Care Packages

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Care Packages

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Film, Theatre, and Communication Arts

of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts, with University Honors

and Honors in Film Studies

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May 2013
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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will describe and analyze the process of creating my thesis film, titled Care Packages. I will recount the production from start to finish, focusing on each specific phase of production – this includes any act associated with the writing, planning, shooting, and editing of the film. I will then reflect on my work in self-analysis to decide the success of my film.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I cannot remember the first instance that drove me to study filmmaking. If I were asked the question today, I would have to answer with the assertion that movies tell stories – filmmaking, by most definitions, is another means of storytelling – and ever since I was old enough to write, I wanted to tell stories and remember them. I do not remember ever being very good at writing stories, and even today I cannot say that I have mastered the art. I do remember, however, the first instance in which I held a video camera with the intention of telling a story, and the new possibilities that I saw it had granted me. I was afforded a new set of rules – new tools of expression – and it seemed so much easier to tell a story with pictures rather than with words. I wanted to understand the language of pictures; I wanted to know how a succession of certain images could create a clear story; and, quite simply, I just wanted to tell stories. I had just discovered a new and interesting method that seemed to promise more simplicity than prose, and this is what I have chosen to study, years later, as an undergraduate. In broad terms, it is largely what my thesis film, Care Packages, was designed to investigate: filmmaking as storytelling.

I began to conceive Care Packages shortly after completing the Advanced Project in Film Production class (FTCA 4530) that yielded MACHINE WASH COLD (2012): an Official Selection of the 2012 New Orleans Film Festival, and a short film that I am still very proud of today. I learned a large amount of my filmmaking knowledge from the
curriculum of this class and from the experience of making *MACHINE WASH COLD*. The production was small and thankfully one with many controlled factors – i.e., one location, few actors, and a short script. However, with *Care Packages*, I wanted to challenge myself with a full-scale production – the fullest I could afford myself as an undergraduate student. I wanted to be able to have a clear understanding of a realistic, multi-faceted production, but mostly I wanted to ensure I learned as much as I could before I graduated. In a sense, *Care Packages* was an attempt to incorporate into a production new challenges that I had not dealt with in the making of *MACHINE WASH COLD*, but that were important to consider when making any film of any length. In short, *MACHINE WASH COLD* was a first pass at film production, whereas *Care Packages* was designed to delve into film production in a more complex manner.

The story idea of *Care Packages* was developed over a very long period of time, changing in many different ways. What I have come to understand as the final version of *Care Packages* is still true to the underlying concept that existed in the story’s inception: *Care Packages* is an unhappy love story. Looking at the overall plot – this includes, specifically, the action and chase elements – it might be hard to classify *Care Packages* as a straight love story. However, throughout the project, I wanted to focus on what were, to me, the most realistic qualities of the story – the character interaction and the degradation of an intimate relationship. I felt that if I could make these attributes of the story real, I would have a film with actual depth, rather than something like any other end-of-the-world action flick. I followed this direction so closely that I decided to treat all story elements outside of the characters’ interactions as externalizations of their relationship – for starters, the crumbling post-apocalyptic setting reflects a deteriorating
relationship. In a manner of speaking, I wanted to make a divorce movie that also followed a few genre tropes of post-apocalyptic movies. For story inspiration I studied some of my favorite break-up movies: *Kramer vs. Kramer* (dir. Benton, 1979), *Blue Valentine* (dir. Cianfrance, 2010), and *Like Crazy* (dir. Doremus, 2011). Additionally, I drew ever so slightly from post-apocalyptic genre film, such as *Mad Max* (dir. Miller, 1979), *The Road* (dir. Hillcoat, 2009), and *Escape from New York* (dir. Carpenter, 1981), for stylistic influence concerning elements of costuming, set dressing, pyrotechnics, score, and the like.

In the following chapters, I will outline my approach to producing *Care Packages* from start to finish, and I will weigh the effectiveness of my decisions and filmmaking process.
CHAPTER 2

Writing

Care Packages is the first film that I have adapted from another work. During my sophomore year as an undergraduate (2010-2011), a group of friends and I started a creative writing blog with the purpose of sharing our work for criticism and collaboration simultaneously. Our idea was to create short plotlines that would take place in the same setting so that each author could make attempts to connect the storylines, at times continuing unfinished storylines written by other authors. The title of the blog was Zombies Ate My Neighbors, named after the popular video game. The subject matter? Zombies, of course. The first iteration of Care Packages was the continuation of a storyline written by Rachel Waldroup, entitled Reminiscence, which focused on two survivors of a zombie apocalypse, male and female, who fall in love because they are, as they assume, the only people left alive. At the time, I was not aware of what it was about Reminiscence that inspired me so much. Perhaps I was simply excited to be a part of this creative writing experiment. I do know, however, that my perspective on the subject changed after I chose to make Care Packages my thesis.

After completing MACHINE WASH COLD, I knew I wanted to attempt something bigger. I did not have any new scripts in the works, so I reviewed some older stories I had written, searching for anything that could be rewritten or adapted for my thesis. Care Packages was originally written in screenplay format, but at the time it was written, I had no intention of ever bringing it to the screen – I thought I would not have
the resources to create the post-apocalyptic setting. With the confidence of having completed *MACHINE WASH COLD* on a small budget, I geared up to make *Care Packages* a reality as my thesis project. After my junior year as an undergraduate (2011-2012), I began a summer long sprawl of revisions to the script. These began with simple changes – removing the tangential zombies and focusing on designing the setting and action to reflect the internal conflicts of the two major characters, which I gave the names Jack and Mel. The majority of the revisions came after a breakup in the midst of the rewriting process. Much like the characters in my story, I had entered into a relationship too quickly and it was cut short. This presented me with a new understanding of the script, which I amended largely to reflect the feelings associated with this particular breakup.

