

THE CLASH OF TWO IMAGES
CHINA'S MEDIA OFFENSIVE IN THE UNITED STATES

by

FAN BU

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Committee

Fritz Cropp, Chair

Clyde Bentley

Wesley Pippert

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Fan Bu

Fritz Cropp, Project Supervisor

ABSTRACT

At a time when most Western newspaper and broadcasting companies are scaling back, China's state-run media organizations are fast growing and reaching into every corner of the world, especially in North America and Africa. The \$7 billion campaign to expand China's soft power has significantly increased its media presence.

But are these media offensive efforts effective? This paper analyzes the current state of the media expansion, the motivation behind it, the obstacles, suggestions and the outlook in the decades to come.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Growing up in Beijing, I was one of hundreds of millions who watched the China Central TV prime time newscast each night at 7. But I never realized how biased the programs were until I traveled back home recently after studying and working in journalism in the United States for five years. In the half-hour show, international news normally takes 5 to 10 minutes, most of which report on negative news around the world, such as riots in the Middle East or the economic crisis in Europe. But the greatest attention is reserved for negative events in the United States.

"After bashing the U.S. government's handling of Hurricane Sandy, we had no stories to work on," Zou Yun, an on-air reporter at CCTV's Washington bureau, told me recently. "So our boss sent three teams of reporters to keep going north, until we found power outage due to snow storms. We almost went to Canada, but still didn't find anywhere that had power outage."

China's media system has been heavily controlled by the government. Even though the television stations are always at the forefront of media technologies; even though the mainstream newspapers have talented writers and unparalleled budgets; even though China has the largest number of Internet users in the world – by January, 2013 there are 564 million Internet users in China, according to a report by the CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center), it is still risky to practice professional journalism in China, and especially dangerous to cover certain sensitive issues, such as politics,

religion, and sensitive historical incidences. So fairness and objectivity in news reporting is almost "mission impossible" in China.

But on the other hand, the impression of Chinese media being the only biased ones in the U.S.-China media war may not be fair either. Some would argue that the U.S. coverage of China is sometimes biased, too. For example, Hari Bapuji, an assistant professor in Business Management at the University of Manitoba, and Paul W. Beamish, professor of International Business at University of Western Ontario, examined toy recalls in the U.S. from 1988 to 2007, and found that among the 550 toy recalls, 76.4% were due to the product design problems, but the U.S. media have constantly blamed China as the single source of problem.

Therefore, as China's economic status rises on the global stage, the government is also aggressively using the news media as a tool to re-establish an image that is often portrayed negatively in the West.

Currently I am working for SinoVision, Inc., a Chinese-language television station based in New York. Its mission is to serve the Chinese community in the United States. A few years ago, the station started receiving subsidies from the Chinese government and began expanding at an astounding speed. In the past two years, it has set up bureaus across the continent – Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and even Vancouver in the near future. It launched its two 24-hour digital channels each in Chinese and English,

attracting the younger generation of Chinese immigrants. Smartphone apps are drawing a rapidly growing viewership. As the chief political reporter, I have had the opportunities to cover Chinese President Hu's 2011 visit in Washington, Vice President Xi's 2012 visit in Iowa, and the Republican and Democratic National Conventions in Florida and North Carolina.

A local Chinese-language television station, as you can imagine, has a niche market in the United States. Yet, with the muscle of the Chinese government, the station is primed to reach into every corner of the U.S. market.

SinoVision is just one example of how the Chinese government is making endless and expensive moves in the United States to "counterstrike" the Western media's depiction of China. Other examples include the launching of the new CCTV America early this year, the opening of the new Xinhua News Agency U.S. Headquarters in Times Square, and the display of the "China Screen" at the most prominent billboard spot in Times Square.

This study will analyze how the Chinese media outlets are presenting the image of China to the global audience, and whether they are accomplishing their goals.

CHAPTER TWO: WEEKLY FIELD NOTES

January –April 2009

Week 1 Summary

My internship at the [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) started on Wednesday, January 7th, 2009. They have two recommended start dates, which are the 7th and 22nd. There is no any reason for me to miss the Inauguration Day, is there?

During a brief orientation, about fifteen new interns at WPNI sat together learning about the company. After that, I was led to the multimedia department, where I'm going to work at for 14 weeks. Steve Cook, one of the photo editors, gave me a tour at the department and introduced me to everyone. Besides the fact that everyone was extremely nice, the highlight of the tour was the balcony, where I technically could see the White House if it was not raining.

Then my internship officially started. The first day was kind of laid back. I shadowed Dyan Elovich, a photo editor, with editing and publishing photos for the home page of the [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

On the second and third day, I went out shadowing Ben de la Cruz for shooting two groups of people getting prepared for the Inauguration Parade. Observing his shoot and interviews helped me a lot. I secretly kept a list of tips that I learned from him:

1. To be the boss during the interviews. I don't know if it's good or not. He's a really nice and friendly person, but once he starts an interview, he becomes serious and

bossy. He goes, "Spell your name," like the way a policeman would talk to a criminal. However, it seems that people don't feel offended but rather comply with him.

2. Always let the interviewee to give a complete answer. Because documentary video normally doesn't have narration to serve as explanation or bridge, complete sentences make the piece more coherent and easier to understand. For example, if he asked, "What do you like about this float?" and the interviewee answered, "It's fun," he would definitely ask, "What is fun?"

3. Change the composition and framing during an interview. First, it helps to make the video more visually interesting. Second, the soundbites can stand alone and be edited to serve as a whole piece without any b-roll in case that there won't be any b-roll opportunities.

4. Clip the wireless mic on a main person and just let him/her do whatever he/she is supposed to do. Listen to the headphone while taking some other shots. When he/she is talking about some interesting things, go and follow him/her.

5. Let the interviewee face the light.

6. Keep the background of an interview as simple as possible.

7. Most important, what I need to keep in mind is that, this is documentary video, not news video. Good interview is crucial. Visual presentation is crucial. Creativity is crucial. Fun to watch is crucial. If in broadcast news, reporting takes 85% of the total effort and time, while writing and editing takes 15%, for documentary video, shooting takes 70% or even less, while post-production is such an important thing that every videographer spends days and weeks on it.

My first week only has three days from Wednesday through Friday. I'm already in love with this place. Documentary video is what I'm good at and where my true interest lies in. All the videographers here are so talented that it's really my honor to work with them. Also, I'm feeling so lucky that I'll be working as a journalist with the washingtonpost.com during Obama's Inauguration, which is such a historic moment that will still be remembered hundreds of years later.

Week 2 Summary

I got my first assignment on Monday. Actually, two assignments came together. The first one is shooting an interview on Tuesday morning between a senior national political correspondent with The Washington Post and Carol Browner, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change. The second assignment is to do a video story going with a print story, which is about the preparation for Inauguration at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

They both sounded so exciting to me. The interview was going to take place at Obama-Biden Transition Office, and the Ritz-Carlton story would be my first documentary video piece. Since I had played around with the camera and lighting kit, I knew I was ready.

For the first assignment, I worked with Akira Hakuta, one of our excellent videographers. On Tuesday, we arrived at the Obama Transition Office building in advance to re-arrange the furniture, set up lights and curtains, and adjust the settings of our cameras. I learned that the normal indoor setting is 2.8 for the aperture and 60/90 for the shutter speed. It was pretty easy but also an interesting learning experience. The main part of the interview can be found here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/01/14/VI2009011403961.html> I was responsible for shooting the correspondent's side.

