

NOTES FROM JEFFERSON COUNTY

A Project
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at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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DEDICATION

For Mildred Burton, who always had an abundance of love, support, and encouragement for all of my many interests and projects undertaken.

She has set a new precedent for kindness, patience, and resilience through the most fatiguing and discouraging of situations.

Mimi - your vibrancy, blinding enthusiasm, and passion for life will always be missed.

I hope this project would remind you of your own childhood. Thank you for inspiring me to continuously seek the unfamiliar, blindly moving forward always without fear.

This is for you.

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I have gained the courage through this project to pursue things I cannot have imagined doing before. I am grateful for the experiences, places, and people that have shaped me as a result.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I began the process of project development by searching for a story about the environment. I didn't know where I should narrow my search, but I wanted to find a story that examined the intersections of people and their physical environments and explore if or how they have been shaped by their surroundings, and vice versa. After I found Steele City and Diller, it became clear that the most direct way to explore the contrast between the two towns—and the most impactful way to communicate the topography and how integral the land is to the story—would be through visuals.

I am interested in current events that impact American environmental policy and have followed the coverage of the Transcanada Keystone Pipeline project for years. When I started to read in-depth to find a human connection to the project, I kept seeing a town called Steele City mentioned on maps and in articles – and I discovered it was a location of the original Keystone Pipeline's transfer station. I was curious about this place as I had never heard of it and began to investigate. I found that Steele City was a tiny village in a rural county in southeast Nebraska, about five hours away from where I was living in Columbia, Missouri. Yet there was never much coverage about the city itself, only the pipeline. Every single news outlet covering the pipeline, op-eds on the topic and talking heads all had an opinion about the pipeline and the potential environmental, financial, and political impact it had on Americans, but no one ever seemed to ask the residents in Steele City what their views were or how they felt about it. I knew immediately that the story I was looking for could be found there, in a place where environmental policies read on national headlines everyday were directly impacting a community. Upon further investigation, I found that one of the state's largest wind farms could be found only five miles away in Diller, Nebraska – and wondered how the two different forms of energy affected the landscape, and the residents' lives.

When I visited Steele City for the first time, I met Margo D'Angelo, owner of the Salty Dog Saloon, the only business in town. She and her bar had been mentioned in many articles, but only in a sentence or passing comment briefly appearing in news spots. Upon meeting her I wanted to know more about her life than what revolved around the pipeline. I wanted to see what her life was like in such a town, known by name internationally but never given a voice. Her story, as well as the Engelman family's six

miles east in Diller, became less of an environmental story over time and more of a human-interest story. I was able to integrate myself in the lives of a dairy farming family and a bar owner and explore the differences and similarities in facing their futures in the midst of uncertainty and a changing landscape - physically, politically, and environmentally.

As a photographer and videographer with a plan to continue my work in this field, I viewed this project as a crash course in self-taught production, editing, and hands-on development on a level of magnitude and scope I had yet to attempt. As I conducted initial research, investigated the area's news coverage and discovered a lack of local coverage that focused on the residents as a topic of interest, I was immediately drawn to the area because of its physical appearance and unusual attributes, and the people whose lives being directly impacted by national policies. No one seemed to want their opinions or to see what their lives were like, and I wanted to be the one to tell those stories.

At the beginning of the project, I read a lot of work from the new journalism movement; I knew my master's project and the future projects I choose would center around the story of the "common man," that I could make a story about a dairy farming family growing their business and farming in the shadows of wind turbines contrasted with a bar owner in a shrinking town dealing with health problems. I wanted to be able to use this experience of making what could be seen as mundane beautiful and interesting. I wanted to showcase the details and daily routines of normal people living their lives and thought that this was the perfect test for an empathetic photographer looking to learn about a different community and gain access to another way of life.

Now, having completed the pre-production through post-production process on such a massive project, I feel more confident than ever before that the stories we as journalists should continue to pursue are the stories of people like us, and that in times of such divisive and aggressive headlines generalizing entire populations or groups, community pieces focusing on the commonalities between people or examining the lives of people we think we know could begin to restore faith in the journalism community. I feel like a more informed, talented, and better journalist and videographer as a result of this project and will take the skills I learned with me as I continue in the professional setting.

CHAPTER 2: ACTIVITY LOG & FIELD NOTES

WEEK 1

I started off the weekend at the Salty Dog Saloon in Steele City Friday night once in town, owned and run by Margo D'Angelo, and had beers at the bar. I wanted to meet with Margo again, as we spoke in November when I first visited town on a scouting trip. Once she came in, she eventually stopped to talk (strangers in the bar are always a topic of conversation) and I re-introduced myself. She remembered me, was glad to see me again, and we started talking – our conversation lasted for 4 hours, her standing behind the bar, telling me crazy personal things I would never have anticipated. I left my number with her, said I was looking for an extra room to rent and to pass my name along if anything came up. She was very friendly, helpful, etc. I'd like to feature her as central character if she's agreeable – her family has a long history in the town and nearby communities, she's owned the bar since her father passed away, and he owned it for decades before then. She knows everyone in town, lives next door to the bar, and keeps up with the town gossip, events, and local news. I'd like to interview her, talk about daily life around town, introduction to neighbors, other people in Steele City, and getting more info and insight on what the town is really about. I'd like to follow up with her family's history, talk to family members, etc.

I shot some B roll on Saturday, met with Norma and Eldean (“Eldie”) Banahan, looked over some of their documents and brochures they had kept from the installation of the pipeline. They're adorable and a lot of their land is tied to the pipeline, and the pumping station's history (originally rented, first piece of land they were able to buy once they got married, close to their first house and where Eldean grew up) with their family is important to follow up with. Sunday, I went to church at St. Paul Lutheran in Diller (5 miles from SC) – super productive! Met the Banahans there, she gave me a card with a contact list of people around town whose land (rented or owned) has the pipeline running through it – 9 people/families total. Met a lot on the list, or Norma pointed them out across the church hall – really, really sweet of her to do. Was also referred to Robyn Stanosheck in Odell (a town maybe 8 miles away) who knows a lot about the area. Could be useful, but also out of the realm of what I want to concentrate on. Met lots of the congregation after church – introduced to Betty Damerow and her daughter Peggy Hemphill, who has a wind turbine in her pasture. Will call to arrange a time to meet and talk next weekend. Additionally, met

Past Mark Liscom, who has been with the church for 15 years. He's got a pretty colorful past – from Seattle, worked on boats, farms, on a combine, rides motorcycles, plays bass guitar in a band that plays in Beatrice – pretty chill guy, a little older, but very nice and approachable. Will call and eventually arrange a meeting; given his role in the community would assume he'd be a good contact. I'd like to add him to the short list of people to follow for the film.

Goals for next visits:

- 1- talk to more people – including everyone on list
- 2- shoot A and B roll in Diller church, and in town (Steele City and Diller)
- 3- start to find shots of decay to show aging towns and declining, contrast with new and shining energy investment in area – or at least begin to think of how to illustrate that

To think about:

- 1 – imagery of Nebraska, Midwest
- 2—what is the conflict??? Tie in energy and the pipeline to the threat of a dying community....is there vitality, or a sense that things are growing?

WEEK 2

The week began with making phone calls to the contacts Norma Banahan gave me in church. I spoke with a number of people in town, made arrangements to visit or call back.

Friday

I spent the day with Betty and Franklin Damerow, an adorable, polite and incredibly sweet older couple. They're long-time residents of Diller and know most people in Steele City. I shifted towards Diller when I met the Banahans, so I've spent most of my time this weekend in that area. They have three children, and their daughter Peggy lives down the road from Diller, between Diller and Steele City.

I went to lunch with them at the fire hall as part of a program for seniors, the food is made in Beatrice about 30 miles north and delivered by locals to community centers, homes, and assisted living places in the area. Their friend Betty Hopke delivers to Diller and the surrounding area, so every week day the Damerows go to support Betty, keep the program going, and get out of the house.

We pulled up in their red Buick to the fire hall on the somewhat-unusually crowded Main Street. Franklin explained there was a funeral taking place in the community center, where these lunches usually take place, and explained the traffic as out-of-towners coming from Beatrice to attend the funeral and wake. After shuffling on the icy sidewalk into the hall, we met Betty, a tiny woman but with a ton of energy and enthusiasm, and incredibly sharp. She lives in town and are great friends with most of the long-term ladies in the area. Four years ago, her farm house three miles outside of town got destroyed in a tornado (hers was the only house hit) and moved into downtown proper. We ate lunch, talked about their lives, the town, etc. for two hours.

Thoughts on Betty, 88:

Loves to photograph! Worked at a portrait studio before she had children after getting married tinting photographs, and has albums and albums filling their old family/play room. She has a digital camera and takes it most places, and loves photographing her family, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She showed me so many albums – their wedding album, their family histories, their lives from when they got married all the way to recently. I saw graduation photos, announcements, and countless newspaper clippings (she saves everything with any mention of her friends or family) filling multiple binders. She says she loves collecting memories, especially because sometimes remembering the details isn't as easy as it used to be, and usually has to defer to Franklin. Originally from a farm near Beatrice, moved to Steele City area in mid-50s when they bought a farm house and had children. Lived in the farm house until 1999, then moved to their current, smaller ranch-style house three blocks from church. Activities include the women's Bible studies and groups at church (they quilt – she cuts the fabric from donated sheets, for instance) and likes to watch Full House on television every night at 8, even though it's late for her.

Ask about:

- community ties and relationships
- then vs now
- raising children in the area and how it's different with raising great-grandchildren
- farm duties and outside jobs
- how did they meet? First date? What was their first years of marriage like? Where did they live, etc. – all of it is saved in photo albums, maybe somehow get photos scanned?

Thoughts on Franklin, 93:

Soft spoken at first, but so very kind and friendly once you prove your worth. Proud of his family, his children, and loves to talk about what he farmed, their lives and activities. He served in the war, from what I gathered in news clippings – 25 months in the South Pacific, earned two medals and a Silver Star (which I believe is the second highest Congressional Medal to be awarded?) Not sure on details, but he seemed happy to talk about it (he wrote a memoir some years ago, brought out the binder when I asked about it – Betty remarked that *she* hadn't even seen the binder, and that he must really like me) but I wanted to do research on the Pacific theater before any formal interview with a camera, because I want to ask more intelligent and less general questions based only in high school AP US history lectures and the HBO miniseries...

On the farm, he grew milo, corn, soybeans, a little wheat in the beginning. Never had a ton of acres, never a large farmer – worked at the farmers co-op, volunteer fire fighter, is a member of the local chapter of the VFW, they get together every couple of months. Occasionally he meets his buddies for coffee at the restaurant or filling station downtown.

Ask about:

- rural vs. city, living in Beatrice and living out in country
- WWII ! (photos, shots of his various medals, paraphernalia?)
- farm life – what experiences were involved, what machinery, was it profitable? Etc.

Damerow House potential shots:

- washing/drying dishes at sink (they do the dishes every night together)
- chairs in living room (it has beautiful light)
- sitting at kitchen table
- silhouettes in window light by the table
- outside house (front and back patio)
- Franklin outside near American flag in their yard
- curio cabinet, shelves, so many pictures, dishes and china
- in community center eating lunch, cleaning up dishes after with Betty

- back of church during service (pews are too uncomfortable, so they sit in chairs at the tables in the reception hall right behind the sanctuary)
- with great grandkids
- Franklin w/WWII stuff
- Betty – shoes, showing scale (she’s so small!!!)
- coat closet
- old office – roll top desk next to windows 95 computer
- bathroom –toothbrushes in cup, hairbrushes with little white hairs, old wall paper
- eating and dishing up ice cream (their favorite)
- their yard after snow
- them at annual Diller Founders parade every June sitting on sidewalk chairs watching parade

Saturday

Spent the day with Betty and Franklin’s daughter Peggy and her husband Steve.

1 windmill on land, raise beef cattle. Son in law Adam and their daughter (name forgotten, didn’t write down) run his family’s dairy near Ennis – will be visiting next weekend. Would be interesting to see – possibly include?

She’s on the board of Diller Foundation – they raise a lot of money off an endowment fund’s interest to improve the community. Steve works at a Toro plant making lawnmowers in Beatrice, Peggy works at Diode Communications (telephone, internet, cable service) in Diller.

Grandkids: Allison, Preston, Sydney (daughter’s children); Piper, another baby coming in March (son’s children).

Recommended to speak with some small businesses in town – meat locker, Lottman construction, Diode, the restaurant about economic impact – maybe will, if not to get to know people – but primarily the people are in Diller, which might be outside focus.

We went to grandson Preston’s basketball tournament in Washington, KS right across the border, met Adam’s family / in-laws, whose family run a 1k cow dairy farm -- kids are sweet, family is knowledgeable about area and a dairy farm that size would be impressive to see? Was invited to the town’s annual Shrimp

Feed next Saturday, got tickets and should be good to meet lots of people I've heard about but haven't spoken to yet.

Sunday

Went to church at St. Paul, met Robyn Roelfs – owns a trucking company outside Diller. She recommended I talk to her sister, Beth Roelfs, who is head of the Diller Endowment fund; she and her husband farm, but also have 4-5 wind turbines on their land, as well as the power grid thing. I'd like to meet them and shoot on their land if possible.

I also met a piedmontese cattle farm owner, Dennis Hannelberg, who I believe has the pipeline on their land, or land they rent – couldn't tell when she was talking, it was only in passing while they were walking out the door – will inquire next week. Got her phone number, will call if I think it's relevant.

To do Still:

- contact Janet Kleeb/office (anti-pipeline)
- meet with Mark Liscom
- keep trying to find a place to live
- contact Transcanada, inquire about tour?

So far –

Characters:

- oil landowners – Banahans? Or anyone on list yet to meet
- wind farm operators – Peggy? Or Beth Roelfs?
- pastor – either Liscom in Diller or Presbyterian Church in SC
- bar owner – Margo
- anti-pipeline – Janet Kleeb?
- townspeople – Damerows? Someone?

Possible shots/scenes noticed:

- “oh give thanks” church sign
- abandoned house – before and after snow, into spring
- main street, Diller

- windmills up close – either on Hemphills or Roelfs property
- tractors/farm equipment
- old windmill in foreground with turbine in back – outside Diller

Overall, I think I've met a lot of people from around the area, either outside or in Diller, which is okay – I did anticipate having people from other towns be included because the pipeline runs outside of Steele City, even though the pumping station technically is within the town limits. Not sure if that's the route I want to go in, but I do anticipate spending a lot of time around Steele City this weekend, at least making contacts to return to next weekend.

I'm not sure how long I should be meeting people and shooting relatively little – I'd like to get to narrow my subject range and really define the narrative as soon as I can, so I can really begin targeting my shooting as a priority. My observations seem to say that there's not a lot in Steele City, but not sure if that's the appeal? Margo said she would introduce me to people who live in town, and I intend to take her up on that, but if I'm really talking about people who are the midst of this energy revolution thing like I originally said, then it seems like I'll have to concentrate slightly outside of town, into other little villages in towns. Not sure now and would appreciate any input on this.

WEEK 3

I left Friday evening, so the weekend really began on Saturday.

Saturday

Started off visiting Betty and Franklin Damerow – looked through Betty's "history" photos and clippings of her family in the region. Lots of old photos of her growing up, in Beatrice, with Franklin and starting a family back in the 40s and 50s. Zach talked with Franklin about his time in WWII, but I haven't gotten to "Franklin's Story" in depth yet. More to come next visit with formal video interview, so far only recordings and my notes from conversations.

Franklin showed me his medals and framed dog tags (Distinguished Silver Cross, among others relating to his location, time served, other service honor ribbons). He flew transport missions in New Guinea, the Philippines. His unit spent time with the native tribes in New Guinea. Flew to Tokyo on V-J Day.

Made arrangements for a future video interview, will call for specific time later in week (they're happy to talk as long as Betty has her hair done).