Throughout rewrites, I shared the script with my producers for feedback and criticism. They responded with much of the same concerns as my thesis advisor, Hamp Overton, when I showed him the script at the beginning of the Fall semester of my senior year (2012) as an undergraduate: there was not enough explanation behind the characters’ motives, and there was not enough character development. The script I had written was structured to tell the backstory of Jack and Mel through flashback vignettes – short scenes that recall key moments throughout the timeline of their relationship’s falling apart. I felt this direction served the subject matter well, as interpersonal relationships are often messy when they do not work out – it is sometimes hard to say what makes love end, especially in a short film! I also liked this vignette structuring on a conceptual level – the vignettes were like small doses of a story. These “small doses” have a thematic parallel with Mel’s closing voice-over monologue: “Our love. Our emotions. Our care. We dish
these out in small doses. Little packages.” Nonetheless, the story was perceived as confusing and disjointed on account of a lacking exposition. To add to the problem, I had not fully realized that I was working with a continuation of another story – I had not been thinking of character exposition during rewrites because I was under the impression that this had been done for me already with Reminiscence. However, I wanted to achieve a standalone piece, and Care Packages had by now evolved into something so different from Zombies Ate My Neighbors that it needed reworking on all levels, including exposition. In the end, I took the best of both worlds and reworked the flashback vignettes to show a smoother transition through the falling out between Jack and Mel, and to give more information about the characters and their choices throughout the story.

The last major rewrites occurred after securing the wonderful locations we found in Hammond, Louisiana and Ponchatoula, Louisiana. With these locations, I was able to stage more of the story outside and during the day – two factors that I had been avoiding to save the believability of my post-apocalyptic world. Originally, I felt that it would be too hard to make an exterior setting look post-apocalyptic during the day, unless we were able to find a location outside of the city to shoot in. However, it was by near coincidence that we were given permission to shoot in and around my co-producer’s uncle’s cement factory and junkyard locations. The rewrites in this phase refer directly to existing locations in Roger’s Ready Mix, the cement factory.
Budgeting and Fundraising

The first anticipated budget for *Care Packages* totaled around $5,500. I had no idea how I would raise the money, but I knew I had to start early on. Working with my producers, we devised a fundraising strategy that I am still very impressed with. Although I cannot say we mastered the art of fundraising (we failed to raise the anticipated $5,500 goal), I am proud to say that we learned the tools of the trade. We learned a lot about the process – enough to set an example for my future endeavors in crowdfunding.

Our first objective was to involve our fan base. We wanted to generate hype about the upcoming film within our community of family and friends, at the very least, as these would be the primary funders of our project. We started by creating a free website¹ using Facebook pages and began a comedic video series by uploading short videos to YouTube and posting them on our Facebook page. We called the series *Care Packages: Production Diaries*. Videos were posted weekly, unless other engagements, like school or work, got in the way. In these cases, we made it a point to post a picture or link a video that pertained to our pre-production work. Each week’s post would comment on the current phase of pre-production; video titles include: “Meet the Producers,” “Casting,” and “Behind the Music.” In an attempt to create even more talk about *Care Packages*, we began the “Red Cross Picture Contest,” promising an original song dedicated to the winner, to be selected at random. It was free to enter – entrants needed only to post a picture of themselves with a red cross on our Facebook page. The resulting song was

¹ www.facebook.com/carepackagesfilm
accompanied with a comedic music video that was passed around various social
networking sites by our friends and our friends’ friends. This strategy of weekly updates
and sharing on social networks continued until we began our online donation campaign.

I had heard before of graduate film students using websites like Kickstarter.com
or Indiegogo.com to raise funds for their thesis films, but I knew that each had their own
advantages and disadvantages. I had also heard of creating a custom website and funding
through PayPal, but my producers encouraged me to pursue something more mainstream
and trusted, for the sake of the funders. We chose Indiegogo\(^2\) and launched our campaign
a little over a month before the first day of shooting. Through Indiegogo, we raised a total
of $3,600 – of which a significant portion was lost to the transaction rates of Indiegogo
and PayPal. The result of our online fundraising campaign was something more like
$3,200.

Other means of funding came from the “Care Packages Post-Apocalyptic Party
for a Pre-Apocalyptic World” fundraising party that we planned with The Other Bar on
Freret Street in New Orleans, Louisiana. We placed a cover charge of $5 for admission
and we served food by donation; all sales made at the bar went to The Other Bar. We also
had a computer station set up for direct donations to our Indiegogo page. As for the
festivities, we screened our newly launched Indiegogo video and various short films,
including the work of graduate student David LeBlanc, who had agreed to help with the
fundraiser. The party raised nearly $600. The funding that paid for the party, which
totaled close to $150, was generated by walking bake sales conducted on the University
of New Orleans campus every Thursday.

\(^2\) View the Care Packages Indiegogo page with promotional video at
Throughout fundraising, my producers and I had been working to pare down the budget as frugally as possible, still leaving enough room for unexpected costs. Thankfully, before the campaign ended we had cut the budget to finally reflect about $4,200[^3] without the feeling that we had lost anything necessary to see the film through production. In the end, we had raised all but $500 needed to fund *Care Packages*. I fronted the remainder myself, and we finished production $200 under budget.