Right after the shoot, I went to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Carrying all my equipments to take metro there made me too tired to keep awake when I was sitting at the

lobby waiting for the PR person, until, I saw Larry King. I suddenly became more awake than ever. “Why not interview him?” I thought. “Of course,” He said. Thus, I got an interview with Larry King about his stay at Ritz-Carlton and how he thought about the Inauguration. Cool.

It was the first day of shooting for this story. I spent Thursday for the whole day there when they baked Michelle Obama’s favorite cookies and held an exciting pep rally, and went back again on Saturday when most of the guests arrived at the hotel. I shot various scenes, and talked with housekeepers, doormen, chef, trainees, general manager, vice president, and of course, the very helpful PR person. I got tons of interviews and footage, way more than I usually did at KOMU station.

Then editing becomes painful. I don’t want to eliminate any of my dear sequences. I’m supposed to have a rough cut ready by tonight and show it to our managing editor Tom Kennedy tomorrow morning.

Anyway, this is a great experience for me. Documentary video is truly what I’m passionate for. I had plenty of plans in my mind in terms of images and scenes, including some film-like shots. I wrote them down in my notebook and managed to get them through my camera lens. That worked very well. However, I didn’t plan enough for interviews and the storyline. As a result, the story lacks of bridges between each part. This is what I should always keep in mind in my future stories.

I also helped our photo editor pick and edit photos for the “Top 10 Sports Photos” gallery on Monday. The link of the photo gallery is as follows:

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/gallery/2009/01/12/GA2009011201416.html>

Look forward to the Big Day, January 20.

Week 3 Summary

After Inauguration, I collapsed in my bed for a whole day. It was an unprecedented event for the United States, but an exhausting battle for journalists.

As team collaboration, ten videographers of our multimedia department were assigned at different spots to cover this historical day. My responsibility was to cover the staging part of the parade at Pentagon North Parking Lot. I spend last Sunday afternoon walking around Pentagon to plan my shots and Monday calling around to get in touch with local marching bands.

The air in the office was like before a critical battle on Monday, full of tension and order. In the afternoon, our colleagues started to march towards The Post, located in downtown DC, with their huge backpacks. I finally finished my Ritz-Carlton story and published it in the evening. The link to my video is <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/01/19/VI2009011902542.html>

I went back home, armed myself with layers of clothes and the most comfortable sneakers, and then headed to The Post.

4 a.m., Tuesday. I woke up in a couch in a conference room on the fifth floor. I met up my runner, who would help me deliver my tapes back to The Post in time, and we took a cab to Dunbar High School. It is the first high school for African Americans in the United States. Its marching band would be in the first batch of the parade. My plan was to get some shots at the high school when the director woke up those students, and to interview them on the bus to Pentagon when they were all excited about the parade, and

then to interview some other bands when I arrived at the Pentagon parking lot. However, none of my plans were accomplished well as I expected.

When I walked into the high school, most of the kids had already woken up but they were too sleepy to talk in front of the camera. One boy said, "I'm excited..." while his eyes were barely opened. I did some interview on the bus and took a lot of shots of the street. Traffic jams in 6 a.m. - even Beijing has never had that before. Our bus finally fought our way out of the siege, and I could already see the Pentagon not so far away, but the director asked me to get off of the bus. After a long way walking to the parking lot, I'd lost them.

Also, I didn't expect the press would be so restricted there even though I had media credential. I was only allowed to get shots and interviews in a temporary booth. The Pentagon volunteers brought representatives from some marching bands to the booth for the press to do interviews. There were six divisions of marching bands in total. But after the second division left, the media booth was closed. I had to sneak around to get some more people to interview. There were just so many challenges for me on that day, but I tried my best.

I got back to The Post around 1 p.m. with my completely numb hands and started to help my colleagues capture tapes and take notes. When I saw other videographers came back to the office with their bird-nest-like hair or iced nose, I felt so proud to be part of them. I kept capturing tapes and taking notes, capturing tapes and taking notes, till midnight.

On Thursday, I finally got out of my bed and watched the video. I choked. Even though there was no any of my footage, I felt so proud to be part of it. I felt so proud to be working with such a vigorous and dedicated team.

Now, Inauguration Day feels like a dream just existing in my memory, a bittersweet dream that I will never forget.

Week 4 Summary

This week was really hectic. My schedule book was all filled up. It was Chinese New Year on Monday, so I brought some shrimp dumplings to the office and shared with my colleagues. Then I thought, why not do a story about the Chinatown in DC? Since my mother tongue is Chinese, I can easily get access to the Chinese community here. It was awesome to get support and encouragement from my boss Tom and other colleagues.

Besides, I got two other assignments, which energized me for the whole week. One of them is a video piece accompanied by a print story called HOWGREEN. My part is to do a video piece on a home audit conducted by an "Eco-Coach." The other one is to cover the upcoming Auto Show in DC with my partner Megan. It's such a big and exciting event that I'm really looking forward to covering it. Also, it's the first time I'm doing a story with the other reporter here at washingtonpost.com. I think I can learn a lot by working with her.

I spent Monday and Tuesday doing research and preparation for the three stories in hand. On Wednesday and Thursday, I attended two meetings about cultural and business development of Chinatown held by Mayor's Office, and talked with a variety of people after the meetings. As I get to know more about Chinatown, the story is getting increasingly complicated. I guess I won't be able to draw the whole picture but rather sketching the most colorful part of it.

On Friday, I went to shoot the home audit. It was the first time I was shooting without using the tripod for more than an hour. The first half an hour went very well, but

then I started trembling. While I was trying so hard to spiritually control my muscles, I regretted that I didn't work out much in the past. So I decided to swim everyday, well, since yesterday.

It's Sunday today, the day of Chinese New Year Parade. I went to Chinatown this afternoon shooting the parade and interviewing some audiences there. After that, I interviewed a Chinese man who is 93-year-old and has been living in DC for 70 years. It wasn't successful, but I know I shouldn't blame him to be too boring. If I got to know more about him and did more pre-reporting in advance, maybe I could have asked some better questions. Anyway, I won't give up my story.

Look forward to the Auto Show!

Week 5 Summary

I can't believe that I've been working here for a whole month. Time truly flies. There are so many things going on this week. I'll use bullets to make this report better organized.

- I talked with the former Secretary of State Colin Powell on the Public Policy Day of Washington Auto Show. Even though he rejected my request for an interview, I talked and shook hands with him as a journalist representing washingtonpost.com.

Actually he said, "I'll leave you something, but I won't let you to mic me." But when I rushed to get my tripod, he disappeared just in ten seconds. I was so mad at myself, but what I've learned from the work is, no matter what happens, deal with it. In the future, I won't let it happen any more. I'll talk with other reporters to get more information so that I can get a better idea about what's going on and make some arrangement in advance. In this case, I should hold the camera on my shoulder and keep it rolling when I ask people questions and forget about politeness.

As a journalist, no one would blame you if you are rude, but your boss would blame you if you don't get good stuff.

- Tom Kennedy, the managing editor of multimedia department, is leaving his position. He said, he wanted to do something different, to explore the real world or to teach. My mentor Dee Swann said, because of the merge between the Post and .com, his leaving was inevitable, but no one knew it would happen so soon. I don't know exactly why Tom is leaving yet, but I guess more changes at .com are coming.