Left their house, went to meet Adam, Brooke Engelman and their girls at their home adjacent to one of one of Classic Dairy's barns. His family has run the farm for 4 generations now, started out with one barn and maybe 100-150 cows and has grown to 1000. We drove to the Dairy just down the road. At 3p, milking had just started. I filmed the whole tour, the various processes, etc.

Their children Allie, Preston, Sydney have their own cows. Allie (6th grade) has 10 cows, Preston (4th grade) has 4, Sydney (1st) has one. Allie shows her cows via 4H at the State Fair every summer, the whole family attends for the whole week, enters competition. The State Fair is in June – plan on attending and filming a lot.

We met Adam's parents, invited back to film. Operation is totally organized, have day and night employees, really interesting to see how the business has grown and how Adam runs it now, with hopes of children taking it over. Definitely want to shoot with them and hang out more, Brooke and Adam are early 30s, very nice, open, approachable, and friendly.

Later that evening, we met with Peggy and Steve Hemphill to go to Diller's annual Shrimp Feed at the Opera House – proceeds from tickets, raffles, etc. go to the restoration fund for the Opera House. Over 500 people attended the dinner, shot some footage. After we moved next door to The Field Bar, joining Adam and Brooke. Talked to Peggy more about her involvement with the [Diller Community Foundation](#), she is willing to let me see more of their process – maybe film meetings? Meet other members? – and would give me a list of the recipients of their awards – thought following up with these groups and seeing how they use the money could be interesting and worthwhile.

Introduced to Chad Lottman at the Shrimp Feed, who owns [C & C Processing](#), the new meat locker in town (old one went out of business after owner's retirement) that is rapidly expanding. Over half the buildings on the west side of downtown are owned by the locker, where they butcher, process and package the meat for distribution. They produce jerky for General Mills now and have outgrown their space, have moved to Beatrice and have hired more employees. They are a major source of income for a lot of the town residents and are a long-upstanding family since the town's founding. He said I'd be welcome to stop in any time and he'd show me around and talk about the town's commerce and business climate.

Introduced to Chad's father, Jim, at The Field. He is owner of [Lottman Construction and Contracting](#) in town. Lots of business locally and in region in nearby states for Sam's Club and Wal Mart, hires locally, brings a lot of the community into his business and supports the local economy. The brothers founded the company in the 70s and have expanded rapidly ever since. Said he and his wife would be on the lookout for a room to rent for me in the area.

Sunday

We went to church at St. Paul. I talked with Pastor Liscom, will be out of town next weekend, try again for an interview the following weekend.

Talked with a lot of the residents of Diller, nearby farmland. Met Marvin Perrin, who has 5 wind turbines on his land, as well as a section of the Oregon Trail wagon path. Invited me over to see them, talk more about their relationship with Next Era Energy and their experiences with both the 'past' and the 'future' on their land. Recommended a place in Odell for a monthly or weekly rented room – will follow up this week.

Next Steps

1. Revisit Margo in Steele City; ask for introductions to other people in town
2. Continue talking with Brooke and Adam
3. Reach out to Perrins
4. Introductory interviews with DILLER: Damerows, Hemphills, Lottmans, Liscom, Engelman's, Barbers
5. Introductory interview with STEELE CITY: Margo, the blacksmith who lives in town, Banahans and their son who farms their land, others after Margo's recommendation/introduction
6. Visit Steele City Presbyterian Church next Sunday, meet Pastor
7. Find out more about Steele City history

WEEK 4 - MID WEEK 4 UPDATE

I didn't go to Nebraska this past weekend (weekend #3) because I felt that I needed to really refine my narrative based off of the interactions I've had since the start of the semester. I realized I needed to further define what I'm interested in, why, and start to work towards identifying who I should be

concentrating my efforts talking to, and to begin the interview stage once these characters have been narrowed down.

First, I wanted to identify what the story should be – I realized that these two towns (Diller and Steele City) were such polar opposites despite being only 8 miles apart, and that contrast – if done right – can be incredibly evocative and can enrich the juxtapositions between characters and themes.

Steele City

Steele City is a town of approximately 50 people, with no industry besides the Keystone Pipeline's pumping station and the railroad – both operated by companies and employees based elsewhere – and has not fostered a future for any further development in this area, while the Pipeline extension is buried for the meantime. The controversial pipeline, which occupies land on easement from property owners, gave a one-time lump sum for the use of land and compensation for any crop they would have grown and harvested during construction and the 2+ years after before the soil has returned to a pre-pipeline state. People who benefited from a large section of pipeline running through their land have added to retirement funds and bought new combines, while others with smaller pieces of land or raised livestock really only benefited from the compensation. In my view, this is an unsustainable practice as compared to Diller and their wind farm, that present ecological and financial risks that don't exist with wind turbines – the entire pipeline measured monitoring sensors every 10 feet that track the 6,000 barrels of oil to and from the pumping station in case of a leak—and don't pay off in ways other more sustainable practices could. Those in town who are not landowners with livestock or crops must travel to other towns for work, church, basic necessities, etc., and do not receive benefits like those with the pipeline on their property on the outskirts of town.

Given this somewhat depressing reality, I'd like to concentrate on Margo D'Angelo (owner of Salty Dog Saloon) and her family in Steele City. Based off my conversations with her, she's tired. She's been ill (multiple bypass surgeries), is always working, and wants to be able to take time off to see her daughter's family who live out of state but can't see any other options to do besides retiring. The restaurant has been hers for 20+ years, and before that it was her fathers'. She's tremendously proud of her business, the community it fosters, and the fulfillment of keeping it running, but has a hard time finding staff that are reliable and available for the hours she would need to take off, and who would be suitable to run her

family's major investment and inheritance. Seen behind the window in the kitchen, behind the bar, or running food to tables during her often-12 hour work days, D'Angelo, who is reaching retirement age, would love to take a break, but can't afford to.

Additionally, she's not terribly optimistic about the town or its future. She says, "there's not much of anything to keep people here," due to the lack of businesses in town, or much activity that other towns in the area can offer. I want to discuss this with her further and try and understand this overall decline from what used to be a pretty prosperous and self-sustaining community. I'd like to follow Margo, her business, and get to know her family and start to unravel the complexities of their relationship to the town while needing a change and not having any opportunity to do so.

Additionally, I'd like to continue talking with Eldean and Norma Banahan, an elderly couple who still farm their land with the help of their sons. Both lifelong residents in Steele City and Diller, the couple's first purchase as a married couple was the five acres they would later sell to Transcanada for the pumping station. Successful farmers for years, they have downsized their land and/or lease their fields out, but their presence in town is strong. Having no grandchildren, the Banahans, like the town of Steele City, are in danger of having their legacy disappear after their children.

Diller

Diller is a more populated town (260, according to the sign) with many locally owned and operated businesses, a quality school system shared with neighboring town Odell, and a much more optimistic view of the future for its residents. More interesting is the presence of a 45-turbine wind farm operated by NextEra Energy, who leases land from local farmers and ranchers, who receive a monthly check for the amount of wind/energy harnessed, proportionate to how many turbines are on their land. This creates not only incentive to produce such sustainable energy, but its risks are considerably low compared to potential oil leaks, time lost on crops despite compensation, and provide a source of income not available to Steele Citizens. Although the corridor was chosen for its optimal wind speeds that are unique to the area around Diller and not Steele City, it's a sad reality and unattainable opportunity for Steele Citizens, who could also benefit from such income. Yet in Diller, local businesses are thriving. Family businesses are a staple in the community, and employ many locals in one form or another. The importance of family, a sense of heritage, and identities as Nebraskans and proudly rural are integral into the community.

Once such family begins with Franklin and Betty Damerow, a medaled WWII Veteran and his wife, former farmers who raised their three children outside of Diller, and now live in town. Originally from Beatrice but moving to Diller in the 1950s after marrying, they now have a large family living within 40 miles of Diller. Their daughter, Peggy Hemphill, married to Steve, a local farmer and employee at a Toro factory in Beatrice, works at the local phone company, and her oldest daughter, Brooke Engelman, helps run her husband Adam's family's 4th generation dairy, Classic Dairy, just north of town. Their dairy business has grown exponentially, now milking 1,000 cows and growing. I would like to spend time with the Hemphills, who have a turbine on their land and raise beef cattle on the side, and their oldest daughter Brooke with her family and in-laws, to show the thriving and growing economy in Diller, with lots of opportunities and a hope for the future, found in their three children's interest in working with the cows, having a rural childhood, and taking over a successful business one day in the future. There's a strong pride in family present, and I think the contrast between the two towns regarding this manner could be really strongly displayed.

If I could rely on the contrast of these two towns, their struggles, their personalities, and the differences in which their lives are tied to the land and energy in some form, I think this will be successful in portraying a community that is often overlooked in America, and make the issue of energy, legacy and leaving a future for future generations that is better than those in the past more relatable to viewers.

WEEK 5 – DIDN'T GO TO NEBRASKA

WEEK 6

I didn't go to Nebraska this weekend as I was researching/preparing for True/False, my interviews for my research component, and watching films. I plan to return the weekend after T/F -- week 8/March 11-13. I have contacted my subjects and have informed them of this.

So far I have Mo Scarpelli (FRAME BY FRAME) and Omar Mullick (THESE BIRDS WALK) committed to helping me complete this segment of my project.

I have sent introductory emails to Margaret Brown (ORDER OF MYTHS, GREAT INVISIBLE); Pietter-Jan De Pue (LAND OF ENLIGHTENMENT); Josh Kreigman/Elyse Steinberg (WEINER) and will

contact Kirsten Johnson (THE OATH, INVISIBLE WAR, CITIZENFOUR) when I receive her email address.

I'm going to structure my interview questions around the following topics/guidelines. I will choose 5-6 of these, depending on the filmmaker, and will obviously continue with follow ups. The total interview time will be 20-40 minutes total, and will be filmed in a video room I have reserved in the basement of Lee Hills, using equipment from the photo locker – a light kit, two cameras, etc.

Generalized Questions

1. Discuss how you develop a sense of place using location, and how a location can influence an audience's understanding of the narrative. Does developing the location as a character or larger component within the story contribute to audiences' understanding?
2. Discuss what is important to make the audience aware of the camera -- either through making the filmmaker/camera a character, or by drawing attention to how the camera is being used to capture events and characters
3. Visualizing a new-oriented, or event-driven film as opposed to a more character-driven, sense-of-place film, what are some challenges in choosing the framing of either the issues or the characters? What factors contribute to the decision-making revolving around your portrayals, and how does your role, as cameraperson (producing the content) wielding the camera (recording the content) play into these decisions?
4. Discuss visual comparisons and differences in films that influence how audiences see and understand characters, plot devices, themes, etc.

Filmmaker-Specific Questions

1. Discuss their films' (either a specific one, or a body of work) visual patterns: i.e., identify a character and analyze their portrayal, and how they thought about framing the character through the camera's viewfinder to shape the character's narrative. Could be done with an event or a plot element in the film, as well.
2. Analyzing a scene or segment of a film and discussing the composition and other elements regarding either a place, character or event. How does this coverage influence audiences' perceptions of the content? Is there other footage not used in the final cut that could have changed

this? Or perhaps different positioning/coverage/composition of the camera, that could change the impact, accuracy, or portrayal of the elements listed above?

3. Look at projects they have produced, examine their intentions for each film, and find visual connections that can shed light on their own personal feelings/attractions toward a kind of character, a kind of community, or event-driven story.
4. How the film was intended to be perceived, and if the reality and perception is different -- applicable to characterizations, or plot developments

Week 7

This week was spent preparing for my research interviews – I set up a standard 2 camera/hair light/fill light space in the video studio in the basement of Lee Hills, finalized my questions, and began to set dates and times for interviews with the contacts I had made already via email.

Once BOATS began, I sat through all the panels and introduced myself to Omar Mullick (These Birds Walk) and arranged for a time to interview him. I also arranged for a time with Mo Scarpelli, but we eventually had to reschedule.

Thursday I finalized my interview time with Pieter-Jan De Pue (Land of the Enlightened). Friday morning I met with Omar and we had an amazing talk. Other than having to replace batteries in the TASCAM audio recorder constantly everything went smoothly; he was very generous with his time and answered all my questions. I feel really confident in the interview and the resulting conversation I plan to edit in the next few weeks.

Friday afternoon I spent a lot of time with Pieter, meeting, grabbing food, beginning the interview in the afternoon before the second screening of his film. Despite a bit of a language barrier, it went well, save for some sound issues; thinking I could plug a power AC cord into the side to keep it from wasting batteries and dying in conversation, I tested it and recorded the audio tracks, but upon review the device never recorded (I assume because it was “plugged in,”) so I need to make do with the on-camera audio and try and up the levels/quality in Audition as best I can.

WEEK 8

Didn't go to Nebraska this week – was sick.

Instead, did more research on the area, went through footage, and made a checklist of what to focus on more –

- interaction between children and dairy
- Margo interview needed re: health
- More Margo footage in town
- Engelmans in field (planting? At dairy? Need more ag presence)
- Interview with Adam on planting season, responsibilities
- Interview with Brooke on planting season and family balance
- More footage of kids playing, in life

WEEK 9

BACK IN NE!

The weekend was bookended by two birthdays – Peggy and Steve’s granddaughter Piper turned 4, and her great-grandfather Franklin turned 94.

I attended both parties – Piper’s a little more excitable than Franklin’s (at what point do you just say ‘it’s just another birthday’ after you’ve had 93 of them, I wonder?) but both were wonderful in their own ways. I arrived late on Thursday night and saw from the road the pumping station had a huge crane set up with bright lights and a construction crew. I filmed from far off on Hwy 8 and then approached one of the workers after driving up to it via Steele City’s Romeo Rd. I apparently frightened one, he explained what was going on (maintenance – they were repairing a pipe, so they had to cut off the line and insert a section of pipe via the crane) and when I asked who I could talk to about seeing inside, I was told without approval from the corporate office, getting some impressive security measures, etc. it was very, very unlikely I would be able to be permitted on the property. Still not completely discouraged, I’m hoping to at least make contact with the office to let them know what I’m doing, if not just to be on good terms with the Communications person up there.

Friday I spent the day at Classic Dairy with Brooke, Alli, Preston, and Sydney. It was the kids’ spring break, so they were working either in the fields or around the dairy choring with their mother and grandmother. I shot a lot – the kids are comfortable around the camera, were engaging, and I was excited to see they were interested in their family’s business. I talked to Brooke, and while she seemed hesitant to be in the frame, she didn’t actively shy away when I was filming the kids and she happened to be in it.

Hopefully that gets better with time, because I'd love to spend time with her seeing her role in the business, interacting with Adam, etc. as well as with her children.

I learned a lot about the operations and know the schedule and general operations for future time spent there. I spent all the nights at the Salty Dog talking with Cheryl, a bartender and lifelong resident of Steele City. She's the daughter of Bill Scheele, the former mayor and current postmaster for the town, and she has a really interesting back story that would be in my opinion a very compelling narrative that seems to comment nicely on the state of the town (it's changed since she was young, she and her father have endured personal challenges as well as the town itself), the future of SC (she needs to leave in order to get back into her career), and the ideas associated with familial obligations, heritage, identifying where 'home' is, and the idea of creating a future for oneself and family – or not being able to, depending on location. In this case, it's only a few miles distance between Diller and Steele City, and the comparisons and contrasts couldn't be more conveniently apparent and on opposite ends of the spectrum.

We built a pretty good rapport – I think she trusts me, I really enjoy talking to her and hearing her perspective as a woman with an advanced degree struggling to maintain and keep a career going, ties to where she grew up and her family, while struggling to get out of a small town and a future she doesn't want. Contrasted with the Diller storyline, I think it could be really evocative and powerful in the two contrasting realities. Shot a decent amount – sorting through and cataloging, will upload some later this week. Bought a RODE mic, had some problems picking up audio levels initially, but got it figured out and I'm set audio-wise for most situations.

Pretty optimistic about narrative, very overwhelmed about shooting all of it, and under pressure to accurately represent everyone I've met that have been *so* kind in opening their homes to me. This weekend was productive in terms of practical shooting, but not in terms of furthering narrative or getting new information. I've been fighting off some sort of bug or allergy-related thing, and I've been really strung out, so I'm not at 100%.