[^3]: See *Appendix B: Budget*
Casting

The casting process for Care Packages was a new experience for me, one that afforded me with a much better understanding of the importance of holding proper auditions. With my previous film, MACHINE WASH COLD, I held auditions for a very small amount of actors. I essentially already knew who I wanted for the lead roles. Similarly with Care Packages, I had hard and fast ideas about who I would cast as my leading man, so much so that I had largely rewritten the role of Jack with the actor Mason Joiner in mind to play him. I also had a strong inclination to cast the actress Lucy Faust, who I had seen in other University of New Orleans students’ films, as Mel. However, when I learned Lucy was unavailable for the shooting dates, I turned to my casting director and producer, Lizzie Guitreau, who strongly implored me to take on a large casting process, despite my fixation with casting Mason as Jack.

Lizzie published a casting call on Craigslist.com and Facebook.com. We also advertised through our Facebook page and sent emails to the actors in the UNO Filmmakers Club Actors Database. The response was phenomenal. We scheduled only three days of first round auditions, so we had to turn down many of the applicants. Auditions were held in early October (2012) at my workplace, UNO Media Productions, in the Liberal Arts Building on the University of New Orleans campus during after hours. I was able to use the camera setup in one of the media classrooms to record all the auditions for my review at a later time.

I learned a lot about my script from simply seeing it performed during auditions. I was able to narrow down Jack pretty quickly. Mason Joiner gave me exactly what I had
expected. In a sense, he was how I had been envisioning Jack throughout the pre-
production process – hotheaded, cocksure. However, I was very amused with Jacob
McManus’ audition. Although he did not necessarily sound like Mason Joiner’s portrayal
of Jack that I had envisioned, he was able to deliver a vulnerable Jack that I had yet to
coerce from the other actors that had auditioned.

On the other hand, I learned a lot about Mel from seeing various actors’
interpretations of her. I learned that the sides I had prepared were garbage. Even the more
talented actors who auditioned for Mel had to struggle through the sides, and I had to
direct them with thin material. When I auditioned Kaitlyn Heckel, however, I was
floored. It had been a long day of auditioning Mels, and I was sure I would never be able
to get the character right, let alone cast her; but when Kaitlyn auditioned, I knew she was
Mel. Formerly a stage actor, Kaitlyn brought to the table a surprising amount of nuance
that is not often seen in theatre actors. I was sold by her performance, even with the
cheesy lines that I had written as sides. At this point, I knew I had to cast a Jack to match
Kaitlyn, which was assuredly unexpected, as I had already set my eyes on Mason Joiner
as Jack.

When it came down to it, I held callback auditions and sampled different Jack and
Mel pairs with different sets of actors. The decision was made after a week of watching
audition and callback recordings. After each performance I found that it was harder for
me to get the variance that I wanted from Mason. He seemed to be too much of my
interpretation of Jack, and it was my intention to open up the characters to the actors,
after having seen the variable interpretations in auditions. Additionally, Jacob and
Kaitlyn are a couple in real life, and I saw that their chemistry was not something we
would have to spend time to foster. They were the closest, intimately, of all the pairings, but also the most ferocious in terms of argumentation. Their acting together was too real to pass up, and the thought of directing a real life couple to play a couple in my film was intriguing. I am quite shocked, looking back at it all, to see that without such a long casting process I might have casted someone other than Jacob.

Before production, I took time with Jacob and Kaitlyn to study each scene and each decision their characters make. I allowed them to create their own character backgrounds, which were surprisingly in line with my instincts, most of the time. Other times, they gave me ideas about their characters that I feel have saved my movie. My cinematographer, Bruno Doria, had scheduled a camera test shoot with me in early November (2012), and we brought the actors along to see how they would appear on camera in costume. The result was a long car ride to our location in Hammond, Louisiana – the entirety of which was filled with conversation between Jacob, Kaitlyn, and myself about character. We started from the unaltered script, and I asked them what they thought each scene meant or how they would see their characters acting if certain situations were to arise. We explored character backstory, something I had given little thought to. They once again delivered so many ingenious ideas for things that I felt had been shortcomings in my own writing. I was certain I had casted appropriately because I was then able to see so much of Jacob and Kaitlyn in Jack and Mel, having worked with them creatively to construct the characters of my story. When we arrived at Roger’s Ready Mix in Hammond, I had the actors toss out the script and improvise their scenes. From this, I am not ashamed to admit that I have stolen quite a few of their improvised lines for the final draft of the script.
Locations

Location scouting for Care Packages began with the start of the Fall semester of my senior year as an undergraduate. Madeleine Hebert, my initial locations manager, began scouting areas in the city of New Orleans that were the most isolated. She came back with a plethora of photographs of parks and gas station convenience stores, but nothing seemed private enough for the post-apocalyptic world that we wanted to create. We devised a plan to secure the abandoned Six Flags New Orleans theme park for shooting, keeping close contact with the Industrial Development Board of the City of New Orleans. We got as far as providing proof of insurance⁴, but we never heard back from the Industrial Development Board. We decided to abandon the plan when my producer, Sarah Smith, broached the idea of shooting in her hometown of Ponchatoula, Louisiana.

We found a secluded gas station, Cash & Dash, which just so happened to be owned by one of Sarah’s high school colleagues. During our location scout at Cash & Dash, a man rode up on horseback, once again confirming the isolation of the location. Inside the convenience store of the gas station, we struggled to imagine how to use the cramped space, while at the same time we marveled at the look of it all. It was something out of the past – faded colors and classic advertisements – which coincided nicely with our artistic idea of setting⁵. Jay Coffey, the part-owner of Cash & Dash and an old friend of Sarah’s, was extremely compliant, and assured us his availability to be present during the late shooting hours.