- I argued with my partner. Megan and I are doing the project of Auto Show together. Actually it's common that people may have disagreement in their partnership, but my problem was that I didn't realize the fact that she is ABOVE me. I thought as long as we were working together, we were partners. However, I am just an intern and I should always respect what she says. Anyway, I learned from this. I should always voice my opinion, but never argue with any of my colleagues.

- The interactive project of Washington Auto Show can be found here:
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/cars/autoshow/interactives/index.html?hpid=multimedia2&hvp=national>

I did the third video by myself. By doing that story, I realized what I'm lack of right now. First of all, I'm lack of knowledge and not keeping up with news. I didn't know who Lisa Jackson or John Dingell was. I didn't know why the auto show was so important to the Big Three before I talked with the other reporters there. I would do much better if I had known about the basics. Second, I'm lack of experience. It was the first time I needed to squeeze among all other reporters to get a shot or to ask a question. There was no time for me to warm up or to hesitate about my questions. I had to block a public official's way and point my lens straight in front of him. Great learning experience.

I've been working continuously for eight days and more than eight hours a day. I know that I'm supposed to work 30 hours a week, but I just love working here too much. It gives me a huge stage so that I have so many opportunities to do all different kinds of

stories, to meet all different kinds of people, to learn and try new things that I've never done before. I'll make the best use of my rest nine weeks here.

Week 6 Summary

Compared to my previous weeks, this week has been a bit laid back. I spent Monday and Tuesday on tweaking my Eco-Coach story, which I shot more than a week ago. Since the print story got held, I got more time to make my video look better. I asked two of my colleagues to take a look at it and give me advice. They gave me invaluable suggestions, such as to show the best characters rather than the most important ones, and to watch my unfinished video without audio and to listen to it without watching the video. I realized that when I was doing the story, I immersed myself in it without being aware of my audience. I considered it as MY story. I enjoyed myself working on it so much that I forgot all my efforts should be made to serve the audience.

Another suggestion was to do a quick interview with the Eco-Coach again and let her talk about the report she provided with the homeowner after the home audit. So I did it on Wednesday at the Post in downtown D.C. There was no studio available there for an interview and the conference room had very bad lighting. The only acceptable space was the elevator lobby. I had a thought in my mind, “Anyway, I know how to use the ‘Color Correction’ function in Final Cut Pro to adjust the lighting and color effect.” Therefore, I just simply rearranged the chairs and table and turned on the small light above my camera. But I didn’t let the interviewee to face the window, where all natural light came from. One of the “Golden Rules” is to always let the interviewee to face the light. The interview turned out okay, but I’ll keep that in mind in the future.

Wednesday afternoon, I went to the Old Executive Office shooting an interview with Obama's senior advisor David Axelrod. I worked with my colleague to set up lights, microphones, and cameras. I could always learn from him by observing what he did for setting up, but I also love to watch the video afterwards to see what he did differently than what I did when we were both shooting. I'll experiment more variety of shooting next time.

Thursday I had a meeting with Tom Kennedy, now the former Managing Editor of Multimedia Department, who left his position on Friday. Since I've been working here for more than a month, I asked for his evaluation and suggestion. He said, I worked diligently and my work attitude was good. He had seen my progresses since he watched my broadcast stories for KOMU last semester. He also gave me some advices in terms of my storytelling skills, such as to sharpen my focus while I am shooting and editing, and to hone my skills on lighting, color, and composition. He told me his standard for a good video: good characters, good sound, and good action.

The meeting was a much better lesson than I explore those principles on my own. At the farewell party on Friday, he told me to finish the internship good with strong skills. Roger that, Sir.

Week 7 Summary

This week has been really laid back, but I'm still learning so much. I uploaded the Eco-Coach video piece onto the server but no one knows when it'll be run, as the print story got held. The upside is that I went through the whole video production process on Monday and compiled a step-by-step help file for myself. Since there's no such document in our internal resources yet, I also sent the help file to my supervisor. Hope it would be useful for all of us.

I spent Tuesday on contacting my sources for the Chinatown story and setting up three interviews. I still haven't found an ideal character for this story yet, which is really frustrating, but I will spend more time on this story next week.

On Wednesday, I had been sitting in the office for three days so I eagerly looked for story ideas on the Internet. Hunting for brilliant story ideas is not easy for every journalist, but it's even harder for an "online documentary video journalist." The story has to be of a significant and relevant topic to our viewers otherwise no one would click on it. The story has to be visually interesting otherwise no one would watch it through. Finally I found a very interesting story idea, but it led me to trouble...

The story idea is about cooking classes, so I looked up the staff directory for the food section's editor's email address. I sent her an email and pitched the story idea to her to see if she was interested in doing a print story on it so that I could do a video piece accompanied with it. My intention was to get approval from the editor first and then I would tell my supervisor, because I didn't want to waste her time on a non-doable story

idea. But that was completely wrong. My supervisor warned me to never do anything without going through her, seriously. It was a great lesson to me. I won't do this ever again.

I'm sure there are still some other office rules that I'm not familiar with, but I'm trying to fit in with our team as well as I can.

I did another interview shoot on Friday at the Post downtown. As part of the series video On Leadership, it was an interview between a Post reporter Steven Pearlstein and the CEO of Pfizer Jeffrey Kindler. It was the third time I was working "just" as a videographer, so I felt much more confident and comfortable on setting up lights and camera. This interview was particularly interesting though. The Post reporter Steven wrote something against Pfizer in his blog first, and then the CEO asked The Washington Post for a chance to talk with the whole editorial board and with Steven as a sit-down interview. The video can be found here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/02/19/VI2009021903216.html>

After the interview, Steven said, Jeffrey Kindler was one of the smartest person he had ever met. Although I didn't fully pay attention to what he said during the interview, I had a question mark in my mind, "In order to get the best and truest answer, does the reporter have to be smarter than the interviewee?" Interview is truly a fine art, and I'm still learning.

Week 8 Summary

It's hard to believe that I've finished half of my internship. Time truly flies, so I want to make a good use of every single day while I'm interning here.

This week, I've been actively looking for story ideas rather than sitting in front of my desk waiting for assignments. I found a story about twelve thousand young people coming to DC to push the government to pass green legislation, and I pitched it to my editors. Then they asked me to pitch it to the Metro editor, and then the Metro editor asked me to pitch it to the Business editor. Some sections are somewhat overlapped in terms of their content, which makes the procedure a bit confusing to me. Luckily, I made it through. The Business editor Alicia Cypress said, a newspaper reporter, who happened to be the same reporter I worked with for the Eco-Coach story, was planning on writing a print story on this event. As a result, I could make a video accompanied with the print story. As far as I am concerned, even though there's always a risk that my video won't get published if the print story gets hold, as what happened to the Eco-Coach story, videos run with print stories are always better promoted.

The event called "Power Shift 09" kicked off on Friday at the Convention Center. As discussed with my editor and the Metro editor, I went to the green career fair and did a story about young people's passion about pursuing green careers. I found the Public Relations person first and she introduced two good characters to me. After the interview, I realized that it was always a smart thing to do to get in touch with the PR person first. It's a shortcut of finding good characters and getting to know the whole story. However, I

should also be aware of the PR person's motivation in case that I'll miss the other side of the coin.