Spent more time with Cheryl at Salty Dog – got to know Al, the cook, who's quite a character (would love to talk more and interview to get his perspective) and left a successful restaurant rescue-esque career in Lincoln to move to small-town Kansas with a cooking job below his culinary interest/expertise.

Was interested in spending time at Dairy on Saturday but felt awful and stayed in hotel taking notes and reviewing footage and researching.

On Friday there was news of SC merging its water supply with nearby village Endicott in the upcoming years because of high nitrates present in their water supply. Margo and husband Greg are in Idaho Falls visiting Margo's daughter and granddaughter until this upcoming Wednesday, so I had to put off talking with her about her experience running the only business in town, and what its future looks like. Spent time talking with a few residents – Dustin (last name?) and his family raise cattle, grow corn/soybeans outside of town. Dad is PR guy for most of the coops around, so potentially good resource regarding agriculture. Could get me an intro to some surrounding farmers. Met an employee of Roode's feed yard, Chris, who ropes cattle. Interesting character – said I could film at the feed yard, could be potentially interesting shots. Left Saturday night, but have a giant list based of strategy I created while driving home – see next week's field notes – and hope to get going on it after Easter, when the weather is better, more is happening in the fields, and people get geared up for spring.

WEEK 10

I'll be home for Easter from March 25-March 31, but plan on reviewing, cataloging what I haven't cataloged yet, and uploading footage I've gathered thus far over the break onto the blog. I'm thinking it will be more like a review of what I've got thus far and less a technical 'scene' or something. Still working on building characters, but I have a good idea of what I want both in terms of narrative and character development. Main characters' personalities seem compatible in terms of contrast and their narratives seem like they would complement each other well – I just need to (a) get everyone more comfortable with the camera and (b) really capitalize on planting season for Diller and the emergence of Spring in Steele City.

For Diller/Dairy –

I'd really like to get more of the Engelman kids talking about their home, their family's business, their interest in agriculture, keeping the dairy going, etc. Also I'd like to get perspective from multiple generations – kids, Brooke and Adam, Anne, Adam's grandparents – about the operation, importance of their land, etc. I'd most like to highlight the importance of their land, their heritage, etc. in the film, and the importance of the future and the investments made in order to make it as full of opportunity as possible. As

a metaphor for the town and the majority of the citizens, this continuing on with tradition, importance of family, growth of industry, etc. is key in creating an atmosphere within the film that makes the audience identify with the characters and really feel like they're immersed in the experience of living in the town.

For Steele City –

I need to keep talking with Cheryl, as I know she's open and willing to talk to me, but I need to be around with a camera when she's not working, stop by her house, see her at home and out away from work, in order to get her perspective on living in town, her career, her goals on getting out of SC, her relationship with her father and what ties her to SC, etc. I'm not sure she'd be comfortable with a camera, but I'd like to keep talking, as I feel that it's a really dynamic story that would contrast nicely with the narrative I have of a multigeneration family in Diller tied to their land and committed to keeping it running. The decline of Steele City's population, industry, and literal presence in the lives of its residents (no jobs, stores, etc. when there used to be plenty) can be equated and compared subconsciously with the experience of Cheryl and her family over the years of being in town.

That being said, I have quite a long to do list for the coming weeks, and hopefully will be able to get some leads from residents on these who know the community and its residents better --

Week 11 and beyond (starting next weekend, April 1-3) To Do:

Calls to make:

1. Doug Lottmann / Lottmann Construction – for interview about town's prosperity, growth of business, economic climate and why that is

402-793-5359

Also – his son Chad @ Diller Locker (re: plane, business development in Diller, Beatrice; Phone needed still

2. Bill Scheele / Steele City Post Office – interview + spend time with him in Post Office, ask about what the town used to be like, how was his mayor term, what about SC he feels is home, etc.

1 800-275-8777

402-442-2246

3. Ann Engelman / Classic Dairy – interview (in home?) about the history of their dairy, their family's presence in Diller, etc.

4. Cheryl Scheele / Salty Dog – ask to talk in her home, interview about her time in SC, what it was like growing up, what she and her friends did for fun, what drew her to leave SC and what made her come back
5. Diller Museum in Bank (stop by, get name of lady who runs it) - learn about town origins, founders, presence in Jeff City
6. Steele City Presbyterian Church – pastor, introduction and ask for interview in coming weeks re: changes to congregation, population, way of life, etc.
402-442-2230
7. Wind Farm Office --- off Hwy 8 N of Hemphill property – inquire about maintenance schedule
8. Steele City Pumping Station – inquire about maintenance, procedures, recent activity, etc. Call corporate office *number still needed, contact Eldean and Norma for possible name and number?

Shots to consider:

1. SC exteriors: bank, wide of Main St., Post Office, Salty Dog, church, school
2. Diller exteriors: bldgs. Church, businesses, Post Office, school, Field
3. Interior, exterior maintenance of Turbine – ask office, use GoPro? Shots of blade maintenance, etc.
4. Aerials: farmland, trains, pumping station, wind farm, land while planting or burning *Chad Lottman re:plane
5. Union Pacific – transporting oil? Pumping oil? Inquire about schedules, timetables *need to find local contact!
6. Cheryl Scheele and father, Bill – daily life, home life, etc.
7. Steve and Peggy – working with cattle, conversation on turbine, their children and grandchildren, about living in town you grew up in, etc. Shot cattle and turbine this past weekend, but
8. Franklin and Betty – importance of family, sense of heritage, experiences, etc. – in home, shot lists in previous week's field notes
9. Lots of environment shots – get to know the state, its people, the atmosphere, etc. – cattle auctions, feed lots, rodeos?, barns, planting work, dairy work, etc. Look for details (micros in

towns, farms, etc) as well as broader coverage (macros via aerials, standard b roll for farming, ranching industries)

WEEK 11 – 13 (spring break for 11, 12, didn't go to NE for 13)

More considerations to the story of both towns this week – heavily concentrated on capturing footage needed to complete what I've been referring to as a working outline (determined by Engelman's schedule for the spring – baseball, after school stuff, aside from their planting schedule and maintenance of fields). Steele City is different – I've been trying to be at the bar as much as possible, as it's really hard to track down Margo otherwise, as she is usually almost always working. Getting her to talk on her breaks, or if she needs to run to town, seem to be the ideal times to chat with her and get to know her schedule for the week.

So far, for outline –

I. INTRO – post office/town/Margo in bar (SC); farm, maybe downtown Diller?, wind turbines)

II. WORK – shots of Margo at bar (SC) and Engelmans at Dairy or in field (Diller) to establish profession, their daily routines. Concentrate mostly on adults, and then as time goes on the film will shift to kids.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONSHIP – need to establish Margo's relationship to the town and the parallel to the relationship between Steele City and the KSP. For Diller, more shots of the wind turbines, and interviews with Brooke and Adam about sustainability on the farm.

IV. FUTURE – find a way to show Margo's future and her relationship with the town changing as her health changes. For Diller, concentrate more on kids.

V. COMMUNITY – what is the role of community in their lives?

VI. END/ OUTLOOK – figure out a way to visually represent the future (for Diller it's the kids, so keep looking for opportunities to shoot them interacting with the land, with their parents, and on the farm. Good opportunity would be the fair in the summer). For Margo, keep looking for ways to show her health and how it's being impacted by her work at the bar.

WEEK 16 (had a shooting job week 14, week 15; and 16 spent in NE)

Spent most of the weekend with the kids, got a lot of farm chores and planting shot. I've been working on developing more of a rapport with the kids out in the field – when they're choring, for instance, as well as when they're at home hanging out.

I know a lot of the footage in the cabin of the combine with Adam will be unusable (shaky video, audio can be muffled) but I use it as a time to get him to talk and feel comfortable around a camera for when I do need to shoot more important scenes. He was probably the most spooked by the camera at first, so I'm happy we've made strides in getting him used to it.

Time out there was limited (finals coming up, had to get back to COMO) but I feel like what I did accomplish in my presence there this weekend was more time with the kids, and more shots of Margo.

WEEK 17

FINALS – didn't go to NE.

WEEK 18

First extended stay in NE – stayed at Rice Lodge in Odell, so short commute to Diller and a few more to SC. Was able to feel better about my reporting and presence (before I've felt my short visits were more helicopter reporting than anything else, so I was happy to spend more time getting to know them outside of a "I have to leave tomorrow" kind of surface level conversation.

Spent most of it in SC collecting b roll and hanging out at the bar. Got to know a lot about the history thanks to Cheryl, who's dad is the mayor. She's spent most of her life (aside from college, and the past five or so years working out of state) in this town, knows everyone, and despite her higher education, gets along with the other residents.

Shot more salty dog footage, met a few farmers who I talked to about seeing their wind turbines in Diller. Not necessary but at least a good contact. Hung out with Engelmanns – shot a baseball game, had dinner with them, spent time at dairy doing morning chores. Progressing well with footage. Definitely trying to focus on kids, and since school is out now we spend a lot of our days together.

Moving forward – look for ways to introduce the land in the shots with kids, get them thinking about their relationship with the land so our interviews can go better and it’s already on their mind.

WEEK 19

Interviewed Betty and Franklin this week – got a firsthand look at family history – Betty is the family’s amateur historian (she saves every clip, takes every picture, has a huge room of storage of documents and family history). Spent the day with them – formal interview, discussion of Franklin in war, and informal interview.

Spent time at farm with Engelmans - got footage of kids practicing for 4H stuff for county fair later this summer. This is apparently the time they should start looking at their calves and their heifers and determining which they are planning to show. Preston and I hung out with his pigs, did chores. Got some good footage of him working.

WEEK 20 - 8-day stay in NE!

Lots of B-roll and landscape shots – concentrated on trying to form a relationship with land with people. Extremely important to capture bc of the commodity of the land – see Adam’s discussion in combines (they aren’t making more, trying to actively buy land or at least lease from other neighbors, etc) The land is the common denominator between towns, storylines, and imagery – try and think of it as a 3rd character. Representation of past, present and future still TBD but at least working on shooting it has become a daily routine.

Representing the differences in the two towns and stories could be found in shots of land? Something to think about when shooting. Rewatched some docs for inspiration on how they portrayed land – White Earth was one. Took note of the long shots, pans, and the relationship between the outside and inside (barns, fields, pasture, milking parlour).

Interview takeaways – ask “what does the pipeline/windmills mean to you? To the future you? To your kids?”

Interview question brainstorming:

- describe what Diller is like in all seasons
- describe about house, your family’s houses, and the surrounding area
- What do the windmills/pipeline do for your business?
- what do people not know about SC/D, the pipeline – address assumptions
- observations of pipeline or turbines as a source of energy, source of profit for ppl involved

Tried again to gain access to Keystone Pumping Station, but calls to Transcanada office and the representative for the area haven't yielded anything promising. The Rep is based out of Omaha so on-site visits are limited to 1 or 2x a month, if needed. Everything is monitored electronically remotely. Not much hope for access.

Interviewed Ann and Dean – informally but got some good information on the dairy to use in later interview with Brooke and Adam about the present and future of the business. Talked a lot about local roots (family burial plot, same church for decades, old farm house and new construction, etc.)

WEEK 21

Classic Dairy and the open house dominated most of this visit – wanted to capture the dairy and involvement with the community first and foremost. Not sure if it fits in the story, but it's at least more footage and concentrating around an event. Interviewed Brooke and Adam – went very well!!! So many good quotes.

Formal Interview 1 with Margo - have issues with audio (the cooler was on, couldn't be turned off – constant hum but content is good)

Brainstormed future topics for conversation with Margo re: health, her family, and the history of the bar. Interview mostly consisted of her daily life, and what running a bar has been like over time, considering the economic changes.

To schedule:

Peggy and Steve interview

Wind Farm up close

Margo Interview 2

Ann and Dean with kids – in barn, at farm, etc.

To Find out:

-family activities that I'm missing that I could be shooting

-Brooke and Adam in field – more footage doing different things

-Margo plans for next week

WEEK 22

Expanded shot list – in light of interviews, and research about towns.

Concentrated on getting Diller downtown shot, paralleled with SC.

Time lapse??

Scheduled Margo interview!!! Next weekend.

WEEK 23

DILLER PICNIC was this weekend – spent nearly the whole time with kids this weekend. Tried to get more footage from their perspective, away from farm, and away from family. Want to try and get them represented in film as kids first and see them on their own living in a small town.

During the week, leading up to DP -

Big week for interviews! Got most everything answered so far!

Interviewed Margo again!! Also spoke with Greg, but not formal interview.

Kids interview in basement – routine, parents routine, favorite part about dairy, etc.

Brooke and Adam interview 2 – more questions about their relationship, less about dairy

Developed more of a shot list for Margo post interview – definitely concentrate on her and Greg outside –

TBD any activities, events coming up in SC that they'll be attending. Won't be going to fair this year,

Margo is short staffed and can't leave bar.

WEEK 24 – out of town

WEEK 25

More work in field, shot a baseball and softball game for P and S. Mostly prep for Jefferson

County Fair for kids – getting their animals ready, last minute craft entries, Brooke and Adam arranging for 4H cow entries. Not much footage shot at the Dairy.

Went with Margo to hospital for doctor visit – HUGE in terms of access. Driving force of her story FINALLY has a visual. Met her mom, interview, was able to see firsthand how her health is affecting her outlook on the bar, on the town, and what she wants to do about her future. Couldn't be more pleased – Margo and I also have a good friendship, so we spent all day hanging out. I stayed after hours at the bar and

we talked more, asked more questions, and got some really insightful info about her life. Don't feel comfortable using it in the film as some of it is very personal, but I think it's shifted how I'm planning on capturing her in my remaining time here. Less getting through daily life and more on what's next for her.

WEEK 26

MARGO INTERVIEW, ROUND 2 - Went well – less interruptions, better sound quality.

Spent more time in Steele City – got a lot of Margo working, other employee's interactions, lack of activity in town. Shot a lottttt of B-roll. Made plans to go to the Fireman's Picnic in community hall the following week, as Margo is integral member of community involved in getting the fire department well equipped, housed.

JEFF CO FAIR! A dream of a weekend – everything was shot well, no hiccups, and basically unlimited access to kids, the Engelmans. Spent a weekend in a campsite with the other families, helped with prepping animals, and shot the entire 4H show. Really highlighted family involvement and the scope of preparation everyone has to go through to be successful, not just the kids .

WEEK 27

Last week in Nebraska before move to NYC. Wrapping up loose ends – not much left missing.

Got everyone's signatures, spent a lot of time with the kids on our own. Was about to get more interviews (informal – playing with legos, outside in backyard, etc) and think I have some useful clips. Figured out my opening and closing shots of the film – know what will be bookended with what. Finally sketched out an actual timeline/storyboard based on my interviews and shaping the footage around that.

Big Salty Dog weekend – spent a lot of it with Margo and Greg. We went on a golf cart ride (they like to call it vacation for an hour) and got out and away from the bar. Happy to see them relax and I think I got a great last scene to the film.

Margo went on a walk for exercise and I joined – never really intended to use the footage, but I have some good audio. Horrible allergies on my end make me sound like Darth Vader breathing out of my mouth (I

think I'm allergic to something in the fields) so that is frustrating listening back to. We'll see if it makes the cut. Was able to capture more footage that I needed based on above and what still was missing.

Super sad to leave, but happy to get back to NY and start there.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION

PROJECT EVALUATION

As a photojournalist, I knew that visually representing the physical and social landscape was an important part of this story for both towns. To do this, I began to consider the visual aspects of each town and of each family, including how their environment changed or how it drew parallels. This piece began with the intent of highlighting the two forms of energy (renewable and nonrenewable) and grew into a study of two families and their daily life in towns mirrored by the local resource infrastructure. At the beginning, I did not want to make a political film, and instead of making a film about the pipeline or wind farm and compiling supporting and negative evidence of their presence, I aimed to show with *NOTES FROM JEFFERSON COUNTY* the present and future of these towns and investigate if these two had any intersection with the respective energy sources. As I went through the process of making the film, my approach to this goal changed more than once. The development and altering of this goal will be discussed in depth below in this evaluation. As I have prepared two different versions of the film, one longer and including storylines from both Steele City and Diller, and another short film only including Steele City, I will be discussing both towns and both families involved with this project.