⁴ See Appendix C: Jazzland Proof of Insurance
⁵ See Production Design
While we were in this neck of the woods, we met with our co-producer, TJ Burrescia, and scouted his uncle’s properties in Hammond, Louisiana – a desolate cement factory – Roger’s Ready Mix – with a junkyard on the side. During the location scout, my creative team of producers, my location manager, my cinematographer, and I all began reimagining aspects of the story to fit this picturesque location. The ride back to New Orleans included a gigantic brainstorm of new possibilities. The setting seemed to supply any set dressing we could want for our world. The machinery of the cement factory used industrial power that we would be able to use to power large loads of lights for night shoots. The only downside to the location was its nearness to the highway, a big problem for recording sound that needed to seem like an empty, post-apocalyptic environment. I can admit to the large amount of sound problems we experienced during production, but I have to argue that it was a problem I was aware of in scheduling and planning the shoot. I can only hope that I have done my work, preemptively and in the post-sound phase, to hide the reality of the highway sounds.

Another problem with shooting in Hammond was getting a film crew comprised of New Orleans based students to the film set in Hammond for two weekends in a row. I knew I would have to pay gas, so I had my producer Lizzie Guitreau organize a carpool list to minimize the number of vehicles travelling. The next challenge was finding a place to house my crew over the weekend shoots, as having an entire crew to commute back and forth each day would not only be costly, it would allow for problems in scheduling and promptness and also add travel time to the already long working hours of the shoot day. Out of sheer luck, TJ owned a cabin right outside of Roger’s Ready Mix. It had been

See Editing
abandoned for about a year, but we managed to clean it up over the course of two day trips to Hammond. The cabin was well insulated – perfect for the cold weather we would be facing with shooting in January. It also included two bathrooms – a plus when it came to the hygiene of a large crew – and a kitchen with a working stove and refrigerator. To top it all off, the cabin had been used as a storage space for countless mattresses that had been removed from TJ’s aunt’s motel across the road during its remodeling. We had hit the jackpot – free housing for a crew of 30 plus, with every floor lined with king size mattresses. I truly believe that Care Packages would not have been possible without the community this cabin afforded the crew. Production consisted of predominately night shoots – 4PM to 4AM – ending each night with an exhausted crew. However, each morning after wrap, we would all return to the cabin to see the sunrise and watch dailies, recounting the impossible feats we accomplished the night before. There was music and merriment and the true joy of community that I feel truly held the production together.
Directing

As a director, I try to distance myself from my crew and focus on the actors. I will often bring my actors to a quiet, secluded spot on set and rehash our rehearsals. I do not like to give my actors much direction unless they ask for it. My initial strategy is to steer their decisions toward the performances that we built during rehearsals, but I normally have large amounts of faith in my actors’ creative instincts. When it came to the actual production dates of Care Packages, I mostly was there to comfort my actors in between takes. If I noticed an actor struggling during a performance, I worked out the confusion; otherwise, I let them give me their own, unadulterated performances. This technique had worked well for me during MACHINE WASH COLD, and I am also quite impressed with its results in Care Packages. However, the enormity of the production of Care Packages, compared to the scale of MACHINE WASH COLD, taught me many valuable lessons on directing that I had not imagined before.

I realized a significant shortcoming in my style of directing after the first day of shooting Care Packages. As it so often happens on student-run film sets, the first day of shooting was a disaster. On the way to Hammond, one of our equipment trailers broke down about 10 minutes away from the set. A team of grips was assigned to rescue the trailer while I was shuttled to set. Everything was behind schedule, and we could only work with the equipment that had already arrived to set. As director, I made it my task to delegate my 3 producers to oversee set operation as I checked the preparedness of each department of my crew. I was fetching batteries, changing film – everything that a director has no business doing. By the time the actors arrived to set, we were still unready
for the first shot of the day, and I was still running between departments. Hours later when we began the first shot, my actors and crew were all uneasy, as was I. I had been reflecting anxiety about the time schedule when I should have left that for my AD to resolve. I was worried about the broken down equipment trailer when I knew I already had one of my producers working on it. I realized that although it might be important for a director to oversee the production in full, it is impossible for any one person to manage it all. It makes more sense, as the director, to facilitate the entirety of production – to delegate tasks across departments and, most importantly, to keep set morale in a positive place. This is something I had heard before in countless FTCA classes, and it was something that I believed I understood; however, experiencing it firsthand had a strong impact on me.

Another large concern I had while directing Care Packages was the wellbeing of my cast and crew. The shooting schedule called for predominately exterior night shoots, which meant cold weather and stunted sleep patterns. On our most difficult night shoot, my cinematographer, Bruno Doria, came down with a fever. Making Care Packages was a battle, as most films often are. Coffee, vitamins, cold medicine, and space heaters were made readily available in each of our shooting locations. As much as I hate to admit it, there was a few nights that we were forced to shoot passed schedule by an hour. I can only show appreciation to a crew that would work so hard to complete my film. Even before production, I made it a goal to build a crew of filmmakers that were friendly – most had worked together before – and would have a positive attitude on set. This careful crew planning combined with the community atmosphere of the cabin is what I believe
fostered a hardworking team of filmmakers, and what brought about the ultimate success of the project.