At the career fair, I did exactly what my editor asked me to do: find a character, interview him/her, and shoot scenes of him/her talking with recruiters there. It went pretty well, and I got a lot of good quotes from the four young people I interviewed. I spent the entire Friday night on editing the video and uploaded it to the server so that my editor could watch it. I went back to the office on Saturday and made some tweaks based on my editor's feedback. The story will be available online on Monday, and it can be found here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/02/VI2009030200828.html>

The main problem of this video is that the ambient sound is so loud that it's a bit hard to hear what the interviewees were saying, even though I had used the Soundtrack to bring the noise down. By the way, the silver line of this problem was that I taught myself how to use the Soundtrack software for the first time because I had to fix the problem by myself. Next time, I will definitely find a quieter place for interviews rather than any area close to the noise.

I also did a shooting for On Leadership interview on Tuesday and an interview for my ongoing Chinatown story on Wednesday.

Week 9 Summary

“This is what democracy looks like! ... (drum beat) This is what democracy looks like!” This sentence repeatedly sounded in my mind after I shot the video, “Rally on Capitol Hill.”

It was the fastest-turn video I had ever produced. Monday was the last day of the “Power Shift 09.” The thousands of high school and college students planned to make their loudest voice to the Congress to push for bold climate legislation. As the PR person told me, at least a thousand young people would show up at the Capitol Hill on Monday morning. My editor told me that normally the Post, especially the video team, doesn’t cover protests and rallies. Because this is Washington, there are protests everywhere, every day. But since this rally was supposed to have a large turn out and it was about climate change, which would fit into the “Green page” on the Web site, my editors gave me a green light to cover it.

However, heavy snow unexpectedly came in the early morning of Monday, and it was extremely freezing. I was worried that there wouldn’t be that much turn out due to the weather but the loud shouts reassured me when I just got out of metro. I grabbed several groups of eager young people and asked them questions that I prepared in my mind. They were amazingly articulate and enthusiastic, which gives the video strong voices. After the video was posted, a viewer commented, “It’s great to know that finally our college students are doing something good rather than drinking beer and messing up their personal lives.”

The problem was, it was too cold on that day. Even my camera was acting a bit slower than normal. With holding the camera for a while, my hands were so numbed by the cold that I couldn't reach to the camera bag and get the wireless microphone sets. As a result, the ambient sound in the interviews was a bit disturbing, but noise would let the viewer actually have a sense of that atmosphere. So it did work out fine.

The video can be found in the following link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/02/VI2009030202503.html>

On Tuesday, I was assigned a story that could be very interesting. It was about a woman who used to be a full-time lawyer in Washington but also an enthusiastic belly dancer. After a couple of years of working during the day and dancing at night, she eventually decided to quit her job and started her own belly dancing classes. I spent a day on researching about her and belly dance, so before shooting, I had a shot list in my mind already.

I went to shoot her dancing class on Thursday and did several interviews afterwards. The interviews were great, but when I got back to the office and listened to them, I found that when I interviewed one, all the other ladies were chatting in another room. Their voices were loud enough to be very interfering in the interviews. I tried Soundtrack Pro but it didn't help. So I decided to go back and do the interviews again.

As a video producer told me, surprisingly, the viewers' tolerance of bad video is a lot better than bad audio. So a bad quality audio could kill a very high quality video. I

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usually pay much more attention to visual content but ignore the audio. From now on, I'll have to practice my ears and monitor the headphones more closely during the interviews.

Week 10 Summary

This week is all about belly dance. I continued working on the story about the career change of Saphira, the belly-dancing lawyer.

Because of the poor audio quality of the first interview, I had to do it all over again. Luckily, Saphira and her students were very cooperative. So I went back to Saphira's dancing studio in Clarendon on Monday and shot her tutoring her students again. The hardest thing of shooting someone dancing is that, they would be constantly moving. With the experience of shooting the dance competition "Dancing for Toyota" at the Washington Auto Show, I did a much better job in manually shifting focus while shooting. But still, I'll need to practice more on manual focus.

I spent all the rest of this week on editing this piece. I first lined up the best sound bites in the interviews. And my plan was to break the sound bites into "chapters" with shots of their dancing and music in between every two chapters. Ben de la Cruz, one of the most talented video producer and now the interim managing editor in our team, once told me that it is really hard to edit something that has music in the ambient sound. I didn't fully understand his word until now. Since they danced with different music, and I'd rather just use one or two songs throughout the video piece, I had to lay down one clip of the whole music, and then put in different shots of their moves that could match with the music.

When it comes to my journalistic analysis, I did my first long interview this week with Pierre Kattar, one of the most senior video producers. He is a great video journalist

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and storyteller, but I found that he didn't really have a big picture about the whole organization. I taped the whole interview, which is more than an hour. So I'll listen to it next week and write down his most valuable insights.

Week 11 Summary

My video “The Belly-Dancing Lawyer” went up on the front page of washingtonpost.com today, at the position of homepage photo, which is the best place to present and promote a video piece. I didn’t know that until my colleague sent me a note of congratulations. It made me feel that all my efforts were paid off and all the tiring works were totally worth it. The sense of achievement and being recognized by other professionals is one of the momentums that keep me pushing forward. I’m always appreciative of the internship opportunity at washingtonpost.com, where I found my passion in online video production.

The video can be found through this link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/19/VI2009031904135.html>

I spent another whole week on tweaking this piece. I’ve watched it hundreds of times so that I didn’t have the judgment about if it was good or not already. Ben gave me some advice in terms of the storyline, and it took me a long time to restructure the chunks of sound bites and B-rolls. When it came to the final stage of video editing, which is detail-oriented, such as audio mix, color correction, etc., it became very technical and boring. If there was no deadline for the assignment, it could take forever to make a video impeccable. But under the high journalistic and technical standards at washingtonpost.com, I have really learned a lot in this profession.

Besides, I went to the White House to shoot the series video “Voices of Power.” Our “voice” this week is from Press Secretary Robert Gibbs. I have done this a couple of

times so I am getting more and more comfortable setting up the lights and camera for an one-on-one interview.

As for my journalistic analysis, now the Web-print merger is going on and affecting both newsrooms drastically. I am thinking about to put my topic, which is about gatekeeping of online video production at washingtonpost.com, into a big picture. I started to read the memoir of Katharine Graham, a former Post's publisher, *Personal History*. Hope the book can broaden my vision about the Washington Post and give me a better understanding about its current situation.

Week 12 Summary

This week has been a little crazy. For the first time, I was able to edit the series video “Voices of Power.” Gaby Bruna and I shot the interview with Press Secretary Robert Gibbs last week. Previously, another videographer would take it over after our shooting so I had never had a chance to edit those videos. But this time, Gaby proposed that we could divide up the task. I am really appreciative of her trust on me so that I finally got to know the work flow of this project.

After we finish shooting, we would send an audio file of the whole interview to Tammy Haddad, the producer for this show, and she would get someone to transcribe the whole interview. Then she would chop it into chapters according to the topics they have talked about and send us the transcript for us to cut. And we would go back and forth to make technical tweaks in the video pieces.

This time, Gaby and I each took care of two chapters. Technically the pieces were really easy to cut. With the clear transcript, what I needed to do was only to sync the two shots of the interviewer and interviewee, put together the chunks needed, and cut out unnecessary uttering. But Gaby was an extremely detail-oriented perfectionist, so it took me several hours to meet her standard. For instance, Robert Gibbs is probably the least articulate press secretary in the history, and there were a lot of “um” and “uh” in his words. Gaby would like to take out that unnecessary sound as much as possible so that Gibbs wouldn’t look that “stupid” on our Web site.

From Gaby, I learned what it is that sets apart the video producers at washingtonpost.com from others. They are all demanding themselves with the highest professional standards and always trying their best to make their video production impeccable.