I began the process of making the film with heavy consideration of Framing Theory as a filmmaking ideal. Not in just the sense of the placement of images within a frame, but also considering agenda-setting specifically in visual news media, and the perception of stories presented in one manner with certain images over others. In my assessment of the Keystone Pipeline story and its relevance to Steele City, NE, I was disappointed in the lack of coverage to the town itself, and the people within it. I wanted to know why it did not often include the people whose land a pipeline would interrupt, or whose land it ran beneath. My interest in the residents led me to Steele City, and finding someone to talk with related to the pipeline. I was immediately drawn to Margo, who was interviewed for various news programs, but only was ever seen in short sound bites. I was curious as to what other images of the town, its population, or its single bar owner were discarded in favor of what appeared on air. In beginning my story, I knew that I would frame the town differently. Ultimately I chose to focus my story on Margo's personal life first, and its effect on the town second – something I didn't know I was going to do until I got to know Margo, with

already a different story in mind from what I had seen (and not seen) in media broadcasts. I hadn't realized in my initial visits that the approach I had towards Margo was with the intent to find out more about her life from a particular perspective. That decision ultimately grew in my mind and in my coverage of her – all under the influence of Framing Theory in real life.

The approach to both storylines and towns also was greatly influenced by my interviews with two documentary filmmakers at the 2016 True/False Film Festival, on Framing Theory and its application to their bodies of work. The kinds of films that directors Pieter De Pue and Omar Mullick made, I realized, were especially relatable to the film I was trying to create, in their methods of visual personification and use of metaphor for characters, and the choice of coverage and presentation of different, more human stories in what are typically represented in visual media as troubled, conflict-ridden regions. While Steele City and Diller are by no means identical to Afghanistan, for instance, it was interesting to consider the physical presentations of characters in “Land of the Enlightened” and its influence on how the audience grew to perceive and understand them. It was also interesting to examine the two films’ selection of storylines that can exist independently from the turmoil that dictates the respective countries’ newsworthiness. While the dominant narrative can make appearances and be implied directly in each film, the characters’ narratives do and can demote coverage of violence occurring in their countries in favor of more ‘domesticized’ and ‘human’ stories of young boys and their fates within their environments. For more discussion on this, refer to the section below on True/False interview analysis.

Visually, I wanted to indirectly address agenda setting in my presentation of the region often featured alongside the Keystone Pipeline coverage, and I considered its overlaps with framing theory in its visual presentation of the town’s condition, and its inevitable decline, based on the images presented in news media stories. The inclusion of dilapidated buildings and a railroad with no stop in town, versus new improvements made to the Salty Dog Saloon, or the weekly mowing of the community park behind the restaurant, were specifically chosen to present a certain, specific image with broad implications about the present condition of the town and its almost-certain future, regardless of the presence of a possible Keystone Pipeline XL extension. I began looking for images that I knew were different from what I had seen, and that the seeking of those images would inform the story I was going to tell about Margo, her

town, and their futures. I did not know, however, how much the story I intended to tell would change at the onset.

I decided first I would do basic reporting and address the main story narrative elements – the town itself, the Keystone Pipeline and its level of presence in the town, and the person with an active interest in both – Margo. I started gathering initial imagery of all three, in hopes that it would lead to more substantial, plot-defining coverage once I had established myself in the town and had a decent level of rapport with Margo. Not knowing at first how I would frame her, I chose to show both struggling and successful sides of the town, and soon met issues in showing the unseen presence (Keystone Pipeline) and its overlap with Steele City, and/or Margo and her business. The ability to capture images of the pipeline proved difficult, as it is underground. The pumping station, up close, was not accessible. I could photograph outside the gates on the public road, but the images I captured were not helpful in describing the landscape or how it is impacted by the pipeline below ground. I instead turned to the town to seek more visual metaphors for the pipeline underneath Steele City – the train, and its transitory nature that cuts through town without stopping; the empty streets, and older buildings in disrepair that made comparisons to an outdated and non-renewable energy source. As a result, I found images that could reflect the unsustainable way of life in Steele City. The closure of local businesses in town following the discontinuation of the Union Pacific line stopping there was the first blow to the town’s viability for a future, though the immediate boom from construction of the pipeline pumping station provided economic growth for a short time for the Salty Dog and other businesses in Jefferson County. Yet once construction was complete and the construction crews left the town and the area, Steele City and the Salty Dog’s brief resurgence disappeared. Margo and her bar are still dealing with the after-effects of such growth and decline. Lack of workforce, a disinterest in keeping the town well maintained, and a lack of a young generation and the responsibility that therefore lands on Margo making a permanent resurgence of the town seem increasingly more unlikely. Visually communicating that through the parallel with Margo’s health problems seemed an appropriate metaphor. I felt that footage like the calendar scene, in which Margo discusses her workforce, and the convergence of her health and the future of the bar in the accounting scene, accomplished this. It was only after I began to spend time with Margo did my story change, however, and it is important to note that the largest factor in changing the direction of the Steele City narrative was the footage I was gathering of Margo, and the

situations that were inaccessible to news outlets visiting the town only for a few hours in surface-level interviews only framed around the Keystone Pipeline. Margo's story, in my opinion, tangential to the Pipeline, was far more interesting and more identifiable than the politicized, issue-driven journalism featuring Margo's bar that appears on television and in print. Of course, this only came with analyzing my footage with Framing Theory in mind, based on the research I had conducted that distinctly mentioned the concept of agenda setting related to news-framed issues, like the XL pipeline affecting Steele City.

Once I was able to move past the general reporting stage, I hoped to gather more nuanced footage depicting her struggle to maintain the bar and the town, at detriment to her health, something overlooked by news groups. Once I had gained access to that part of Margo's life, my story began to change again – and instead of giving Margo a 'voice' about the future of her town in relation to the Pipeline, I wanted to give the majority of my attention to her health and the role in her town she would have if her health were to change. Once I began to see the film in this manner, it became important to see her as a person independent of an *issue*, and as such see her as any other person with a problem that will create consequences in their life depending on their behavior. That story, a universally understandable and relatable story, became the basis for how I framed her in my first edits. The inclusion of the Pipeline in town became lower and lower on my priorities list, as her fate would still be at risk regardless of any outside influence of the politicized events occurring less than a mile from her home and business. That was also when I realized that my coverage of the Engelmanns and Diller had to also change.

In Diller, the town is defined in part by the renewable wind turbines spotted to the south, seen in the introduction and in the footage of its downtown Main Street, which is kept up well, and where a few locally-owned businesses thrive. There are growing and adapting local endeavors, and there is foot traffic. While the town of Diller has a very small presence within the first iteration of the film, I thought it was important to establish the very easily identifiable visual differences in topography and conditions of its downtown area. The Engelmanns have limited interaction with Diller, apart from the carnival scene and a baseball game in the cut, but the visual metaphors of health, growth, and well-maintained upkeep of the town in contrast with Diller were intentional to pair with the Engelmann family and their business. Visual cues of activity and a new generation, in contrast to the relative stagnancy of Steele City were important to include to establish the conflicting impressions of both towns. Once the visual language was established in

the surrounding land and environment of the characters was addressed, I hoped that my physical coverage and framing of each family could make subtle inferences to better establish elaborate on my comparison. The applicability of the shots gathered in these areas, I assumed, would have different meanings depending on which edits I made in both storylines.

In relation to the farm north of downtown Diller, I sought visuals that not only communicated the dairy farm's activities and the Engelmans' routines, but agricultural images symbolizing growth (planting scenes and field work, in particular) and emphasized coverage of the children—Alli, Preston, and Sidney—to show a new generation of growth. The Engelmans have a wind turbine on their property, though it is not related to the Steele Flats Wind Energy turbines (Brooke's parents have a Steele Flats Wind Energy turbine on their property, but I didn't think that was necessary to include in the story). The Engelmans' relationship to the turbines is more tangential, as their growth as a dairy operated by the fifth generation of the family is running parallel to the sustained growth of the town, symbolized in the sustainable energy in the turbines, and the positive impact they have had on the community, both financially and environmentally. At first I sought to include it in the frame of their time on the farm and wanted to find a direct correlation of the sustainable energy initiative to their narrative, but as I spent more time with the family and developed similar conclusions with Margo and Steele City a few miles down the highway, I began to realize that I was not looking for the energy-industry element in their narrative, either. I wanted to pivot away from a narrative that featured both the energy industry and the family's activities, and instead concentrate on the lives of a growing family that provided a foil to Margo's situation. Looking for images that reflected growth continued, but as I spent more time with the Engelmans I realized that the story I was looking for was concentrated most in the children. Making the story about the children became the object of my footage-gathering, and the latter half of the spring (especially after True/False and my interviews) was dominated by time spent with only the young Engelmans in relation to their parents and older family members, and town they lived in. In establishing the difference in age, condition of the environment they were placed in, the two narratives I chose to parallel began to take shape as primarily a human interest story and less pertaining to political influence. The framing of such stories deviated from images only associated with the pipeline or the wind turbines at this point.

In light of the above, I always wanted to make the land a kind of third character in the film, and to show its influence on the lives of all people represented in the film. Yet the way this occurred changed over the course of shooting. For Diller and the Engelman farm, the land is crucial to the dairy's operation – it provides the feed for cows, profit from crop sales and allows the value of Classic Dairy and its owners' financial portfolio to continue to grow. As they acquire more land--“they're not making any more of it,” Adam says in an interview—the Engelmans are not only increasing their immediate growth but are also actively planning for the future. The land is integral to the family's future and safeguarding it and treating it with the respect it demands is an essential theme of the story. Their interaction with the land from an adult's and child's perspective is continually referenced in the film. As I edited my first cut that includes the Engelmans, I grew to see that it was difficult to include both perspectives in a way that didn't become too obvious while avoiding redundancy. Shooting in a way that framed the surroundings, environments, or events from the literal perspective of the children, at their eye level, began to dominate my footage. Their relationship to their natural environment, their town, and their land grew to be solely from their height, and through their experiences (for example, the baseball game, playing in the backyard, their time at the carnival in their hometown, and participation in the County Fair). This perspective I had in mind – wanting to show the children always in a secure environment, with a predictable and certain future, seeking and maintaining a greater level of independence than perhaps other children in America with similar family structures. This idea of a different kind of coverage came over time as I saw their daily life (farm responsibilities, family obligations, extracurricular activities like 4H and after-school sports) always seeming to be supervised on some level by adults, and their desire, like all children, to be more independent and find freedom to be themselves and imagine different future possibilities for themselves, separate from expectations placed on them, if they want. The tension in footage between adult interactions (the county fair prep, working on the farm) and their independent activities (the carnival scenes, playing in their backyard, or Preston with his pigs) was something I wanted to develop, partially based on the influence of “These Birds Walk” and the very particular framing and visual representation of the children within confined spaces versus open spaces.

In this vein for Steele City and Margo D'Angelo, I wanted to present the land around her as a symbol for what could be possible but isn't being realized. Margo's ancestors homesteaded close by Steele

City—the remnants of her family’s farmhouse are still standing. She has deep roots in the area and has invested in the success of the town over the years – contributing to donations for the construction and outfitting of a town volunteer fire station, including trucks and equipment for different kinds of fire (grass, structural, etc.), purchasing property and renovating it, saving properties from being razed with intentions of reuse, and continued operation of her bar, that coincidentally is the last surviving business in town. Footage such as her in the cornfield, or on the sandy beach of the riverbed with her husband and dog, are included in the cuts for this purpose. I wanted to present her interactions within open spaces with a very different tone and pace than those where she is confined in some way – the hospital, behind the bar or in the kitchen, or below her son’s old bunkbed at work paying bills and writing checks. Once I got to know more about her own personal life, this intention became more and more clear – and as her health became the main priority in developing a narrative, the footage gathered reflects my intent to directly contrast the public Margo (bar owner, active resident in town) with the private Margo (worried that her health will affect the bar’s immediate future, her relationship to her work and her husband). While the physical framing didn’t necessarily change (proximity to Margo, maybe, on some level), my attitude towards the narrative certainly moved in the intention to see Margo in a different way than I had previously considered – and the narrative I had established already in my head, in direct reaction to what I had known about her previously.

Her health, in my eyes, can be seen as a direct parallel to the town she cares so deeply about, and the struggles in the face of decline. Her struggle to keep the only remaining business in town operating in light of her health, and whether or not her involvement in the Salty Dog is sustainable, can be compared to the future of the town in light of the presence of the TransCanada Keystone Pipeline and any potential construction for the XL extension, which was approved in November 2017. I knew this was what I was intending to infer in my earlier vision for the film, this changed as I gathered more footage and realized that this was a) too lofty to achieve with such a thinly-related narrative from a visual perspective, and b) not necessary to gain audiences’ empathy and understanding of her struggles. I could simplify the story and reduce the importance of the pipeline in the narrative; this, again, changed the direction of my film halfway through my time in Steele City.

With the addition of interviews and depicting daily life illustrating their current realities, both families' current actions indicate possible future scenarios. While I wish I had been able to make a more concrete comparison with footage gathered, I do not know if such a direct comparison could be made successfully. As I neared the initial editing phase and began to make more cuts, I grew frustrated because I saw that in the editing process I was trying to show this through abandoning interviews and interactive footage, and more through observational footage. I struggled with trying to reconcile my intention to give a 'voice' to commonly underrepresented people in light of this issue, and my new goal of contrasting the lives of two different families, close proximity-wise but different in their approach towards their futures. I realized that I had shot, perhaps subconsciously, a different movie than what I set out initially to create.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

This project challenged my skills as a videographer significantly. I had to constantly consider the way to communicate the two towns' present and future, and aside from capturing daily routines, I had to place myself in situations where some additional insight could be gleaned from actions or interviews. For Margo and Steele City, this was especially difficult – but I believe that my footage from the doctor's visit, her 'vacation' on the town's riverbed with her husband and her constant presence in her business is successful in the above goal. For Diller and the Engelmans, the conclusion I was trying to make was more of a reach, and less concrete, but I believe that the environment (a farm) and the family itself (young children taking active roles in their family's business while seeking a level of independence and room to grow) illustrates my goals for the film, in its latest iteration. In my final iteration in choosing to focus only on Margo and Steele City, I believe that the film is entirely different than what I aimed to create at the beginning of the whole project; I am still coming to terms with what this means for the narrative in relation to my own experience with Framing Theory and its application in real life decision-making. Specifically, about narrative, voice, and intentional actions of the filmmaker and their role as gatekeeper of information, active 'pusher' of a certain perspective, and their role in construction of the narrative based on what is included in the frame versus excluded.

Technically-speaking, I do struggle quite a bit with audio, and capturing audio for this piece proved difficult. I even considered at one point eliminating all unnecessary audio and interviews and presenting the piece as purely observational. This was partially motivated by the technical faults, but also

as a potential communicator of the themes and conclusions I was hoping to create within the audiences' reception.

As I never was able to have a second shooter or another person to capture and monitor audio, I often had to choose one over the other. Had I had some help, or had I able to simultaneously do both with more success, I would feel a lot more confident in my skills and their presence in the film. Operationally-speaking, I found that using my DSLR was far more accepted than use of the University's larger camcorder. My subjects were intimidated by a larger camera at first, and in close quarters (kitchen, combine cab, at home) the smaller DSLR was not only more efficient, but yielded better resulting footage due to its relative unobtrusive appearance. While some sacrifices in quality had to be made – low light in particular – I find that the resulting film does not suffer too much from it, aside from the noise heard from adjusting the exposure when I was not using my cine lenses. While I see it as both frustrating on the role of the photographer, I can see in my later edits the inclusion of the filmmaker as a reminder of their presence in what is being presented to audiences.