*Care Packages* afforded me a first chance to direct a child actor, something I had never imagined that I would attempt. I had seen some reel footage that Bruno shot of the young actor, Alexis Hart, acting in a class environment. She already looked the part to play the Young Taker in the script, and she seemed mature enough. I had been told she was 13 years old, but when I met Alexis, I learned she was actually only 8 – but what maturity she had! It was almost comical how she addressed me – very professionally and with an air of young adulthood. Even though her scene in *Care Packages* was short, working with her was one of my favorite moments on set. I had to focus hard on her performances, and I had to formulate responses that she could understand to give her proper direction. It is a lot different working with a child actor in that they do not necessarily operate the same as an adult actor, nor do they use the same language that an adult actor would use. I feel like her scene was one of my favorites to direct because I had to step away from the logistics of the shoot and work creatively with her and Jacob. I was in the right place as a director.
Production Design

When I began pre-production for MACHINE WASH COLD, I had certain ideas for the look of the movie, but I was in the dark for a large majority of the specific artistic choices that I needed to make for the film. MACHINE WASH COLD being a parody of the slasher genre of films, I knew that I wanted the film to look characteristic of the genre, but I didn’t have specific ideas on everything. Appreciating the fact that I may not be the most experienced in production design, I worked with many suggestions from my art team to build a look book of references, and before I knew it they were bringing me all sorts of props and set dressings that were perfect for our vision.

With Care Packages, I approached my production designer, Lauren Chriceol – who had worked with me before on MACHINE WASH COLD – to read the script and bring me her ideas before having discussed with her any particular vision of my own. I was interested in her original ideas; and, quite frankly, I did not have any hard and fast ideas about the specific details of production design, other than the broad sense that it needed to look ruined, dirty, and abandoned. We met for coffee and Lauren brought with her a prepared look book. She had a few different ideas to try out on me, but she was mostly interested in just one. She asked me, “What time period is the story set in?” I told her that, for me, the setting was not specifically locked to any time period – I only wanted it to serve as an externalization of Jack and Mel’s relationship. I added that Care Packages was not a work of science fiction, and it was not a futuristic post-apocalypse. She showed me her favorite collection of reference photos – 50s era clothing, brand labels, and furniture. I hopped on the idea instantly. To me, the fashions correlated to a
forgotten time. I could already imagine articles of set dressing that suggested age – the characters would find themselves in a world that never progressed – conceptually, a relationship that never reached fruition. We agreed to leave the time period undetermined, but to sprinkle in options from that past era.

The look of the care package was a result of collaboration between Lauren and myself. She gathered various materials that fit my description of a care package and we compiled something that reflected the tarnished nature of the post-apocalypse and combined a homemade look that suggested Mel’s craftiness. The medical supplies were donated by Alberto Doria, who works in a hospital setting. The vintage props were collected and purchased from various props houses and antique stores. The motorcycle belonged to our Assistant Camera Operator, Alex Payne. I was given permission to attempt a few stunts if I paid for repairs to get the bike in working condition before the shoot.

I gave Lauren the freedom to choose her own art department. She worked with Evi Geiger to decide the look of the costumes. Evi made purchases according to the design that they had worked out. Her most difficult task was to organize clothing for all the Takers needed in the film. She scoured thrift stores and even did a bit of shopping overseas in her homeland of Germany during the winter holiday. She tarnished and tore the clothes to suggest the rugged life of a post-apocalyptic world.

Lauren joined us for a tech scout of the locations and was relieved to find the abundant amount of junk lying around the cement factory. For her, these were the perfect set dressings. I was amazed by her ingenuity on set – hiding cables and light stands behind or underneath piles of junk. I know there are countless shots in the final cut of
Care Packages that extension cables and light stands hidden behind articles of “set dressing”. As for the appliance maze chase scene, we were afforded a vast layout of refrigerators and washing machines lined up in neat rows outside of the junkyard. I remember that before the day we needed to shoot the appliance maze scene there had been very little planning or explanation of what was needed. The night before, Bruno and I drew out a few crude diagrams of how the maze should twist and turn. On the day, Lauren and her team of grips and art assistants were moving refrigerators and washing machines and junk to form something from our crude sketches, while everyone else shot a few short scenes as a skeleton crew in the cement factory. When we wrapped at the cement factory and made our way to the next set we were blown away by the work that had been done: an intricate appliance maze had already been built and pre-lit, ready to go.

The biggest challenge for Lauren was dressing Cash & Dash, the convenience store. We had only a limited amount of time to shoot our biggest scene inside this convenience store during its after hours. The idea was to transform a fully functioning convenience store into a looted mess. We had permission to do just about anything we wanted in the store, so long as we returned it to a clean, working condition before it opened back up at 7AM. Although most of the action only occurred in few select areas of the convenience store, we needed to dress the entirety of the store for the tracking dolly shot that would reveal the whole back wall of the store. The ultimate course of action was a combination of removing articles from shelves and covering aisles with tarps and scrap wood⁷. I was delighted to see some of the artistic choices that Lauren made without

⁷ All scrap wood was donated by Alejandro Tefel, who works in construction and remodeling. We had a large selection to choose from, and we decorated our selections with spray paint and mud.
my prompting: in the convenience store scene, there is a crutch that Jack never uses, instead it remains leaning against an aisle; and, my favorite, there are two cots in the dolly shot that rest on separate aisles, suggesting that Jack and Mel no longer sleep together. It is ideas like this that make me proud to have given Lauren such freedom in production design.
Cinematography

Before I even began concerning myself with finalizing my crew, I needed to lock my Director of Photography. Bruno Doria had fulfilled the role in my last film *MACHINE WASH COLD* and had also DPed the UNO Filmmakers Club film that I directed my freshman year, *Retribution* (2010). He has been a jack-of-all-trades to me — every time that I have worked with him he has offered me valuable guidance in just about every level of production. He was my first choice for *Care Packages*, and thankfully he was on board, after giving me notes on my script – something that does not happen enough when I am looking for help with rewriting.