In terms of my journalistic analysis, I did an interview with Tom Kennedy, the former managing editor of our multimedia department. Besides his authoritative insights about the gatekeeping and assignment process at washingtonpost.com, he also gave me some inside scoop about the reasons of his resignation, the conflict between the multimedia team and the corporate management, and so on.

Week 13 Summary

As the talk of merging the Web and the print heats up, people were all panicking in the newsroom. Some of them started taking vacations; some of them were really taking their time working on almost-finished stories. The energy was vanishing.

But, the upside is that, I got more assignments!

I produced two cute little stories this week – yoyo contest and flying yoga. For the yoyo contest, I drove an hour to Maryland on Saturday and spent a whole day hanging out with the “yoyo lovers,” the cool kids. Interviews started to feel easy and doing assignments felt more comfortable for me in general. Seeing them doing fun tricks was very inspiring. I was developing editing ideas while filming, such as splitting screen, and so on. It worked out well.

The second story was for Misfits, a special blog on the Web focused on workout. The blog welcomed its newly chosen writer by making him do acro yoga, a.k.a. flying yoga! It was a lot of fun filming him and his partner writer try it persistently and then fall over and over again. The awkwardness was magnified on camera, which made the video really fun to watch. After I finished the piece, all my colleagues gathered around my computer to watch it and all laughed so hard. That reaction itself is a good reward for me, isn't it?

Week 14 Summary

As the last day of my internship fast approaching, I began to look back at my 14-week life at WaPo.

Working as an “one-woman band,” I’ve covered the Washington Auto Show, Cherry Blossom Festival, and feature video pieces accompanied with print stories. Through my extensive work here, I made every effort to further hone my shooting, storytelling, and technical skills. I've done ten individual stories, and eight series of Voices of Power, in five of which I did both shooting and editing. Besides, I've helped with some other shooting assignments, such as the panda ultrasound story for Federal Eye, and so on.

The stories I did:

1. Ritz-Carlton Hotel's preparation for Inauguration
2. Eco-Coach
3. Washington Auto Show (Dancing for Toyota & Policy Day)
4. Power Shift - Career Fair
5. Power Shift - Rally on Capitol Hill
6. Belly-Dancing Lawyer
7. Yo-Yo Championship
8. Kite Festival
9. Girl Scouts Stepping Showcase
10. MisFits-Acro Yoga

CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION

Self-Evaluation of Professional Component

In terms of my shooting skills, I've made a huge progress from my first story to the last one. At first, I wasn't familiar with using manual focus, iris, and shutter speed. Through my partnership with other videographers and my own practice, I've become much more comfortable to use manual, especially for some moving objects, like dancers. Also, I had to use tripod all the time in the beginning of my internship. Without the tripod, my shooting would be as awful as you can see in the Eco-Coach story. But then I shot off my shoulder most of the time in the Belly-Dancing Lawyer story, and the shots looked much more steady.

On editing, I basically taught myself using Final Cut Pro, because I had been always using Avid back in school. Through constant practice, I've become much faster and more sensitive to little problems in my video, such as audio transition, audio level, color correction, and how to make the video more audible, etc.

Technical skills. I learned the post-production process very fast so that I was able to produce stories over the weekend when there was no one around. What's more, I made a step-by-step list of the whole process, which would benefit the following interns as well.

In terms of my storytelling and interview skills, I learned a lot from my colleagues, such as Ben. When I went out to shadow him shooting on my second and third day of the internship, I learned how to conduct interviews, whom to interview, how

to phrase questions, etc. from him. I even wrote down a list of things I learned from him, some of them I later found out were the so-called "Golden Rules."

When it comes to my work attitude, I kept my enthusiasm and passion about video and the assignments throughout my internship. I worked very diligently. Whenever I got a new assignment, I would do it with my full level of energy and always try to make it better than my previous stories. Second, I always met the deadlines, no matter how tight they were. I've done stories that required to run within ten hours after my shoot, such as the Girl Scouts story. I shot it on Saturday afternoon, and it ran on Sunday morning. Third, I was always willing to help my colleagues as long as I was available. For example, I spent a Saturday with Pierre at an auction for foreclosure houses, helping him talking with different kinds of people and looking for interviewees for his recession story.

Finally, I loved learning from my colleagues and their works. I watched almost all the video pieces they produced within the last three months, and even before I started my internship. I watched some of them several times to learn some details. Luckily, I got to work with each of my colleagues. I absorbed what they taught me and observed how they did things differently. I learned a lot from each of them.

Wherever I am going next, I'll always remember that this is where I started.

Supervisors' Evaluations



Washington Post Digital

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dee Swann and I was Fan Bu's internship supervisor at Washington Post Digital for the spring of 2009. I would like to highly recommend Fan for future employment. Fan was with us for 3 months and it was a true pleasure. Her official title was Documentary Video intern and she shot many news and feature videos for our website. Fan is enthusiastic, has a strong work ethic and is very enterprising. She worked well independently and was able to collaborate well with others. Fan formed great relationships with her colleagues here and everyone enjoyed working with her.

Fan has shadowed several of our documentary video journalists here on many assignments, covering news and feature stories. Fan also did her own original reporting, video shooting and video editing. She takes instruction well and is eager and open to learning new techniques. She always sought feedback for her work and her shooting and while here, her story telling capabilities improved with each assignment. Fan has a positive, can-do attitude and was always very appreciative for the opportunities she had here with us. It was truly refreshing to see the passion that Fan has for the field. She has a dedication and drive that you do not see every day and I believe any organization would be lucky to have her as an employee. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have questions or require further feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dee Swann".

Dee Swann
Deputy Managing Editor, Multimedia
Washington Post Digital
1515 N. Courthouse Rd.
Arlington, VA 22201
703-469-2948



May 15, 2009

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to highly recommend Fan Bu as a video journalist and video producer. Ms. Bu spent spring 2009 as an intern in the multimedia department of washingtonpost.com. During this time, she was a very productive, integral member of our team. She shot, produced and edited 10 news video features as well as helped to produce our new political series Voices of Power. With each assignment, Ms. Bu exhibited marked improvement in shooting, editing and producing.

As a graduate student at the University of Missouri journalism program, Ms. Bu knew how to edit using Avid, but was not familiar with Final Cut Pro. She proved to be a quick learner. When she started, I assigned her to be a second shooter for Voices of Power, an interview series with top Obama administration officials. With her enthusiasm and improved technical skills, she soon was trusted with editing the interview segments on a tight deadline.

Apart from her technical skills, Ms. Bu has grown as a journalist and visual storyteller. Each successive story that she has produced as a "one-person band" has been better told and reported. Ms. Bu has many strengths. Among them is her attitude and willingness to learn. She takes the advice of colleagues in a good-natured and professional manner. Ms. Bu is more importantly a smart and thoughtful reporter. She is capable of tackling fun profiles -- from a belly-dancing lawyer to an annual yo-yo championship. But she can also wrap her mind around more serious subjects like the effect of the economic crisis on graduating college seniors. I am confident that Ms. Bu will prove to be a valuable asset for any news organization.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ben de la Cruz'.

Ben de la Cruz
Acting Director of Multimedia/Video
The Washington Post
703-469-2703
ben.delacruz@wpost.com

P.S. If you would like more specific feedback about Ms. Bu, please feel free to contact me.