I am not the greatest reporter, so interviews were always a bit intimidating for me, especially when trying to establish a rapport and develop a relationship at the beginning. I was intimidated by the idea that I had about the Nebraskans, and their relation to what I perceived were their ideas about me – a college educated outsider with a camera asking questions about environmental issues. At the beginning of filming and as I progressed in my relationships, I felt more at ease and confident in my footage as I gained more trust with the individuals featured in the film. As I spent more time with my subjects the conversations became easier and my presence in their lives during everyday life and specific events grew from surface-level to more intimate. Much of the footage I captured came far after I was able to build a personal rapport and develop a relationship with the person I was speaking with.

As mentioned above, I found that access in such a small community was occasionally difficult to navigate. As the community is so conscious of newcomers, I had to work particularly hard to gain their trust. While Nebraskans in general are far more open and kind than some other groups, I sensed that the topic brought more hesitation to their opinion of me, rather than my 'outsider' persona and lack of familiarity. As I formed relationships with not only my subjects, but other townspeople not featured in the film (bar regulars, the extended Engelman family, etc.) I found that bridging this gap was easier once they

realized that my goal was not to make a politicized film that could potentially misrepresent them. As I changed my thoughts on the direction of my film, and as my shooting and perspective changed, all parties were able to adjust and understand what I was looking to capture.

I feel proud of this film because I believe it is a true representation of the current situation of two towns that are embarked on very different paths, with different futures. I have gained access to a story that I believe is important to tell, regardless of its environmental policy implications, but for its reportage of a way of life that many Americans think is uncommon. Rural life is underrepresented in its media coverage, especially in the method I have employed in this film. While I do think it is a quiet film, and subtle in its plot devices, I think it is an accurate and fair representation of these two communities. While the final iteration for submission excluded one town, and my approach towards framing the narrative constantly changed over the time I shot, I believe the importance of acknowledging Framing Theory at work in real life scenarios grew to be the most identifiable theme, not only in the presentation of my characters and setting and plot, but of my process in arriving in such a presentation.

CHAPTER 4: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

See multimedia folder for:

1. documentary film
2. folder of jpg images
3. interviews from True/False

CHAPTER 5: NOTES FROM JEFFERSON COUNTY - ANALYSIS

The Crossroads

At the Kansas border on Rte. 77 in the midst of flowing fields of green, a welcome sign invites travelers to the Cornhusker State. It sits on the side of a two-lane highway, across from a hundred-year old clapboard church with a lopsided steeple and peeling white paint. In old-fashioned block lettering the sign shouts, "NEBRASKA...THE GOOD LIFE." An old pickup will chug by or a combine will occasionally rumble down the pavement, but usually the only sound is the wind gusting through the aisles of rustling ears. This is Great Plains country, big sky Country, and visitors don't have to work too hard to imagine a line of covered wagons trundling across the horizon in the distance -- at least until they see the wind turbines, that is.

Conjuring images of Wellsian space invaders, 44 windmills tower 422 feet into the skyline outside Diller, Nebraska. While they are certainly a striking feature, the turbines also seem to fit right in, as their languid rotations mirror the slow way of life in the local villages nearby. And this isn't the only major energy infrastructure in the area: the area is also home to a transfer station for the TransCanada Keystone oil pipeline and will be the future ending point of the Keystone XL extension -- a project approved by the Trump administration in November, 2017. The unlikely Jefferson County, whose population sat just above 7,000 at the time of the 2015 Census, has somehow become a very important hub of Midwest energy.

Steele City

A dilapidated brick schoolhouse sits on a hilltop near the highway; its windows busted and boarded, the swing set out front coated in rust. A small clump of houses tucked behind scrub and trees overlook a rolling landscape interlaced with electricity lines. Down a dusty stretch of one-lane road, a series of huge metal coils surrounded by chain-link fence topped with razor wire emanate a throbbing bass hum that can be heard from a distance when the wind blows just right.

The church in town was closed years ago, as was the grocery store, the bank, and the schoolhouse. The only signs of life these days are the few solitary residents, the local post office, and the Salty Dog

Saloon -- the sole business in Steele City. The bar's proprietor, Margo D'Angelo, still remembers when the town used to be a community, before the Union Pacific railroad pulled its Steele City stop and the workers moved away.

"The population was right around a hundred, and we still had a gas station in town. We had a cement ready mix business in town. We had a grocery store, of course the post office is still here. There was quite a few more homes and people living here. As time has gone by we've lost a lot of homes and people. Once the railroad left a lot of the jobs went with it, and places closed down."

After the railroad and its workers packed up and left, Steele City fell into pattern of decay. Older residents died, their children moved on, businesses closed, and the population fell from over 100 to its present state of "about 50 on a good day," according to D'Angelo. However, in 2008 the local population received some surprisingly good news when President Bush approved a new project to build 2,147 miles of crude-oil pipeline from Alberta, Canada, to a new transfer station in Steele City. The pipeline, which would transport around 600,000 barrels' worth of oil a day through the area seemed like the tonic the local economy needed to begin to rebuild.

"It doubled the business. They stayed around in campers, and even if they weren't staying here in town they'd come in after work and drink and eat...Anytime there's a work crew that comes through town it'll make the difference in putting a new roof on or putting in central air unit, increase your employee's pay, so that always increases. Out of town people always tip a lot better, so that increase their wages."

The Salty Dog gained a new crop of regulars as workers from around the state and beyond began to frequent the bar during the station's construction. Pipeline crews started camping out in the park behind the saloon or staying in local hotels in neighboring Fairbury. The stores and restaurants in Diller nearby got a boost from the influx of shoppers and patrons, and the Nebraska welders union represented hometown workers for the build. Even the local residents received benefits from the construction as TransCanada made payments to any landowner whose property would need to be dug into to bury the pipeline.

However, the boon to the economy was not to last. Construction on the Steele City phase of the Keystone was completed in 2010, just two years after it was first announced. The new transfer station was

almost entirely self-operating, and as such requires little to no regular maintenance or full-time local workers. The construction crews picked up and moved on after the project wrapped, and Steele City fell back into its old, quiet way of life. The benefits the project brought with it were just as fleeting and unsustainable as the oil that now coursed through its pipes. Eight years after its construction, the transfer station at the end of Romeo Road has become a permanent fixture in the landscape, a memory of two years' prosperity and a rallying point of hope for the Steele City community wishing for the XL extension's groundbreaking to begin.

Diller

The approach to Diller, Nebraska (population 260) is heralded by a sign just north of the Steele Flats Wind Farm -- about five miles from Steele City and the Keystone transfer station. The strip of street lights dotting the sidewalks and buildings on Main Street shine on a community center, fire station, telephone company, Opera House-turned-event space, tavern, meat locker, filling station, picnic pavilion, and an ever-busy church. A grain elevator greets visitors from the south and an elementary school and athletic field border Diller's northern border. The village may be small, but events like the charity Shrimp Feed, the Diller Picnic and the various church events throughout the year have fostered a strong sense of community among the residents.

Head a few miles to the south of the town, past farmhouses and spindly pivot sprayers and you'll see a small sign that reads "CLASSIC DAIRY." A collection of outbuildings and barns, hulking machinery, and a farmhouse comprise the home of the Engelman family: Fourth generation dairy farmers and owners of own of the area's largest organizations. The Engelman's dairy has grown since its inception in the late-1800s from a small farm and milking operation to its present state of 1,100 heads of cattle, multiple barns, thousands of acres of cropland and its position as one of the county's largest milk producers.

"I like living in a small town, you know everybody, and you feel safe. You can go out and not lock your doors every time, you can leave your keys in your vehicle, you wave to everyone on the road and they wave at you. The small schools are nice, you know the kids in the classes and know who their parents are...I like the small community living."

The area's population has remained fairly level, hovering around 250-300 residents since the 1960s. In recent years large-scale local operations like the Engelman's Classic Dairy have uplifted the economy and brought more jobs and opportunity to the area. The wind farm project also provides a lasting benefit to the landowners around Diller as any privately owned land that houses a turbine is paid a monthly stipend by the project's management company - making the operation a sustainable endeavor in both energy output and income for Diller's population.

"A lot of people our age and ages close to us I feel like have come back lately, maybe left for a few years but are now coming back to raise their families in a small town...I think it comes down to being what we know. We all know what small town life is like and how great it was for us to grow up here."

The Engelman's young son Preston, now 12-years-old, has lofty career goals for his grown-up self. His two aspirations at the moment are either to play professional baseball for the Kansas City Royals, or to take over the family farm when his father and mother decide to retire.

"I want to stay around and work on the farm because I think it would be cool since my great-great-great-grandpa owned the farm, then my great-great grandpa owned the farm, then my great-grandpa owned the farm, now my grandpa owns the farm, and one day my dad's gonna own the farm. I think it would be cool if I own the farm, and my kids can. Or else I want to be a professional baseball player, because I like baseball a lot."

Already Preston and his two sisters, Alli and Sidney, help out regularly on the farm: feeding and watering the calves, cleaning pens, raising pigs and show cattle, and working at general chores around the farm as needed. Even though most of their friends live closer to downtown, Preston says that life on the farm has benefits he wouldn't be able to enjoy if he lived in the village.

"In big cities I get cramped up...like today you can look out your window and see views that are beautiful, like the corn and everything on the farm, but in the city you just look out and there's a bunch of big houses. I just like living in the country...I can have my pigs. And you can't ride a four-wheeler in the city."

The Future

The future of the two towns, huddled close to together in the middle of vast rolling stillness, is inherently tied to the local residents' lives and their connections to the land around them. The economy and residents of Steele City put their hopes into Phase II of a project that will boost their economy for a year or two -- while some Diller residents like the Engelmans put their faith into developing at home and reaping the rewards of sustainable energies like those the wind turbines provide. One town dying, one town thriving. Each continuing to live with the knowledge that even though the prairie wind will always barrel across the fields, one day the crude oil will cease to flow. Each continuing to wonder which community will still be there when that day comes to pass.

APPENDIX

PROJECT PROPOSAL

STACEY WOELFEL, COMMITTEE CHAIR

DECEMBER 2015

I. Introduction

I came to the University of Missouri with the goal of learning how to tell complex, thought-provoking, visually rich stories that reflect a thorough understanding of context and with a strong visual style. After beginning in the Photojournalism department and moving towards documentary film production, I believe that I have the fundamental training to make films about how I see the world. I aim to communicate to viewers of my work the emotional feeling of being in a particular place, or experience of an event in a visually-complex, aesthetically appealing manner.

Through courses like *Fundamentals of Photojournalism*, *Micro Documentaries*, and *Editing for Documentaries*, I have been given the training needed to begin this tremendous undertaking with confidence in my instinct for finding visually informative and compelling images, technical capabilities as a filmmaker, and reporting skills to find stories and tell them in a way that is truthful, accurate, and interesting to the viewer. In classes like *Qualitative Research*, *Mass Media Seminar*, and *Project Seminar*, I have been given the research tools to conduct a quality research project. Thanks to a foundation in art and photography from my grandfather, a B.A. Photography and Art History, and a lifetime of consuming and appreciating film and motion pictures, I believe I will graduate from the University of Missouri ready and excited to join the film industry, working on shaping and conveying stories through working through the ranks to become a cinematographer. Not only do I believe that by demonstrating all of the learned skills from this program I will be able to prove my knowledge and passion for the craft of making films, but through the filmmaking process I will learn more than I could have learned in just a classroom setting. By the completion of this master's project, I will say with confidence that it is the best possible result of the culmination of my technical skills, interpretive eye, and literacy of visual images. I would like to believe that the creation of this project will lead me to my first job post-graduation. From my first job, hopefully as

an assistant cinematographer, or focus puller, or whatever position I end up filling, I would imagine it will be in the trajectory of my chosen occupation that will lead to further positions and filming opportunities.

II. Professional Skills Component

The professional skills component of my project will be a short documentary, approximately 30 minutes, which will focus on the small town of Steele City, NE and its relationship with the Keystone Pipeline and the proposed Keystone XL extension. I have the necessary education training and professional experience to undertake this project because of my understanding of film theory, appreciation for long-form, narrative journalism, literacy of visual imagery, and knowledge of the importance of context in relationships within communities is in finding a narrative, following it journalistically, shaping it through editing, and determining its rightful completion.

Through the completion of my bachelor's degree, I received training on long history of visual imagery, both still and moving, and the theories behind its development. I learned what makes a successful, powerful, and striking image, and why. I learned from watching films and being exposed to art and photography how images can shape people's perception of the world. I learned that artists and filmmakers influence public perceptions and challenge viewpoints. In my master's degree focusing on photo and documentary journalism, I realized that journalists and filmmakers are capable of doing the same, but can use real life experiences, people, and events to paint a view of the world, which can alter public perceptions in much of the same way. I have been trained to use cameras to capture how I see things, and I have been taught how to report on events, people, and places, and how to accurately convey reality through my classes. I have been trained how to shape these observations and interactions with the world through editing, and the theory behind why we see what is presented to us, and to consider what is left out. Most importantly, I believe that I have the required skills and talent to become a part of a small community, wary of journalists, and become trusted by those who live in Steele City, and come away with an extended, multi-faceted portrait of the place and the people who make up that place, whose lives act as a lens that magnifies, comments on, and is a reflection of one part of the human experience in some way.

The project will begin on January 19, 2016. I will return to Columbia for the Spring Term, gathering my materials, finalizing equipment checkout arrangements, and contacting my subjects. I will

travel to Steele City, Nebraska on Thursday, January 23 to begin shooting, getting more familiar with the residents of Steele City, and homing in on interesting potential subjects. I will return on Sunday, January 26 to Columbia, where I will import, catalog and organize my footage. Monday through Wednesday I will be on campus, reviewing and finding moments in my footage that I deem interesting, and flag for further review. On average, I will be in Steele City for approximately 90 hours, subtracting a 10 hour drive round trip each time, which could yield up to 25-30 hours of shooting, assuming I shoot 5-8 hours a day, yielding 20-30 hours of footage per weekend. I will then be in Columbia fulfilling my Teaching Assistantship duties for Fundamentals of Photojournalism from Monday through Wednesday, as arranged with David Rees. I will spend up to 8 hours each day reviewing what I shot the previous weekend, and keep a running catalog of shots, scenes, subjects and places for future reference. I estimate that this will streamline the editing process once I begin to assemble the film. Assuming I travel to Steele City eight of ten weekends from the start of term through the end of March, that will yield an estimated amount of a total of 720 hours of time logged in Steele City, with an estimated amount of 200 hours of footage, according to the above parameters. For a project of this size, this will be more than sufficient. Once I begin the editing process, I estimate that the completion of the film will take far less time if I keep a detailed record of the footage shot, and have pre-viewed what I have captured, which will cut down on time spent hunting for footage. In March I estimate that I will begin editing, and anticipate logging 6-8 hours a day, working 5-6 days a week for three to four weeks, with a total of 36-48 hours a week, and 108-144 hours.

While I can form an idea of the film I want to make before I begin shooting, I must mention as a disclaimer that once I am in the field, working every day and filming residents of Steele City, the plan I have made to focus on certain characters or events may change. Keeping this in mind, I would like to concentrate my efforts on some of the “key players” that are related to the town and the Transcanada Corporation, who own and operate the Keystone Pipeline and are pursuing its XL Extension. Based off what I know at the time of proposal, the Eldean Banahan is the previous owner of the land the Keystone Pipeline pumping station is located on, as well as the 150 acres surrounding it. His family owns the land surrounding the pumping station, and from my research has his children living adjacent to his farmhouse. The owner of the only business in Steele City, the Salty Dog Saloon, knows the whole town, and witnesses much of the activity surrounding the Pipeline, whether they are protestors, Transcanada employees,

maintenance workers, journalists, et cetera. Lastly, the former mayor of Steele City and postmaster, Bill Scheele, grew up in Steele City, and knows everyone in the town. I will start with the owner and employees of the Saloon and rely on their trust of me and my work to serve as introductions to the rest of the community. I will also attempt to gain the trust of Scheele, who can also serve as an introduction to other residents. Lastly, I would like to get to know the Bahanan family, whether it will be Eldean or his children and grandchildren. At this time concentrating on these individuals is only speculation. I cannot say for certain, but I believe that they are key to the story of the town and figuring out its economic and social future. I will report back to my committee my findings over the first few weeks, and once I develop a direction will continue to follow it until I feel I have enough accurate information to convey the narrative I wish to tell. Throughout the semester, I aim to spend a significant amount of time receiving advice on shooting and reporting from my committee, and once it is ready to edit I intend to discuss my work and receive editing notes from Robert Greene.