Our first decision concerned how we would distinguish the look of the film between flashback scenes and present day scenes. We already knew that we were going to use Bruno’s RED Scarlet camera, a state of the art camera that captures video in 4k resolution. We had been running camera tests and calculating required hard drive space to store such large amounts of digital media. After watching the film *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (dir. Zeitlin, 2012) together, we remarked on the effects of the Super 16mm film that the movie was shot with. The picture quality was something grungy and otherworldly, and it seemed to us a perfect look for *Care Packages*. Bruno had worked with film before, briefly, but I was still cautious on gambling such a large production on something I had no prior experience with. However, I did want to take on the challenge of film, and viewing this project as an extension of my education, I wanted to be able to say that I had worked with film before graduating film school. After much thought, I offered the scenario that was successfully achieved in the film *Blue Valentine*: we would
shoot the present day scenes in digital and the flashbacks on 16mm film. With a generous donation from my advisor, Hamp Overton, we were already 800 feet of 16mm color negative film closer to our dream of shooting on film. All rolls of film that we shot with were donated from various sources. Every scene shot on film was also shot with the RED camera as a fail safe. We had budgeted our film usage so strictly that, in the end, we only shot around 800 feet of film.

After making our decisions with picture mediums, I came to Bruno with a shot list of how I wanted the story to be cut together, and he offered a few ideas for shots here and there. We outlined each scene as a map that tracked the different dramatic beats throughout the story, and from this we made sure our choices in storyboarding reflected the drama of the visual storytelling. Our biggest collaboration in storyboarding was the motorcycle stunt. Before production began, our actor, Jacob, did not know how to ride a motorcycle. For shots of Jacob on the motorcycle, we devised our shotlist to allow for Jacob – riding the motorcycle – to be pulled in a trailer, as the camera recorded from the back of the pickup truck that pulled the trailer. After principle photography, motorcycle owner and assistant cameraman Alex Payne gave Jacob a riding demonstration, and we were able to capture the shots of the closing montage with Jacob actually riding the motorcycle. For the stunt shots, Bruno and I collaborated with Willie Weber, a friendly stunt coordinator who had just moved in from Arizona. Willie was a friend of our first stunt coordinator, who had to back out due to an immediate move back to California. Willie always showed enthusiasm in teaching us the safest way to accomplish what we wanted – to have a motorcycle slide into a crash. We had started to build a rig that would attach a camera to the motorcycle as it slid away from the crash, but we had to cut the
shot due to a lack of available time. In the end, the preparation for the stunt amounted to a few minutes practice time for Willie. We set up two RED scarlet cameras to capture the stunt from multiple angles at once and we ran it as a series. Willie was always eager to please, constantly asking, “Do you need it again?”

One of Bruno’s biggest challenges was figuring out how to light a world that had no electricity, and to do this at night. Using John Carpenter’s *Escape from New York* as reference, we decided to bring in the element of fire. The Takers would carry torches in the exterior chase scenes, and in the climactic scene, the clearing would be encircled with flaming torches and fire pits to light our wider shots. We enlisted the help of our friend Brandon “Snakebites” Melancon, who had trained for his certified pyrotechnics license, to design the torches and fire pits, and to work with my producer Tyler Laperouse to organize safety precautions and procedures on set. Hidden in every scene with fire were buckets of water for emergency extinguishing. Bruno also worked with our Production Designer, Lauren Chriceol, to design milk jug lanterns that would help motivate lighting for the interior of the stock room and convenience store. In the script, both scenes lead into each other continuously, although they were actually shot in separate locations. I like to think that the jug lanterns offer a nice continuity of space between the scenes. In the end, most of the lighting was accomplished by blasting as much light as we had to get a proper exposure at night. I have to commend Matt Guidry, our gaffer, for painting such wonderful pictures with such a very limited amount of lighting equipment. Unable to call in a light big enough to light an entire area, he carefully chose certain spots and background objects to light in order to give our final image a well-exposed, nighttime look.
The editing phase for *Care Packages* was a brand new experience for me. It was my first time working with 4k RED footage, and my first time working with film. Our workflow for editing 4k footage was lengthy and drawn-out. *Care Packages* was one of the first 4k projects to pass through the university’s finishing suites, so we were learning about the software as we were using it. The finishing software we used was a program called Scratch. RED footage was brought into Scratch and transcoded down to a 1080 resolution for editing. Editing with RAW 4k footage would be near impossible, as the RAW files are so large they will not play back in real time on workstations with even above-average capabilities. After transcoding, which was plenty to figure out in itself, I moved to editing the 1080 resolution footage in the Avid editing software. I shared each new cut with my advisors and took their notes until I reached a picture lock. From this picture lock, we moved back into Scratch to connect the edited 1080 resolution footage to the original RED 4k footage. Coming back into Scratch, we found inconsistencies in certain clip positions, mostly throughout scenes 3 and 10 – the convenience store scenes. The problem arose from having repeated timecodes on separate shots. We had been running two cameras while shooting in the convenience store, there been a mix up in media labeling and dumping that night. The duplicate timecodes confused the Scratch program so that it was unable to point to the correct clip and clip position, thus producing inconsistencies in the timeline of the convenience store scenes. It was a simple fix of sliding the clip into the right position on the timeline, but it was an important lesson on organization and record keeping for the future. My favorite experience with the post
workflow was the forensics work I did with Rob Racine, my second reader, to better understand the Scratch software.

