related to the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, alleged spies for the Soviet Union who were convicted of treason and executed in 1953. For decades after the execution, the FBI continued to collect information on hundreds of people tangentially connected to the case.

For this project, Perlin selected a transcript of a dinner conversation between two couples that took place in a Greenwich Village apartment months after the Rosenbergs' execution. Much of the dialogue is muffled, as the agents had difficulty hearing. When they could not understand the conversation, the agents would indicate "inaudible" in the transcript or guess what was being said. Perlin used this succession of words to create the stop-motion animated film.

Courtesy of the artist, Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, and Galerie M+R Fricke, Berlin.

Transcript has been supported by grants from The American Center Foundation, Geneva and Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts and post-production services were provided by the Standby Program, NY.