Once I have edited and completed the film, I would like to try and submit it to as many film festivals as possible, in hopes one agrees to screen the film. I will also publish it on my Vimeo account, which will in turn be shared on all social media platforms I subscribe to. The 20-30 minute documentary will be included in the final project report, along with my field notes, that display the amount of work done to satisfy the “abundant physical evidence” requirement by the University. Once this is submitted, my committee comprised of Stacey Woelfel (chair), David Rees, and Robert Greene, will review the project.

III. Professional Analysis Component

A. Research Topic

Because I aim to be a cinematographer, and because my professional project will be a short documentary film, in this professional analysis portion of my project I will be conducting interviews with cinematographers working in both fiction and non-fiction, in which they will discuss their practice and the theory that informs their decision-making when capturing footage. Analyses of a cinematographer’s stylistic and visual choices that determine the film’s narrative, aesthetic, and character development, while seeking to understand framing theory applied to such filmmaking, in order to determine audiences’

reception to the themes, plot devices, and characterization will greatly improve my cinematic education and inform my decision-making for future projects.

B. Research Questions

Some examples of discussion topics could include the following:

- (a) their films' visual themes; development of character through visuals and how they view their framing of the character;
- (b) development of place through framing of locations; the presentation of a narrative that has been shaped through editing and how audiences perceive their deliberate framing choices in narrative and character developments;
- (c) having the filmmaker being present as a character, or absent, in the filmmaking process; visual influences specific to certain projects, or overall to their entire body of work;
- (d) the differences between framing a news-oriented work as opposed to a character study or issue-related film;
- (e) how they choose to cut away from one moment to another, one person to another, altering their composition and "frame" for the moment occurring;
- (f) the strengths and weaknesses of highlighting visual comparisons and differences and relying on what's in or out of the frame to tell the story or develop a character.

C. Methodology

I will conduct semi-structured video interviews with up to five cinematographers in both the documentary and feature film world, in order to begin to understand their theories behind cinematography, how it translates into their practice, and the visual decision-making that must be done to best visually represent what the director envisions for their film. As explained in the preceding theoretical framework for the analysis, I will apply the content of these discussions and their understanding of visual framing and the decisions that inform them and apply Framing Theory to further examine selections of important cinematographic work. Through this series of interviews, I aim to prove there is a tangible, identifiable connection between the theoretical framing of stories through inclusion and exclusion of information, context, and content, and the visual, moving image representation of that information within a frame on screen.

I aim to include cinematographers who will be attending the True/False Film Festival in March 2016, as they will be in town promoting (and in some cases, premiering) their films at the Festival. I will have worked with the programmers and heads of communication for True/False, as well as my contacts in my committee and in the Journalism School and will have a list of filmmakers who would be willing to speaking with me. I will have a makeshift studio set up in the Journalism school, complete with a backdrop, lights, and a two-camera setup. I aim to cap the total interview time at 30 to 45 minutes, so as to not make working with me a major time commitment, but also to help my editing of these discussion videos take less time. I hope to have conversations with cinematographers with different skills, backgrounds, and interest areas, in order to obtain the most diversity possible.

Examining a cinematographer's stylistic and visual choices that determine the film's narrative, stylistic and character development, applying framing theory to analyze the viewer's reception and understanding of the film's modes and themes, plot, context, characterization, et cetera, will provide significant knowledge to communities that rely on visuals to communicate, like those in film and news media. In the semi-structured interviews, I will pose a series of loosely scripted questions that will investigate the theory behind the cinematographer's chosen framing in films that they were director of photography for, chosen for discussion by myself, but with opportunity for the cinematographer to choose, as well. They will be purposefully open-ended so that the subject will have ample amount of time to fill with their explanation and discussion of their thoughts on the film's visuals. My questions will also refer to the value of judgments in their decision-making, and their placing value on some situations, peoples' expressions, and all visual content over others. In order to gather information needed to perform the analysis and reach the comparison I wish to prove, interviews in this manner should be conducted in such a way as to find "common understandings, get insight into particular experiences find out the motives behind decisions, get a view of informal procedures, consider apparent contradictions between attitudes and behavior, and allow respondents time to provide their answers" (Hannabus 1996, p. 23). This kind of answer in a conversation between an aspiring cinematographer and a practicing one is precisely the way to further understand decision-making in cinematography.

These answers, once recorded, will be edited, coded, and roughly transcribed to note important or especially applicable portions of the interview that apply to my research. They will be assembled into short videos comparing and contrasting their answers.

B. Literature Review

In Mass Media

The world of cinema is divided between fiction and non-fiction stories. Both kinds of narratives require a director to dictate and direct their vision for the final product, but in order to achieve their vision a cinematographer must make decisions on what occurs in each shot. This act of “framing” a narrative through strategic planning of the content of each frame completely determines how the audience will receive and process the information they are seeing. The film’s content and subsequent structure, regardless of its fiction or non-fiction narrative, is determined by the cinematographer.

In the consumption of stories, what is excluded from the frame is just as important or more than what is within the frame. I aim to explore the strategies and conscious decision-making of who determines the ‘agenda’ of the frame. Such knowledge is beneficial to filmmakers, audiences and all consumers and analysts of visual media of all kinds.

In looking at what is included and excluded within media, the same basic principles and practices can be applied through using the framing theory. Framing theory, in essence, recognizes what certain events, people, and places are given attention in media, and what is left out, effectively influencing the perception of the media presented within the “frame” of discussion. The theory can be understood as a more advanced form of “agenda-setting,” determined by those who create and shape the media consumed by audiences (Scheufele 1999). The act of analyzing the content within each frame, as well as the parameters for selecting and excluding such content, originated in Erving Goffman’s *Frame Analysis Theory* (1974), and is exceedingly relevant to our awareness of what images are presented to audiences. In fiction and non-fiction films alike, what is left ‘outside the frame’ is determined by the cinematographer, and realities are constructed and deconstructed based on what is presented.

Mass communication scholars have heralded framing theory for its proposition that “meanings, in everyday life, are the projection of the structure or form of the experiences in which they are embodied and

must be dealt with in terms of the ways in which such experiences are framed, in which they relate to, transpose...or cancel other frames” (Jameson 1976, p. 119). Entman’s “Framing: Towards a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm” (1993) says the “analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location...to that consciousness” (p.51-2), stating that the words ‘framing’ and ‘frame’ can be used outside scholarly discussion but are ascribed roughly the same meaning. He makes explicit the common tendencies among the terms’ usage, highlighting ‘selection’ and ‘salience’ as key:

to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe a point... (Entman, 1993, p. 52)

Entman (1993) provides the example of the “cold war frame” that dominated U.S. news of foreign affairs for most of the twentieth century with newsmakers, the dominant communicators, consciously choosing to present information (or text) on this topic guided by frames (or schemata) that organize and inform their belief systems. The text contains the frames, that are manifested in the absence or inclusion of “key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments. The frames that guide the receiver’s thinking and conclusion may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator” (p. 51-2).

Frames’ ability to highlight portions of information and elevate their salience to audiences proves important to newsmakers, but also to image makers. In a similar way, media (concentrating specifically on *visual* media) can be effective tools in constructing realities, impressions, and ideological messages within the minds of their audience (Fairhurst and Sarr 1996). This inherently unique quality of being able to carry messages through subtext just as well as with dominant text, can nurture new readings and understandings of visual material based on its ‘framing’ of an issue, event or person prevalent in media coverage.

Framing techniques in news media, according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) include the use of metaphor, slogans/jargon, use of objects with significant cultural and visual association, contrast and comparison, and placing a “spin” on a concept that conveys a value judgment. Because visuals are

inherently a part of documentary media, the use of metaphors, objects, and comparison can be easily identified within a frame or shot; in cinema, these techniques go hand in hand with creating themes, motifs, and narratives as a whole. In order to establish a visual world in which the narrative can take place and characters can live, cinematographers must work with the director to create parameters for their “universe,” consisting of locations, lighting, wardrobe — everything that appears in the frame has a reason, and every choice made serves the purpose of advancing the narrative (Brown 2012). The position of the frame is responsible for directing the audience’s attention for conveying a story (Brown 2012). The strategic use of the frame, and the inclusion of visual elements and exclusion of others, is what determine the narrative the audience sees, hears, and experiences.

According to Scheufele (1999) In visual media, this is true in a similar way. Framing theory follows the definition, but when applied to visual media, like cinema, gains another layer of meaning – in that it is a construction of reality. However, in fictional cinema the use of the frame and mise-en-scene is used to construct an imagined reality, framing in non-fiction is meant to corral a social reality present in everyday life into a ‘box’ in which the viewer of the documentary can understand the context and present reality for the characters in the narrative. In order to develop a narrative and carry it forward throughout the film, a director’s reliance must be in the (a) *development* of a theme, motif or idea as a premise, the (b) *exploration* of those through fragmented moments within that social reality, and the (c) *execution* through a construction of a narrative from ‘found’ elements within that reality. These combined together can be traced to the effects visual mass media has on viewers, which has been studied exhaustively since the beginning of the 20th century through today (Scheufele 1999).

Framing in Documentary

In the documentary world, films have been part of a “larger effort to spark debate, mold public opinion, shape policy...” (Nisbet and Aufderheide 2009, p. 450) all while the genre is becoming more commercially successful in recent years. As a result of changing trends in content, distribution methods and audience reach, documentary films are shaping public opinion to such an extensive level about political and social issues and figures, cultural identities, etc., in breadth, length, and focus that traditional visual coverage has lacked (Nisbet and Aufderheid, 2009).

With documentary film's origins in the first films ever created by the Lumière brothers' cinématographe and Thomas Edison's kinoscope, documentaries have long held the tradition of educational and explanatory modes in the eyes of the public. Yet more creative endeavors, with poetic and cinematic influences, grew in popularity alongside these expository films, rooted in the art of motion pictures and appeal of aesthetically interesting images. These progressions in medium, like any art form or mode of communication, have informed certain formal and ideological qualities (Nichols 1983) to the genre, often overlooked by scholars despite its influence on media and communication.

When watching a film, either fiction or non-fiction, what is inside and outside the frame carries tremendous importance. Cinematography, defined in a rather unhelpful way by Merriam Webster as "the art or science of motion-picture making," is much less nebulous and confusing in practice. On first understanding, a cinematographer's job might seem simple, but in reality their work is far more creative, complex and methodical.

The cinematographer, also known as the Director of Photography or "DP", is the person on the crew responsible for all of the visual elements present in the film. They determine and make decisions for every creative and aesthetic choice in the film, including composition, lighting, camera movement and depth of field, and color, to create an overall, cohesive aesthetic "feeling" in each shot, that when combined together unify and create a visual mood for the work. Not only are they responsible for the visual elements but are also utilizing the aesthetic choices in the film to enhance and drive narrative elements, character development and express the work's themes and motifs, while establishing and developing physical spaces, narrative and character contexts, and narrative and visual tension.

These decisions are not only essential to the work's overall aesthetics, but they are also an agent in creating the film's narrative structure: moving storylines forward, subverting and drawing the audience's attention to different aspects of the narrative, and creating tension all through what is placed within the frame and what is left out. In film, as well as its applications in documentary journalism, the practice of framing, and exploring the reasons for inclusion and exclusion to enhance and further a narrative are necessary to discuss and analyze, in order to further non-fiction film understanding as a whole.

Presentation of ideas by media and the exploration of how those ideas altered and influenced social attitudes has developed over time through the current day, in which "social constructivism" reigns

supreme—rather, that mass media (for the purpose of this project, documentary film) “have a strong impact by constructing social reality, that is, ‘by framing images of reality...in a predictable and patterned way’” (McQuail, 1994, p. 331), while being “limited by an interaction between mass media and recipients...” in which media “discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists...develop and construct meaning in public discourse” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 2).

Nisbet and Aufderheide in their publication, *Documentary Film: Towards a Research Agenda on Forms, Functions and Impacts* (2009), identify questions and themes central to documentary film’s validity and importance for scholarly study. They isolate the ideas of (1) cultural production, (2) normative and ethical questions concerning the roles of documentary filmmakers within the visual media landscape, (3) societal impact, and (4) the genre’s “interface with civil society and democracy” as areas ripe with material for further study.

First, the study of cultural production is concerned with the influencing factors that determine the subjects portrayed in the film, the stylistic conventions and the public’s interpretation of the film (p. 451). They cite Anna Zoellner’s research of participant observation and case studies to analyze the selection process for documentary programming on major broadcast outlets in Great Britain and Germany (Zoellner 2010). Additionally, they reference Naomi Schiller’s study of the circulation of the film *THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED*, a film that challenged dominant news media accounts of the attempted Venezuelan coup d’état against Hugo Chavez in 2002, in which she examines the film’s reception following its release in New York and Caracas, and its largely contested intentions and definition as being pro-Chavez propaganda or dissident political statement, observing, “the meaning of a film is shaped not only by its composition but by who is responsible for its circulation, when and where the film is screened, and the contextual information provided to the audience” (Zoellner, 2010, p. 500).

Second, discussion of the documentarian’s role as filmmaker, journalist, storyteller, artists, and/or entertainer is necessary to realize the intention, focus, objectivity, and scope of their project, and what “ethical and professional standards guide the production, content, and strategic use of a film” (452). Mention of a 2009 study, *Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in Their Work*, and their findings over interviews of 45 documentary filmmakers and practitioners that found filmmakers

“identified themselves as creative artists for whom ethical behavior is at the core of their projects at the same time that their ethical choices are affected by unprecedented financial pressure to lower costs and increase productivity,” mentioning responsibilities to their viewers, their subjects and their artistic vision were continually conflicting (452).

Third, considerations of societal impact challenges media theory’s ability to inform the social impact of the film’s release should be taken into account, particularly with the influence on an audience’s ability to understand a complex policy topic, how the narrative and perceived realism of the film influence the viewer, and the influence on the public who do not see the film, “specifically, how can a film reframe an issue relative to wider public understanding, news coverage and policy debate?” (453)

Fourth, the documentary’s “interface” with democracy and civil society should be continually questioned. Documentary film’s ability to act as a vehicle to engage people as viewers but also “members of affected publics and participants in the public sphere,” and in what ways can films be used to “sponsor or facilitate public deliberation” in light of their changing status as a highly commercial, marketable genre and a potential role shift, remaining as vehicles for public knowledge while featuring increasingly varying strategies, forms, and approaches (454).

Clearly those responsible for the images presented on screen are cinematographers, and there is a clear understanding that what is presented visually on screen, who is portrayed and in what manner, and the framing of events, ideology, et cetera, are all clearly determined by the cinematographer as per the director’s vision. This link is essential in studying films’ receptions and contextual information provided, noting that what is on screen is just as important as what is not, and is crucial in framing notable events, movements, and people in public life throughout history. The importance of visually transmitted information, whether it be television broadcasts or web postings, media coverage can garner support and opposition, transmit messages, and disseminate social and political movements and agendas.

Stover (2002) discusses this in “Framing Social Movements Through Documentary Films” and cites activist documentaries *The Weather Underground* on the protests of the 1960s, and the racial integration of Arkansas public schools in the series *Eyes on the Prize* (1987) as a prime examples of social movements portrayed in visual media, both at the time and long after events have transpired. The visual, stylistic, and artistic presentation of these event and movement-based stories, he says, “explicitly frame social movement

agenda and issues” (p. 57), “through selecting visual images, characters and storylines...highlighting certain themes, subjects and messages over others” in documentary films. While he discussed activism films, the same observation is applicable to documentary films as a whole, just as news media can choose to frame their coverage by selecting what aspects of the story, characters, and images to focus on, while subverting others.