1515 N. COURTHOUSE ROAD • ARLINGTON, VA • 22209
PHONE: 703-469-2525 • FAX: 703-469-2995

CHAPTER FOUR: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF WORK

Ritz-Carlton Hotel's preparation for Inauguration (Published on January 19, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/01/19/VI2009011902542.html>

The interactive project of Washington Auto Show (Published on February 7, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/cars/autoshow/interactives/index.html?hpid=multimedia2&hvp=national>

Voices of Power - Obama Senior Adviser David Axelrod (Published on February 12, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/02/12/VI2009021203213.html>

Voices of Power - White House social secretary Desiree Rogers (Published on February 26, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/02/26/VI2009022603623.html>

Power Shift - Career Fair (Published on March 2, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/02/VI2009030200828.html>

Power Shift - Rally on Capitol Hill (Published on March 2, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/02/VI2009030202503.html>

The Belly-Dancing Lawyer (Published on March 19, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/19/VI2009031904135.html>

Voices of Power - D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty (Published on March 19, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/19/VI2009031902023.html>

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs (Published on March 26, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/26/VI2009032604016.html>

Washington's Annual Kite Festival - "Let's Go Fly a Kite" (Published on March 30, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/30/VI2009033001355.html>

Voices of Power - Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (Published on April 1, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/30/VI2009033002634.html>

Voices of Power - Secretary of HUD Shaun Donovan (Published on April 8, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/04/08/VI2009040803817.html>

Voices of Power - Secretary of Energy Steven Chu (Published on April 15, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/04/15/VI2009041503516.html>

Going Green at Home (Published on April 17, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/04/17/VI2009041703085.html>

Voices of Power - Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood (Published on April 23, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/04/23/VI2009042304190.html>

Voices of Power - Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke (Published on May 4, 2009)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/05/04/VI2009050400934.html>

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS COMPONENT

Amid flashing neon images of bottles of Budweiser and interactive games that include willing pedestrians as part of a display, there is a massive, 60-by-40-foot billboard taking the second-highest position on 2 Times Square. Millions of people see it every week. The LED sign displays images of pandas, folk dancers and natural landscapes. Unlike other advertisements that promote products, this one promotes a country.

The ad, along with high-priced office space nearby, belongs not to a tourism bureau but to Xinhua, China's state-run news service. Xinhua's choice of such a prominent location is part of its expansion in markets from America to South Africa. But at a cost of as much as \$4 million a year, is it worth it?

“The Chinese government is launching its ‘media aircraft carriers’ in the U.S. to influence the Western audience culturally and politically,” said Professor Xiaohong Xuan, managing editor of the Information Center for Social Sciences of Renmin University of China.

Xinhua’s global expansion is just part of China’s \$7 billion campaign to increase the country’s media presence overseas. At a time when most Western newspaper and broadcasting companies are scaling back, China's state-run media organizations are fast growing and reaching into every corner of the world, especially in North America and Africa. Last year, China Central Television launched its CCTV America station in Washington, D.C., employing nearly a hundred journalists, half of them Americans.

CCTV News, a new syndication service launched in 2011, now claims 200 million viewers outside China, according to an article in The New York Times. The China Daily newspaper created its U.S. and European versions and has paid about \$300,000 a day to insert its front page in the center of The Times, even after The Times ran a story revealing former Premier Wen Jiabao's family wealth.

Ever since 2008, the state-run media outlets have become a tool of strengthening China's global influence. "The level of communication skills and technologies determines who can influence the world more forcefully and spread its culture and value more widely," China's President Hu stated at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 17th Party Congress in 2008. That statement shaped the direction and provided support of Chinese media's outreach effort.

In the United States, it is hard not to notice the Chinese media's presence. "Of course, I have noticed the media expansion," said Stephen Orlins, president of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. "From CCTV to Xinhua, it is a full-on media offensive."

Some see the media offensive campaign as a way to output the Chinese culture and values to the United States. Professor Xuan said: "The U.S. has been imposing its values onto the Chinese audience for too long. Only if China and the U.S. have an equal voice before the global audience, can the two countries begin a truly equal dialogue."

On the other hand, the rationale behind the media expansion is also partially based on the notion that biased Western news media have painted a distorted portrait of China,

The Times reported. "Hostile international powers are strengthening their efforts to Westernize and divide us," former President Hu Jintao wrote last year in a party journal. "We must be aware of the seriousness and complexity of the struggles and take powerful measures to prevent and deal with them."

Young Chinese netizens are at times angry at what they see as Western media's biased news coverage. Michael Zhao, managing editor at Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations, pointed out that, "They have formed Web sites such as 'Anti-CNN' to counterstrike at the Western influence."

Yes, it is becoming a media war. When Hurricane Sandy devastated the northeastern shore, CCTV's Washington bureau sent out five teams of crew, vastly covering the natural disaster along with criticism of the government's inability to cope with it.

Beijing's initiative to increase its volume to a global audience is raising alarms in the U.S., according to a Times report. "We are engaged in an information war, and we are losing that war," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned a Congressional committee last year, citing the growing influence of state-backed outlets like Russia Today and CCTV.

Does it work?

Given such lavish and ambitious spending on media outreach efforts, is there an audience interested in reading or watching Chinese media content? If so, are Chinese media conveying their messages in a cost-effective manner?

As of now, the Chinese media outlets are facing some difficulties. First of all, global public opinion is still largely shaped or swayed by the Western media because of its established platform and credibility. On the other hand, Chinese media organizations have yet to establish their legitimacy before a global audience.

Alan Paul, author of the book "Big in China" and of the Wall Street Journal column "The Expat Life," lived in Beijing for three years and still travels there occasionally. He said credibility would only come with more objectivity. "If they (the Chinese media) continue to vilify political dissidents and mute them on critical issues, no matter how much money they spend, people won't take anything seriously," Mr. Paul said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Orlins said: "The Chinese government's goal of 'Chinese culture going global' is almost like a joke. When the government sets out to control the media, it's doomed to fail. Neither China nor the U.S. could ever achieve this goal. It is simply not something the government can control."

Mr. Orlins said that American viewers are skeptical, even resentful about CCTV because of its status as the "mouthpiece" of the Chinese government. Therefore, he

doubts that a Chinese newscast could ever attract a substantial Western audience. "I ran a cable business for 10 years," he said. "Content didn't matter with me. What mattered to me was the viewership. The customers are voting with their clicker."

Mr. Paul sees it differently. He believes that the Chinese news coverage draws interest in the U.S., because of its refreshing viewpoint, which is different from Western media. "I know that lots of the information is propaganda," Mr. Paul said, referring to CCTV and China Daily. "But I watch the news with that in mind. The coverage is still valuable to the American viewers. You always learn something about China."

Politics is not the sole purpose of China's media expansion, though. As economic ties grow stronger and deeper between the U.S. and China, the latter needs to attract investment as well as plant its business in America. Meanwhile, American business people are trying to better understand the Chinese as well.

Anthony Walton, vice chairman, Americas, at Standard Chartered Bank, believes that the Chinese media could have a sizable market in the U.S. "I love China. I travel to China often. But when I'm not there, I'd like to read about it. This vast country fascinates me." Mr. Walton said, adding that he is always interested in learning from a different perspective about the world's most populous country.