The 16mm film was shipped to Fotokem in Burbank, California, to be processed and printed. Our plan was to transfer the film to a digital medium by means of something called a “poor man’s telecine.” Using our friend’s 16mm projector, we projected the film onto a white sheet and captured the footage with the RED Scarlet camera. Unfortunately, the projector had not been properly maintained: its rollers were smudged with grime and parts of the film were tarnished. My thesis cut of Care Packages does not feature the original film footage. Instead, the 4k footage we shot as fail safe for the flashback scenes has been colored to reflect the look of 16mm film. However, I still own the original negative, which I will use to reprint the tarnished sections of the print so that I can later add them to the film. 

For post sound work, I used the university’s Nuendo software. I had been studying the program in Rob Racine’s sound classes, but using it for Care Packages was another learning experience. I wanted to put myself into a position to learn the most I could from the university’s film program before graduating, and perhaps it was too much to fit into a single semester of post-production. I will say, however, that Care Packages was the perfect driving force to push me to learn the new software. Whereas most films tend to relax or die in post-production, I could see my determination and work ethic grow throughout the finishing phases of Care Packages. Thanks to Rob’s sound classes and many hours spent in the editing labs, I have learned not only to properly mix audio levels, but to smooth transitions and hide the reality that my film was shot near a busy highway.

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8 See Appendix F: 16mm Film for a DVD with original 16mm film footage.
After completing *Care Packages*, I can now say I know what it is like to truly see a film through post-production.
The musical score for *Care Packages* was composed by Taylor Clements, my bandmate and former roommate. Taylor had worked for me before on *MACHINE WASH COLD*, and I felt that our communication was easy, both being musicians, and having been musicians in the same band, no less. With *Care Packages*, I had definite ideas for the score, but I found that the recording sessions were mostly trial and error. I liked the idea of working closely with my composer, rather than sending a cut of my film to a composer and having him score on his own. I liked the learning involved in the scoring process. As we worked with different sounds and moods, Taylor and I would ask ourselves serious questions about the purpose of score – its necessity, its absence – and often times we would experiment with different instruments and voicing.

Our first endeavor was to compose a song for the opening title sequence, which would be Mel’s theme. I knew I wanted something minimal, so we eventually decided on a simple music box melody. This musical theme recurs as a full orchestra in the starlapse scene on top of the school bus and again, in yet another iteration, when Mel is dying. We embodied Jack with heavy heartbeat drums, to characterize his fear and chase anxiety, and electric guitar, to give him distinction from the string voicing that characterizes Mel. The Takers were characterized by scattered solo tom drums and rattling chains that gave them a foreboding presence – often times in the film they are never seen, only heard. With these musical themes, I was afforded another language to with which to affect our audience.
CHAPTER 3

Self-Analysis

_Care Packages_ has granted me many opportunities that I would have never encountered in the normal curriculum of an FTCA undergraduate student at the University of New Orleans, and the most beneficial aspect of this experience is that I was educated above and beyond the normal curriculum because I was able to drive my education with little outside intervention. I was given permission – and plenty free reign – from my thesis advisor, and from the Honors Department to accomplish what I felt was most important to my education. At times, it was daunting to assume the role of being my own teacher, but I could always go to my advisor, for guidance – a luxury I am incredibly grateful for. Thankfully, I had a team of producers to guide me into the work necessary to see my film to completion. I was able to accomplish specifically the things that I had wanted to accomplish, and I was learning the complexities of advanced film production on all levels – from pre-production to post-production. After having completed _Care Packages_, I have planned to continue working on the project through distribution – screen-testing the film to audiences and fine-tuning my product to be most acceptable to a film festival audience. I plan to showcase my film at the 2013 University of New Orleans Film Festival, and to continue screening it for family, friends, and colleagues for opinions and suggestions. I will combine this data with my knowledge of the characteristics of award winning short films – something I have studied as the Vice President of the UNO Filmmakers Club.
Although I recognize my shortcomings in various fields of the production, I realize the importance of *Care Packages* as a fulfillment of my degree, as a large array of lessons learned. In all honesty, I am mostly filled with pride to have succeeded at what seems impossible to me today – things like working a crew of 30 all night long, an hour away from home; working with pyrotechnics, stunts, and child actors, and tackling new technologies with speed and efficiency. If I have learned anything from *Care Packages*, it is to challenge myself with something new each time I attempt a project. Otherwise, how would I learn anything new? How would I create anything new?
CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

As for the overall outcome – the product of my thesis work – I can only hope that Care Packages tells a story about the different forms of love. With what little screen-testing I have already done – friends, colleagues, and advisors – I have come to find many errors as well as triumphs that I will recount presently. I received the most extensive feedback from my thesis advisor, Hamp Overton, my second reader, Rob Racine, and my former filmmaking partner, Kyle Moser, who I have co-directed many short films with before, but who now lives in Austin, Texas.

Out of the three, Hamp was probably the most acquainted with my project. He had followed the film for a semester before it had been shot, and he already knew the twists and turns of the story. His largest suggestion was to have more mystery surrounding the Takers, to give them less screen time so that the audience has less of a chance to make any conclusions about them until the pivotal climax scene in which Jack realizes that the Takers are just the same as other people, just the same as himself – desperate for help. I have taken his advice and cut back on the Takers’ screen time, as well as having added musical cues (the tom drums) in order to bring attention to their presence without depicting them visually on screen.