In Frederick Wiseman’s films, like *Welfare* (1975) the viewer’s interpretation of the film is shaped by the very distinct organization strategies arranged to assert a “preferred reading” (Nichols 1986, p.19), one that inherently favors “the personal over the political, that seeks out and celebrates the interruptions of individual feeling and conscience in the face of institutional constraint,” a strategy, like others, as complex as fiction, that describe the visual material as “an effect of the film’s style or voice, just as fiction’s strategies invite us to believe that ‘life’ is like the imaginary world inhabited by its characters” (Nichols, 1986, p. 19). Wiseman, a filmmaker whom many consider a master of the documentary genre, argues that his films cannot be unbiased, unrelated to the biased process of choosing to make a film, emphasizing his own ethical obligations towards the portrayal of subjects and events in his films: “[My films are] based on un-staged, un-manipulated actions...what you choose to shoot, the way you shoot it, the way you edit it and the way you structure it...represent subjective choices that you have to make...” (Sponitz 1991). When applying this to documentary films, it becomes increasingly obvious that the creation of a documentary film requires aesthetic, thematic and narrative decision making, and within the results of such decisions, implicit and subtle information is presented to audiences (Abraham and Appiah 2006).

Because the framing of an image representing the subject is so evident in documentaries, a medium that consists of literal construction of a narrative in order to create meaning through bits of captured reality within a set ‘universe’ edited together to reveal a larger truth, audiences in turn respond through assessment of the material presented according to “social assumptions and habitual ways of seeing, including biases, that it brings to the film” (Nichols 1991, p. 93), what Neuman et al. describe as a constructivist media effects model (1992, p. 120). What Friedland and Zhong (1996) summarize perfectly, that frames consumed by the public serve as “the bridge between...larger social and cultural realms and everyday understanding of social interaction” (p.13), is imperative in understanding the frame as a device used in film to create a vacuum in which the set dialogue, character development, plot development, etc. exist, can

be considered practically identical in intention to constructing frames in documentary film, which aim to bridge the gap between an audience's past experience and present knowledge and a larger theme commenting on reality's society and culture.

The creation of a narrative, already existing but compiled together for brevity in documentary form, is explored in Entman's (1993) work on how media provide audiences with ways in which to interpret the events presented: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52).

Examples of framing theory applied to film include Dirse's analysis of the female gaze behind the camera (2013), in which she discusses the role of women in front and behind the camera, the female versus male gaze, and the importance of visual imagery executed by the cinematographer to assert gender roles and dominant values, while subverting others, and maintaining status quo in gender representation in film. In France, Levine discusses the role of documentary in Interwar France, asserting that documentary film serves as a "memory box" (p. 160) of that period in time, shaping the minds of its viewers through "mummifying change," a phrase coined by influential French film critic and theorist Andre Bazin, in discussing the views of film that rely on the audience's field of vision as transparent (Bazin and Gray 1960, p.8). The application therein "allows the frame to disappear, as does the framer, the viewer, and the multiplicity of human interactions that surround the moment of framing" (p. 160). Whether or not this can exist in the world of documentary film is debated, as many formal mechanisms allow the filmmaker choice to reveal their identities or make the audience aware of the camera and literal 'frame' of the image presented, but throughout documentary's many forms and modes since film's beginning, it has been viewed as a "pure vehicle for truth," an ideal with loft goals of life itself, without a frame. Yet, the obvious "framing" of information presented within films, and a loftier form of agenda setting via controlling what is within the frame and what is beyond it, cannot by its nature present life as "objective" despite its neutral appearance.

Through this research, it can be clearly inferred that the creation of reality in both fiction and non-fiction film is vital for audience recognition of themes and motifs, social commentary, and understanding of behavior of its characters. The reliance on the physical construction of these developed themes, i.e. editing

what the audience can see and not see, what they are aware of on camera and off, is what determines the audience's reaction to the work. Because we can study and quantify how audiences will react to fiction and non-fiction media, it is safe to say that what is shown on camera and what is in existence off camera both known and unknown by the audience, shapes public reception and determines its outcome and level of success in communicating a narrative. The expression of the narrative through cinematography, therefore, is vital to assessing audience understanding and the effectiveness of communicating a director's message. This is worthy of further study, and discussion by cinematographers and their practice will serve as an important evaluation of the very important decision-making that shapes public opinion.

Conclusion

Visual media, particularly motion pictures and the documentary genre within it, have a responsibility to present and disseminate information to audiences. The creators of such images have a unique responsibility in selecting the information, framing the information, and then disseminating it to the public. This portion of my master's project will seek to understand the reasons and theory behind such framing of stories; this work will be significant in defining and identifying such decisions and the theories that inform them in the world of cinematography, both for fiction and non-fiction films. It is my hope that with this information, other filmmakers will benefit from such information, other aspiring cinematographers will gain knowledge through the interview series, and that this project will continue to raise awareness in audiences of the positive and negative aspects of the visual frame and will encourage critical thought in minds of media audiences.

IV. Conclusion

The significance of the proposed Professional Analysis component will be of significant interest to all visual media, because it will encourage further interest in how the makers and framers of visual images perceive their products and encourage discussion among their audiences about how visual media is received. In the video interview series, as well as the accompanying research article about audience awareness of frames, my research will advance the study of visual frames shaping audiences' perception of the information presented to them. I will learn more about how I should consider my own visual framing choices, and how it influences the perception of characters, places and events.

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Analysis: True/False Interviews

I. Introduction

For my filmmaker interviews, I have interviewed Pieter Jan DePue (“Land of the Enlightened”) and Omar Mullick (“These Birds Walk”) on their use of framing and the relevance of Framing Theory in their films. I chose these filmmakers specifically because of their shooting styles, the similarities in themes of their films, and their methods in conveying a narrative through visuals. Additionally, my interest as related to Framing Theory was found in the coverage of characters and situations that are often overlooked in traditional news media of the areas in which the films take place. I was fascinated at the different approach to referencing the conflicts that dominate their traditional news coverage in each film, and how it was degraded in favor of the children’s perspective, sometimes completely absent from any violence pertaining to war.

I asked a series of questions on topics related to framing and narrative devices and will interpret their answers in light of Framing Theory, applied to documentary non-fiction films. Framing theory, in essence, recognizes what certain events, people, and places are given attention in media, and what is omitted, effectively influencing the perception of the media presented within the “frame” of discussion. This considers the level of representation of certain images over others in visual media, the *way* particular events or characters are presented, and how the narrative is described, visually or otherwise, in relation to how the audience perceives these presentations. The theory can be understood as a more advanced form of “agenda-setting,” determined by those who create and shape the media consumed by audiences (Scheufele 1999). Using the answers provided, I aim to provide a different interpretation and add more experienced-based discussion of a widely-used visual tactic. What is discussed then informed the decision-making in the construction of my own film, which I will elaborate on after each question posed and its analysis.

The purpose of these interviews and subsequent analysis is to provide evidence that there is a link between the theoretical framing of stories through inclusion and exclusion of information, context, and content, and the visual, moving image representation of that information within a frame on screen. Based on these interviews and the discussion on Framing Theory in the act of making, editing, and

presenting a film, I was able to draw my own conclusions regarding the changing of my approach of my own narrative and the presentation therein.

II. Discussion: Framing Theory in Documentary Film

I first began each interview wanting to approach the concept of framing a location and establishing a sense of place. Both these films took place in the Middle East, an area most people have pre-established opinions or impressions of. For these films, both centering around lives of children, and in a widely-covered region, I could see that the premise of each film wanted to challenge the widely-promoted idea about the region.

In the first place, I wanted to make film in Afghanistan. I didn't want to make with kind of a report about arm trafficking and drugs smuggling or something, and being embedded to with the Taliban unit or with a small camera and try to capture everything...One of the reasons also was that, I wanted to capture the landscapes, and the mountains and the environment in such a way that it became a kind of character [in the] film. I wanted to show also the very dramatic aspects of those landscapes and how these dramatic landscapes were kind of influencing the people and the characters, who were in the film. How it was influencing their daily lives, and yeah, with this approach I think from the very beginning we started making the film (DePue, 2016)

Pieter's response, above, indicates the intent to create a film that was very particular in its purpose –to not capture Afghanistan and the specific region as it has been portrayed in news media to Western audiences. In his intention to frame the surrounding landscape and shape the narrative on the inclusion of the landscape as a third character, in a sense it is anthropomorphizing the land and choosing to shoot, or frame, the landscape in such a way to provide it with a distinctive voice within the film. A voice that is contradictory, even, to the typical representation exhibited to Western audiences.

While his intention was from the beginning to, "...make cinema on, and with the word cinema, I mean like something, which was visually interesting to look at, shot in a very aesthetical way. I mean with the means of like, kind of a fiction film shooting, but implemented in a documentary style in a country in Afghanistan." Having this intention to film this story in a way that is not often associated with a country framed to the world as being violent and chaotic and dangerous, concentrating on the characters within a striking landscape allowed for more creative freedom in terms of cameras, experimentation with certain shots, and later in post-production allowed more freedom and options in the creative process.

I immediately in my own work identified with taking the exact opposite approach to shooting a place and the people within it, and had the established dominant story in mind throughout the entire filming process. Even if the benefit was just to inform my shooting style, the inclusion of certain images over others, or to challenge what that narrative did choose to include, by keeping the larger frame in mind I was able to visually plan my shots and their desired effect beforehand. I saw Steele City as a one-dimensional town, and that its presentation to audiences was lacking the human-based perspective immediately, even before I got to know Margo and her husband. The information I had gleaned from initial news coverage of the area was something I kept prominently in frame at the beginning, but was also a focus I began to steer away from as I learned more and changed my goal to shoot images that referenced what was already featured in a different context and related to Margo's personal life without a political overtone.

Omar Mullick, on "These Birds Walk" and the need for establishing a sense of place in films:

A professional work where I shoot a lot for television, it's very frustrating because when you're shooting B roll or establishing shots or trying to establish your place, it's very easy to do good establishing shots of place, very difficult to do great ones. You can very quickly do good ones if it means you've got a wide shot and you pan and you track, or you drop the camera, or you just frame up very nicely from a high angle of some city or town, where you're entering into, and that'll do the job. But, if you're really good, what you'll do is, if the narrative that you're there to do, you'll get the establishes, later, and you'll work the person or the character upon whom you're pinning the emotional resonance of the work or they'll lose the appetite to sit in.

And you'll pin them into that establishing, so that the viewers; feeling is that, you're a part of their world, and that's how you come into it. Because, I can't help but watch things and go 'Okay yeah they grabbed those establishings', they essentially place. They show that. The thing with our film in *These Birds Walk* was that, sense of place was tricky because I'd committed myself to a very distinct perspective with the children...But, we had this motif going through the whole thing of, children and people and adults bird-caged by the society around them. The sense of place for our film, we established, it didn't really become Karachi per se, but it became him running in confined spaces. Or then breaking out these confined spaces. (Mullick, 2016)

The development of the place for the film, was largely chosen for the purpose of building not just a physical representation of the surrounding area, but a more metaphorical representation of the environment the subject was feeling in his surroundings. For both "These Birds Walk" and "Land of the Enlightened" it is clear that the use of surrounding landscapes, and the specific shots of these environments, were chosen by the filmmaker to direct the initial impression of the viewer in a specific way - to understand

the place where the story is occurring, but purposefully excluding the traditional methods of establishing a sense of place through visuals and adopting a more nuanced approach of visualizing physical space.

For both Margo and the Engelmans, I knew that the establishment of place was essential to build a solid base for character development and could propel the narrative forward, in light of their surroundings, and in some instances, because of them. Margo's placement in closed, confined spaces in contrast with her in open spaces is a direct comparison with the intent to create an understanding of the tension in Margo's dual roles in town. For the Engelman children, the need to establish their stable environment and supervised versus unsupervised time was crucial in conveying through the framing of their activities both their possible futures and their attitudes towards it in the present time. Looking to place them within certain environments (the farm during choring, at home with their family, versus on carnival rides, or on their property) and reinforcing their visual framing through repetition of perspective seemed the best way to establish character development and reinforce the themes I wanted to convey.

Another topic posed to Mullick and De Pue was the presence of the camera and the level of awareness of audiences of the camera in the filmmaking process. As the camera lens acts as the physical frame the story is built through, Framing Theory draws much attention on the method in which visual images are included (shot through a camera and presented on a screen) *or* excluded from view of the audience. The noticeable ways filmmakers make visual frames and establish time constraints in the creation of films, and the methods they use to subvert or highlight any noticeable first-hand involvement were considered in their answers relating to their own films. The referenced value system of shots they sought to frame, their intentions in building these frames, based on their motives for narrative, and the representation of such values in creating scenes and developing themes proved interesting in their takes relating to their films.

Mullick's take:

...We're in a time where meta references, drawing attention to the camera, being aware of your own role intercessors, is rightfully becoming something people want to contend with. At the same time I do believe and David Foster Wallace wrote about this, and other people in terms of literature that, if you make the reference once or twice, that's fine, but you've got nowhere to go after that. Once you draw attention to it, okay, I'm making the film, to keep doing that, you've got to really be saying something, to justify watching that for 90 minutes. On the one hand, we tip our hat a couple of spots in the film and the kid says 'Oh, you're trying to be a big movie star for the

cameras, before the fight breaks out', and we left that in there because we wanted to acknowledge our own limits and position, in hopefully a subtle way.

At the same time, the opposite impulse and the main impulse for that particular film was actually not what was to try to disappear as much as possible...

...He [John Cassavetes] said something that I love, which is 'Sometimes even the camera gets in the way of the movie', so he's being a little glib and funny, but he's saying he wants to be so immersed in the experience, is how I read it, he wants to be so immersed in this experience, that even the freaking camera is getting in the way of the film. He's being a little funny but it's a beautiful way that what he's chasing is a perfect absence of any construct whatsoever and to just be utterly in the moment. (Mullick, 2016)

Mullick's take is fascinating because of his value of presenting an experience and the responsibility of the filmmaker to recognize the importance of editing yourself, checking your biases and perceptions, and, "acknowledge our own limits and position," as gatekeeper of visuals captured and their presentation with context and without. The idea of any absence of constructs is difficult to reconcile, because I question whether or not this is possible in nonfiction filmmaking. With an absence of script, planned shots, and a clear perspective developed and written in preparation for filming, fictional storytelling and its construction of narrative differs from documentary film in so many ways, but most importantly in my opinion, in regards to this matter – the role of the filmmaker and the difficulty that lies in developing a narrative and building scenes that support said narrative, with consideration the entire time of how their role changes what is being presented to them and their camera. I struggled with this, in the construction of Margo's story over time, and the constant checking of my own intentions and adaptations that resulted.

In contrast, De Pue, in post-production, went through a series of editors each with different takes on how the final version of the film should look. One topic of contention was on how much of the filmmaker and camera's presence should remain (lens flares, running out of film, camera drops, etc.), in what capacity should these characters be presented at the instruction and encouragement of the filmmaker on their actions, and whether these elements brought in a more human element to the film, or whether it led to a less 'authentic' piece of filmmaking, and its qualification as a nonfiction film. Once they landed on an editor with the very strong opinion to keep these 'human errors' in the final cut, the selective process of choosing images became more intentional:

This new editor was more for the opinion that, all the mistakes should be included in the film. For example, kids who were watching in the lens, and because they are watching in the lens, that you have like a very weird, as a viewer, like a kind of very strange feeling. Like, is this kid watching me or that you just come out of the fiction and that it's suddenly again a reality.