But is Chinese media content perceived positively? In 2011, prior to President Hu Jintao's state visit to the U.S., China launched an extra large billboard in Times Square displaying a minute-long publicity video as a "public diplomacy campaign," described by Xinhua. With images of Chinese celebrities like the basketball player Yao Ming and

Kung Fu movie star Jackie Chan, the video touts the country's achievements in art, culture, sports and science. However, a study conducted by Professor Yu at Renmin University discovered that the video's target audience, Americans, have little reaction to these images. Professor Yu and his team recorded the brain electrical activity of dozens of Americans while they watched the video. The readings showed that most participants did not show any excitement during the video, while a few of them only showed minor excitement at the image of Yao Ming.

"They (China's state-run media giants) need to understand and respect the American culture instead of simply imposing the message onto the Western audience," Professor Yu said.

Mr. Zhao at Asia Society believes that the Chinese government is heavily investing in the media platform rather than the content. "At a time when most Western audiences are resentful of Chinese propaganda, it's really important to have strong and personable narratives," he said. "They try to grab eyeballs, but fail to connect to our hearts."

When it comes to the billions of dollars Beijing has spent on projects like the Times Square billboard, Mr. Orlins smiled and shrugged. "It certainly wouldn't hurt, but does it work?" he said. "They have a lot more to learn."

How to make it work

Professor Yu has been the mastermind of many media outreach initiatives in China. He offered some long-term and short-term approaches.

The first is platform. "The Chinese government is not using new media wisely," Professor Yu said. He believes that the traditional media organizations in the West have been so well established that it's very difficult for newcomers to take a bite. But the new media platforms have enormous potential for niche markets. Chinese media outlets should use this opportunity to expand their influence in the global audience, he said.

One of the strategies that the Chinese media is already harnessing is the use of the Western media as its own platform. They call this strategy "to beat a strong opponent with little but smart force." CCTV-News is a new syndication service founded by China Central Television with the goal "report China to the world." Officially launched in May 2011, CCTV-News is a newborn baby in the international media world.

CCTV-News service cannot compete with The Associated Press or Reuters. But it can provide breaking news in China faster than anyone else. It can break exclusive stories that no one else has access to. Thus, it has been gradually establishing its working relationship with media outlets in Asia and North America. Now CCTV-News is delivering a news service to media organizations around the world in languages including English, French, Arabic, Russian and Spanish.

Secondly, the Chinese state-controlled newspapers and broadcasting companies have separate divisions working on two different versions of the same stories, one for a Chinese audience and the other for an international one. In this process, lots of work is duplicative, and lots of are wasted. Professor Yu believes that the domestic news teams often are very resourceful. They have the best talent and the best equipment, and can access more sources. If there could be an organizational restructuring to merge the two divisions, the contents serving the international audience would have a much higher quality and attract more viewers.

Credibility remains the key factor. China is not merely selling products overseas anymore, it's also trying to sell its image to the global audience. But the "tariff" is credibility. If Chinese news organizations don't establish their reputation as objective and fair, however much the Chinese government invests in the overseas propaganda, the news will not be taken seriously. However, a reputation of objective media reporting will have to be established over a long period of time.

Outlook on China's media offensive

In China, media reform will have to coincide with political reform. The newly elected President Xi and Premier Li started their decade-long leadership by touting reform, from cracking down on corruption to restraining energy consumption. Chinese people are skeptically optimistic about the next 10 years.

"Xi is more likely to push for real reform than his predecessor, Hu," said Yong Zhang, a businessman who travels between Beijing and New York City. "Xi is a princeling, which will enable him to harness his political assets in order to achieve his goals, whereas Hu did not have any background in the political hierarchy."

The Chinese media is expected to open up more within next 10 years as well, said Mr. Zhang. But many people predict that real reform won't happen until 2023.

"If all goes well, Guangdong Communist Party Secretary Hu Chunhua will succeed Xi Jinping as the next party chief," Mr. Zhang said. "He will be a true reformer." Yes, even though President Xi has just begun the job, insiders suspect that the next president has already been chosen. It has become widely known that the Chinese politburo has the rule of skipping a generation, meaning that the previous administration plays a role in selecting not its direct successor, but the regime after that.

Therefore, many believe that what Hu Jintao wasn't able to accomplish, Hu Chunhua will. "So between 2022 and 2032, China will experience dramatic reform," Mr. Zhang said.

With media reform taking place in China, and Chinese media outlets establishing much stronger credibility internationally, the government will presumably have a more powerful voice around the globe.

The ordinary people in China already are seeing more opened media coverage on political issues. With Weibo being prevalent among more than 500 million users, the media is not a one-way street anymore. People enthusiastically despise or humorously criticize the government about social unfairness, corruption and air pollution, so much so that the government simply cannot ignore it.

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APPENDIX 1: PROFESSIONAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

1. Theoretical Framework

This paper will attempt to reach a conclusion under a few theories and concepts, including agenda-setting, framing, and bias. So first of all, it is crucial to define each of them and look at what the other researchers have studied in these areas.

1.1. Agenda-Setting

Throughout the past decades, an enormous number of studies have been done in the realm of agenda-setting theory. The agenda-setting function of the mass media was first inspired by Bernard C. Cohen, who addressed that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about (Cohen, 1963).” However, agenda-setting theory was first put forth in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their study of how the media influenced the public opinion in the 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. McCombs and Shaw (1972) explained that during the presidential campaign, the major role of the news media was to set an agenda and to tell people what to think about by the salience of stories. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, both associate professors of journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill at the time, have devoted decades into establishing and further developing agenda setting theory.

1.2. Second-Level Agenda-Setting

As the agenda-setting theory continued to grow, McCombs and Reynolds (2002) further developed the agenda-setting effects into the second level of agenda-setting model, which is known as “*attribute*” level of agenda-setting, too. Amy Reynolds is associate professor at the Indiana University School of Journalism. McCombs and Reynolds asserted that the mass media not only tell people what to think about, but they also tell people how to think about some issues.

In the studies of agenda-setting effects, the unit of analysis on each agenda is an *object* (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey, 1997). According to McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997), during the process of communication, there can be a set of objects drawing or away from the audience’s attention and consequently influencing what the public think about. Beyond the agenda of objects, each of these objects has various *attributes*, which are characteristics or traits that of each object that complete the full “image” of each object. Just the same as the objects can vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) stated that both the selection of objects for the audience’s attention and the selection of attributes for the audience’s perspectives are powerful agenda-setting roles. Attributes have several dimensions to explore. Kim and McCombs (2007) explained that affective and substantive elements are the two most instrumental dimensions or aspects of attributes. Substantive elements refer to the descriptions of certain characteristics on the

informational level of the coverage, while affective components relate to the positive, negative, or neutral tone and descriptions of certain characteristics. The affective attributes can influence the audience's attitude towards certain objects.

McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) conducted one of the first studies in the second-level agenda-setting effects by analyzing TV and newspaper coverage of the 1995 election in Spain and elaborated the construction of candidates' images and the influence of the media on how people think about these images. The study raised two hypotheses of that the agenda of substantive attributes and affective attributes presented in the mass media influence the agenda of substantive and affective attributes defining the images of the candidates among voters separately. They analyzed three variables of substantive attributes for candidate images: qualifications, personality, and ideology with affective attributes (positive, neutral, and negative) of each one of them. On the other hand, they conducted a survey among voters about their opinions on both attributes mentioned above. Through data on the candidates' images from quantitative content analysis of the media coverage and a voter survey, they attempted to find correlations between the attributes in media agenda and the public opinions.

In this study, they found significant matches between the voters' images of the candidates and the images constructed in the newspaper and TV news on substantive and affective levels. They also found a medium of communication pattern, in which the newspaper has greater influence than television in conveying both substantive and

affective attributes. The tone of voters' descriptions was evenly balanced between positive and negative, which resembles the style of the newspaper coverage about the candidates. They obtained compelling evidence correlating affective attributes conveyed by the media to affective attributes conveyed by the public. And the study showed more evidence of second-level agenda-setting effects on affective attributes than on substantive attributes.

Based on this study, one can also make the argument that how Chinese media outlets are covering China on both substantive and affective attributes could influence how the Americans and U.S. policymakers think about China and their constructed images of China and could ultimately shape U.S. policies towards China.

Similarly, Spiro K. Kioussis, associate professor and chair of the Department of Public Relations at University of Florida, led his two Ph.D students, Philemon Bantimaroudis and Hyun Ban, in a research about the political candidate image portrayed by the U.S. media. Kioussis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban (1999) examined the attribute salience in the agenda-setting process by investigating how media emphasis on certain attributes of political candidates would influence public perceptions of those candidates. By examining the role of attributes at both the substantive and affective levels, they found out that the perceptions of candidate personality traits resemble media coverage of those traits, while perceptions of candidate qualifications do not appear to mirror media depictions.

According to the research conclusion by McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997), the mass media have a greater influence on the affective attributes (positive, neutral, and negative) of the public opinions than the substantive attributes. In another study, Joe Bob Hester and Rhonda Gibson, assistant professors in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, concluded that negative framed news coverage has a greater impact on the public's attitudes than positive framed coverage. Hester and Gibson (2003) conducted a quantitative content analysis of four years of print and broadcast news about the economy to investigate the second-level agenda-setting effects. They proved that news coverage about the economy was framed as negative more often than it was framed as positive. They also found out that although media coverage only had a small effect on how people perceive the real world, negatively framed news coverage of economy was a more significant predictor of attitude toward future economic conditions than positively framed news coverage.

1.2. Framing

The discussion of second-level agenda-setting also links to another contemporary concept, framing. Robert M. Entman, professor of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, is one of the most prominent researchers in the field of framing theory. As Entman (1993) succinctly and accurately addressed, framing is the process of selecting certain elements of “perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation.” Instead of attributes, which can convey a main theme but are not necessarily frames, framing looks at a set of characteristics to deliver certain perspectives. (Johnson, Davis, and Cronin, 2006, p.5)

On the other hand, Dietram A. Scheufele, the John E. Ross Chaired Professor in Science Communication at the University of Wisconsin, argued that framing looks at the assumption that “subtle changes” in the wording of the description of certain issues might affect how the audience think about them (Scheufele, 2000).

Framing works to influence and shape the audience’s understanding towards certain issues by introducing the salience of certain ideas and encouraging the audience to “think, feel, and decide in a particular way.” (Entman, 2007) According to Entman (2004), “substantive frames” define effects or conditions as problematic, identify causes, convey a moral judgment, and endorse remedies or improvements.

Entman (2007) also asserted that, frames that have the most cultural resonance with the audience, the salience on the newspapers, and repetition (frequency) have the

most prominent impact. The purpose of this paper is to find out whether the U.S. media have the tendency to portray sets of negative attributes as an approach to convey conflict messages.

1.3. Bias

Based on Entman (2007)'s definition, there are three different categories of biases. *Distortion bias* happens when the reality is purportedly distorted or falsified in news. According to the Journalist's Creed, written by the first dean of the Missouri School of Journalism, Walter Williams, accuracy, truthfulness, and fairness are the fundamental of good journalism. Hence this type of bias is what the mass media should avoid in order to achieve their journalistic professionalism. In the meantime, *content bias* can happen when news is not providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a conflict, but rather favors one side. And sometimes the ideology of journalists could produce biased news content, which is categorized into *decision-making bias*. In this paper, we would primarily look at the content bias.

2. Research Questions

The major purpose of this paper will be to examine how Chinese and American editors perceive the effects of the Chinese government's efforts to reconstruct China's image.

RQ1: What are the key messages that the Chinese government attempts to convey through its media outlets?

RQ2: How is the Chinese government trying to spread an image more positive than the one depicted by the Western media?

RQ3: Is there evidence that the Chinese government's efforts to reconstruct China's image are effective?

With the approval of her committee, the author changed the professional project into a professional analysis. Therefore, these research questions will be addressed in the analysis.

3. Methods

A qualitative approach is planned for this research because it provides insights into the thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes of editors who shape and monitor the coverage of China.

More specifically, the researcher will attempt to conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with several news editors and experts. The research will use purposive sampling, which will attempt to include both Chinese and American interviewees, including the following as reference and examples:

Orville Schell. Director of the Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society in New York.

Joseph Kahn. Foreign editor of The New York Times, former Beijing bureau chief.

Alan Paul. Author of “Big in China,” a memoir about his family’s four years spent in Beijing, and former writer of The Wall Street Journal column “The Expat Life”.

Rebecca Blumenstein. Deputy managing editor and International editor of The Wall Street Journal. Former Beijing bureau chief of The Wall Street Journal.

Stephen A. Orlins. President of the National Committee on United States-China Relations.

Peter Hessler. Author of three acclaimed books about China, and contributor to The New Yorker and National Geographic.

Jesse Pesta. Page One editor at The Wall Street Journal. Former reporter in Hong Kong

and India for The Wall Street Journal.

Fred Teng. Chief Executive Officer of NewsChina, an English language monthly magazine focusing on China distributed in the U.S. and Canada.

Michael Zhao. Managing Editor/Producer of China Green at Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations.

Xie Xiyao. News Editor of Xinhua News Agency's International Service.

Xiaoyong Wu. President of Phoenix North America Chinese Channel.

Lei Zhang. Deputy Managing Editor of China News Service.

Xin Zhong. Professor of Journalism, Renmin University.

The interviews will be conducted via e-mail or phone or in person. The researcher will perform an interpretive analysis on the transcripts. She will carefully read through the transcripts for key ideas related to the research question. The researcher will attempt to categorize the key concepts and to offer concrete conclusions.

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APPENDIX 2: QUERY LETTER

Philip Chang
President
SinoVision, Inc.
15 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016

Dear Mr. Chang,

I have recently completed a professional analysis titled "Clash of Two Images: China's Media Offensive in the United States." I am submitting it to you for your consideration.

I spent months conducting in-depth interviews and research on the topic of Chinese media expansion in the United States. I believe that it lends itself nicely to a broadcast-friendly script and would welcome the opportunity to convert it to a documentary.

I have attached the full manuscript. For your reference, here is the lead:

Amid flashing neon images of bottles of Budweiser and interactive games that include willing pedestrians as part of a display, there is a massive, 60-by-40-foot billboard taking the second-highest position on 2 Times Square. Millions of people see it every week. The LED sign displays images of pandas, folk dancers and natural landscapes. Unlike other advertisements that promote products, this one promotes a country.

The ad, along with high-priced office space nearby, belongs not to a tourism bureau but to Xinhua, China's state-run news service. Xinhua's choice of such a

prominent location is part of its expansion in markets from America to South Africa. But at a cost of as much as \$4 million a year, is it worth it?

“The Chinese government is launching its ‘media aircraft carriers’ in the U.S. to influence the Western audience culturally and politically,” said Professor Xiaohong Xuan, managing editor of the Information Center for Social Sciences of Renmin University of China.

I will call you next week to see if you are interested in pursuing this project. In the interim, please feel free to contact me at 917-885-7965 or fan.bu53@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Fan Bu