We were playing very much on this level. It became a hybrid film anyway, like we were playing really with fiction and documentary all the time. Also for example, flares and all these mistakes because of film, like this renal drops and everything should be included. That finally was, yeah, a big choice that we took, but it's, I think it helped a lot to tell also the roughness of Afghanistan. That nothing is perfect and that especially in Afghanistan, everything is brutal, and everything is imperfect, but everything. I mean, I'm talking about life of the kids in general. This was the reason why we showed on film was helping this even much more. (DePue, 2016)

The decision of DePue to include shots where characters were breaking the fourth wall, or Mullick's conscious decision to shoot his footage using a 50mm lens at the eye level of children, is a clear nod towards the audience in allowing them to either see the presence of the camera within the film or dictating the visual perspective in which audiences receive the film. It was with this in mind that I began to shoot the children and their environments differently and altered my approach to their story. My presence for them, during various events and across different scenarios, was acknowledged in a few ways, from glances at the camera, to intentionally framing images from their perspective at their eye level, or using a 50 mm, and had a significant effect on the resulting footage and the narrative formed from it. Like both filmmakers, the intention of physical framing within spaces and consideration of their presence within scenes, or even within specific frames, directly informed the narrative I wished to create.

I then asked both directors if they had any visual patterns that they consciously chose when filming. DePue's use of nature and its presence within the film was something he sought to intentionally film and have represented in the film - not just to continue the visual discussion on landscape and its characterization in the film, but also as a thematic trope used to communicate other more metaphorical themes:

...for example, nature elements like stars, sunrise, sunsets, clouds, the way our river was flowing, rain. Also, we did do those kind of elements were very important to me. I mean we tried to capture them all the time. We put up like, especially in time lapse shots, because I wanted to have the aspect of time very present in the film, so that's why there you will see there are many sunrises, sunsets, but in a very slow way.

Also, like shadows, which are moving over the mountains again that to have that aspect of the very impressive and dramatic landscape more, even more present. That's of course like, and always returning elements in the film. It's the meaning of that was, in the first place that still even though there is a war in this country and army after army is trying to invade Afghanistan to take

over power, to rule that country, that nature is, and the universe is still on top of that. They're going to decide about our globe and about Afghanistan in general, but Afghanistan in the film, but among the globe in general. (DePue, 2016)

Because the landscape is so heavily featured in the film for scene-setting, for character development, and as a catalyst for plot devices, it does make sense that he would choose to shoot these elements in the way he did. However, what is interesting to note is the conscious decision to shoot natural elements in a way that characterized them and enhanced the stories of the other (human) characters in the film. It gave the impression to the audience that there were larger forces affecting the lives of the characters, aside from what was occurring nearby and changing the physical and political landscape. This purposeful inclusion and editorializing of landscape footage is an important feature to note within the realm of this discussion on framing theory and relaying certain information in a particular way to audiences.

In a response to the same question, Mullick's answer provided a glimpse of how the visual theme of choosing to capture the boys within 'birdcages' - barred windows, barriers and use of enclosed spaces changed how the audience perceived the situations throughout the film, and the characters' role within these situations. Finding the visual representation in birds, in alluding the "street kids" put into homes and spaces that constrict their growth, development, and maturity, a metaphor was born out of an organic moment of watching them on the bridge, throwing pieces of meat to feed the birds nearby. Use of sound design through the score and visuals combined into an intentional framing of the audiences' understanding of the characters. I thought it was incredibly insightful that Omar always wished to show the boy running – and that association of action, and motion, and emotional upheaval as a child that accompanies his circumstances, informed his framing, and greatly influenced the presentation of his narrative:

...There was something enclosed about everybody's life, and then moments where they have to go. Even the ambulance driver, he uses his vehicle to go. There's something about childhood that's like that, you learn in one second and then you're in a fight- and that resonates as true to me, so, for better or worse I latched myself to that mask, but, it was around that process that the opportunity for a symbol worked. That I felt worked, and it was about dialing it in a way that was subtle and working it back from the beginning.

So, one of the other things we did was, there's a bird motif for that audio for the bridge, and that music for the bridge, we had other music for the opening of the film, and during the edit I said take that music and run it through the opening of the boy running. People were like 'No, no, no' and I said 'Just do it', and they did it and that became that. Because, I thought I want subliminally the motif of the birds is associated with Omar when he runs. (Mullick, 2016)

The importance to me of subliminally associating certain visual devices with the children when they're out in the open or indoors was so vital in developing character values and the exploration of their feelings toward their environments. Visually referencing the appearances of Omar to birds in flight when always in motion was the most compelling element of the film – the ability to understand his situation and his future in his unstable, constricting environment came through clearly in his presentation within each frame, based on these subtle references. I spent a lot of time in my own shooting to find a way to portray the Engelman children in such a way, with subtle references to their various environments and their behavior within them. For me, the ever-present influence of wind on my shots, my audio capturing, and the way my frames were constructed from figuring out a way to deal with and acknowledge this natural feature that had drastic effects on my footage, into using it as a device to frame my characters within their environments – Margo, when she is outside, surrounded by an environment that is changing and moving outside of her control, and the children, given opportunity and moving in accordance to opportunities presented to them, and their adapting to or exploration of their environments and the opportunities within them. Seeing their freedom at the county fair, for example, and their lack of adult supervision within an event dictated and arranged by adults. For once, we can see the children as their own people for the first time, separate from the expectations placed on them, their responsibilities at home, and their relation to their parents.

For Margo and Steele City, the importance of place and its role in relation to her health was paramount in my last iteration of her narrative. The responsibilities placed upon her by her family, years ago, the influence of the town and their dependence on her establishment and presence in the town, and the expectations she places on herself for her future, sometimes in conflict of what she wants for her future, were what I wanted to highlight. Seeing her at odds with her environment, in working long hours, her lack of breaks for her health, and the anxiety induced from considering her future in light of her health were important to highlight for me.

Lastly, I asked both to find any evidence of visual elements that were repeated in terms of framing the character - physically with a camera and lens in space, or through visual metaphors of what is included or excluded in the frame, or in shaping the character development through post-processing and choosing narrative elements.

Mullick, in answering, did not necessarily answer the direct question, but instead considered the element of audience reception and their editing choices for the conclusion of characters' lives on the screen. He discusses the elements of movement within the work, referring to camera movement and technical filming of the scenes, but also of the movement of the character within spaces, relationships, and their environments. The concept of *home* - a physical place for the characters, as well as a mindset inferred by the camera's presence and portrayal within the specific scenes included in the final edit of the film - is being wrestled with by any person viewing the film, which contends with their own experiences, biases, and impressions of the characters in the film, the area the film takes place, and their experience with both of these elements while watching "These Birds Walk."

Yeah, it's humbling, we're a couple of years from the film and I shoot a lot for television and I even shoot a lot for other people, but I am- I think movement, movement is very important to me and movement resonates, and I see that there's something stewing in there...I think there's something there, that I haven't quite fully worked out. And then, it's humbling because you start looking at films and you go 'Yeah, that thing that I thought was them, is also my filter', and I've pulled out of this situation something that is maybe a little bit more about me than I'd like to admit. I think that's better left at that level, but there's definitely things there, biases, filters, emotions, yeah.

And so, I've tried, now in a very long winded way, going 'What's the point of that?' I've tried to, and I am very responsive to film when it is both challenging, open ended and you don't know actually, what the filmmaker thinks...At the end of our film, we're like, maybe not ambiguity, you know things about these characters, more so than you did an hour and half before, but, you don't know what's going to happen to Omar at the end of that. When I shot it at the time I felt defeated, I was like 'Oh my god what a crap ending to this film', the parents don't hug him, they knew where he was all along, life goes on.'

So...What does home mean for this runaway boy? Is it the street? The home he left? Or the institution that he's at? In there it's also universal hopefully, what does home mean? So anyone watching it from outside has to contend with this question throughout. What does home mean for these kids, or these boys? And they deal with their own dysfunctional homes or functional homes or homes with issues or not issues, but everybody deals with that issue and that was the way to rid the film of the emphasis on the other 'These are just kids, aren't they poor and stuff like that and oh, you know, I'll give ten dollars', right? That thing that I hate.

So, structurally the film works this way. It's very deliberate and it's very structured that way because we shot a lot of kids and we shot a lot of narratives...It is very constructed because the experience that is the intention that drives that is that you get a hopeful and a negative and then you follow this character to something open-ended, that you have to leave with. (Mullick, 2016)

For Mullick, the intentional framing of the children in the film, the intentional decisions to include specific scenes and plot elements that give audiences a very clear impression of what their lives are like, or what being in that situation would be like, the intentional ambiguity of the ending is a challenge to the

framing that has been intentionally structured throughout the film. The lack of certain ending, for me, is a comment on the framing itself, harkening back to the issue with framing theory and what to do with what is presented to audiences, after it is completed? At the end, does it present an accurate depiction of what happened, and leave it with a 'satisfying' ending? Or does it establish, maintain, and develop expectations in the mind of the viewer, and then allow the audience to draw their own conclusions based on the facts and visual evidence they have just consumed?

In my own film, I wrestled with leaving the children and the Engelman family in a certain way. I didn't want it to be a straightforward plot structure, because even though there is an absence of conflict per se, it wasn't without conflict in considering their own lives. For Alli, Preston, and Sidney, the consideration of their futures laid out and prepared for them by their family for generations, in contrast with another possible alternative, can weigh heavily. While they are just kids, the expectations for their behavior, their attitudes towards their environment, and their involvement with building their own future are very evident as dictated by their everyday life – choring, involvement with their animals, responsibilities for the farm and accountability with their family, etc. Seeing them both acting in accordance with these expectations and outside them, where they can just be kids free of responsibility, was something I wanted to establish in effort to build a sense of a far-off decision influenced by small, everyday moments.

For my coverage of Margo, this concept came especially into consideration with her activity outside the bar. For the town, they see her as bar owner, community activist, and a person trying to continue her family's legacy, even at great personal cost. At the end, the audience, who has been led to understand her situation, given a payoff that acknowledges her stress-inducing behavior by her mother, and leaving her story open-ended seemed the only way to properly create an arc fitting of her situation, that in real life, outside of the frame, is very much uncertain. The importance of addressing that level of ambiguity and uncertainty of the future, the level of character development throughout the film, and the overlap between the two can hopefully create a narrative that is satisfying but also lends itself to more questions than answers, particularly about her value system, and the value system placed on her decisions by the filmmaker.

De Pue discusses the importance of collaborating with the children he was filming to continuously check that their actions within the frame were as realistic as possible, even if they were improvising a

hypothetical situation posed to them or were reenacting something that they have seen. For DePue, and for the film, the importance of the narrative is that it is based in truth, even though elements of it were based on reenactments, or as a moment acted out in reaction to a scenario posed by DePue.

Yeah, and then many other elements were, sometimes we did some horse riding. I was like, I didn't know. Sometimes we said, okay, we're going to do some horse riding shots now, because I needed to have like their departure from the mountains in high speeds. I said to them, "Let's do a race, because I can do horse riding too." I was jumping on the horse and I was sitting on the horse. On one hand I was holding the super 60 millimeter camera up and I was shooting it in high speed.

We start shooting and then it was like galloping and full speed over the plane. Just the only thing was like, okay, I said to Gholam Nasir, "Just stay close to me, because I need to have your face from very close, and I want to see the expression of your face when you're at fully racing." It was for them a kind of a game. It was like, okay, we're going to do some horse riding or we're going to do some shooting and we're going to hunt or whatever, and then so we start filming them when they hunt. I tried again to capture the right moments out of it.

...If I was talking about ideas, about, "Okay, now you have to collect opium, because you want to convince the father of the girl that you're in love with to marry with her." This was something that he understood, because it was happening in his village for example. He was also showing me, I mean he was, during the preparations I was understanding what going on. I was collecting all these little elements and we talked about it, and we wrote actually together the story in a way...It was all about giving a context, which they know, which they liked and where they could play themselves actually. Then in this context that I was creating to take out the right things.

...I needed to give them a lot of freedom, because even for myself, I did not had the ways to make the environment around them really strict and organized, because there was no organization. I needed to leave them like this and I need to capture the elements that I wanted to capture, so that was creating also a much more natural aspect in the film, which was finally seen to be an advantage.

De Pue's use of collaboration with his film's subjects, and the insertion of direction and guidance towards his subjects, as 'non-actors' in their portrayal of their lives, but also in reenacting elements of the narrative, was critical in their shooting methods, in dictating cameras used and what scenes were included in the final edit. While the process of gathering footage, developing a narrative based on this collaboration, and the final culling of footage to create a cinematic, almost directed film was very intentional and based in traditional fiction directing methods, the resulting film presented a narrative of a reality that wasn't quite real, but was true in its study of its characters movements, expressions, and mannerisms within situations either arranged or presented to them. This level of accuracy within a complicated narrative structure, filled with reenactments, hypothetical scenarios, and real-time situations, was visually and psychologically true to

their own characters, despite its variety of catalysts in which produced the responses of the characters in the film.

In comparison with my film, the lack of direction for Margo's narrative on the filmmaker's end, and instead the creation of a more 'directed' structure in the editing process, differs greatly from De Pue's method. While the level of direction is present at the filming of the children and their actions, with Margo, within the Salty Dog and other environments she finds herself in, it became important to me to capture all aspects of her life – personal and private, as an outsider – to then find a higher narrative device, aside than plot devices. It was my intention to have audiences understand the predicament she is in, but also understand that despite knowing what she *should* do, accept that she most likely *won't*. For De Pue and his film, audiences are privy to a reality constructed by the filmmaker that is open to interpretation, given partially to its subject matter but also reinforced by the way in which he constructs his narrative, informed especially by shot selection and its character development. For my film, as I edited, it was my intention to create a narrative that felt like Margo's life was shaped by outside forces, and not necessarily from the editorial hand of the filmmaker/editor. What happens to Margo, and her future at the bar or in Nebraska, is unknown to her and the audience.

III. Conclusion

In my posing of the questions to both directors, I aimed to discern more about the use of visual and narrative framing and its place in documentary films, and how each director considered the role of major elements of the Framing Theory in relation to telling a story and executing a successful narrative. The presentation of footage, the inclusion of characters and events, consideration of footage and the way these events were shot, etc. are all included in this query, and are particularly complex with a documentary film.

Within this manner of "agenda-setting" that is commonly used in news pieces, Framing Theory can be utilized in both traditional news stories, fictional representations, and documentary coverage. To revisit the scholarly discussion of this Theory, Entman's "Framing: Towards a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm" (1993) says the "analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location...to that

consciousness” (p.51-2), and delineates between the presentation of information to the audience and their reaction, and the manner in which the information was collected and the audience’s interpretation that follows.

For both directors, the importance of camera placement and inclusion of specific moments over others, and the shaping of these moments either by outside factors, director interference, or physical restraints, was paramount to creating the narrative they envisioned. So too, was the conscious decision of camera awareness of the subjects and the audience during filming and editing. The inclusion or exclusion of the editorial side of the camera, and its presence that is conveyed in certain cuts or shots, is a motivator for the narrative, as it is in mass media - but it is important to note that unlike in other methods of media, news in particular, that the physical frames of images did not take advantage of audiences’ awareness of what was being included vs. excluded from the film. The directors, and both of the films, did not seek out ways to exclude the camera’s presence during filming, or convince the audience that what was being presented to them was accurate and occurring in real life regardless of the camera’s presence.

The construction of realities in both films, centered around young boys growing up in the midst of struggle and what is presented as a stressful environment, can be interpreted in a variety of ways by audiences. As an agent in creating the narrative structure, the cinematography of each film has creative leeway in constructing this reality. For these two directors, based on their answers, conveying the setting and its influences upon the characters’ lives is the most important aspect of the film - not necessarily how this impression is delivered, or in what way such information is conveyed visually. As such, by framing the films around the physical environment they take place in, the directors have been able to establish the landscape as its own character and influence the audience’s way of perceiving the other subjects and their stories.

CHANGES MADE TO PROJECT FROM ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

Instead of creating two short films of the interviews of the two filmmakers, I decided that attaching a transcript would be sufficient, instead of video files. The video format I believe is not necessary to understand the conversation topics, as the focus should be on the content itself. Its presentation, while interesting on film, is more efficient presented in transcript form. Transcripts can be found in the media folder. Within the project proposal, please find my analysis of the transcripts in the above section of the appendix.