Rob was likely the furthest from the project, having come aboard after the film had been shot. With his viewing of the rough cut, he admired the look of the film, but had lots of confusion concerning the story. He seemed to understand the progression of the
story, but as for the motives of the characters, there was not enough information to explain why they were doing what they were doing. This is ultimately a shortcoming in my writing. I attempted to tell a large story in a short screenplay, and thusly did not include enough information to guide the viewer. It could likely be that my choice of the “little doses” flashback vignettes will confuse audiences. Taking Rob’s notes concerning the flashback transitions, I enhanced the flashbacks with color cues and musical cues to establish that these events take place in a time removed from the current timeline in the convenience store setting, in hopes that this would clear up any confusion.

I believe that Kyle gave me the clearest advice, as we have established our own language of criticism and commentary, having worked together on countless film projects before. It was very beneficial to receive opinions from an old partner. Kyle screened the film for a group of his cinephile friends, and they took notes regarding their favorite and least favorite aspects of the film. Overall, they felt the flashbacks were jarring and abrupt – another reason that I worked to smooth out the transitions in the flashbacks. They were amazed at the beauty of the film, particularly the starlapse scene on top of the bus, where Jack and Mel share a romantic moment. They praised the drama of the climax, but also criticized the over-the-top “Hollywood” elements (as they described them) such as the vertigo shot, where the Takers surround Mel. There was a mixed reaction to the musical score as Mel is dying. Some felt that it magnified the beauty of the scene, while others felt it was overly sentimental. All agreed that the acting was superb with the only criticism being that Jack had more lines than Mel. They felt that the believability of Mel’s character was related to the amount of lines she had. Jack simply spoke too much.
With all of these criticisms and compliments, I believe that I have not necessarily accomplished all that I set out to achieve with Care Packages. I am discouraged by the test audiences’ confusions with my story, but I aim to refine my work throughout development and distribution. Conversely, I am incredibly proud of my work. I am amazed by my achievements and I am delighted to know that I have grown as a filmmaker. Care Packages will always be a monumental addition to my knowledge as a filmmaker.

I do not assume any answers with my film; I only attempt to investigate the different forms of love and how they might clash together. I hope that audiences will enter the film with excitement and curiosity, that they follow Jack’s journey of understanding with sympathy, and that they leave the theatre having evaluated the ways that they love the people in their life, from their closest partners to complete strangers.
CHAPTER 5

Filmography

Cianfrance, Derek. 2010. Blue Valentine
Doremus, Drake. 2011. Like Crazy
Garcia, Lee. 2010. Retribution
Garcia, Lee. 2012. MACHINE WASH COLD
Garcia, Lee. 2013. Care Packages
Hillcoat, John. 2009. The Road
Miller, George. 1979. Mad Max
Zeitlin, Benh. 2012. Beasts of the Southern Wild
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Shooting Script

*Note: the script has been merged into this document as images and the size has been reduced to save proper script format.
CARE PACKAGES
an original screenplay by
Lee GARCIA

inspired by a short story by
Rachel WALDROUP

Sunday Best Pictures
lleegar@gmail.com
lmgarcia@uno.edu
337.309.5351

Draft 3. Fourth Revision
1/13/13
EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (16MM) FLASHBACK

Jack runs for his life, heaving heavily. LOUD HISSING. He shoots intermittent glances behind. Torches and flashlights appear from over the ridge and make chase.

Jack ducks behind a derelict truck as Takers run past. He clutches his left leg - a BEAR TRAP chews his calf.

INT. STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

A CLEAR BAG containing an assortment of MEDICAL SUPPLIES. A hand inserts a roll of adhesive tape into the bag.

An open KNAPSACK contains a set of pill bottles, bandages cartons - the remnants of your local pharmacy. The hand scans over the tubes of ointment and chooses one.

A shelf CANNED GOODS is scooped into a backpack by JACK (20), unkempt, trying to grow a beard; turns, stares deeply - MEL (23), fresh out of college, working underneath the harsh light of a lantern. She’s writing a note.

Jack packs an ITEM WRAPPED IN CLOTH into his backpack.

JACK

Mel. It’s time to go.

MEL

Yea, I know. This is the last one.
I promise.

Jack moves over to Mel and snatches the note.

JACK

(reading the note)
"As a student of medicine, I find it my moral duty to share these things with you, even when it seems the entire world has gone mad. Maybe we’ll see each other when all of this is over."
(toasses the note)
It’s over. Just me - and you. You gotta give it a rest. Mel. They’re close. They could be here tomorrow.

MEL

Who?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JACK
You know who. The Takers.

MEL
I don’t want to hear any more ghost stories.

JACK
There are dangerous people. Not everyone’s like you - not everyone wants to help. They steal, they kill. Mel, they wanted to eat me!

MEL
You don’t know that. And still you keep running away from superstition instead of helping others.

JACK
I’m trying to help you! Maybe you can’t see that, but -

He reaches to brush her hair, but she fixes it.

MEL
... This is the last one.

Crushed, he leaves.

Mel pulls the knapsack around her neck. The care package in her hands, she smiles - like receiving a pat on the back. She clicks the lantern off.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Jack moves through the aisles. He removes his backpack and shoots a glance to the stock room.

He removes the item in cloth from his backpack, unravels it to reveal a PISTOL. He regards its power.

He removes a TATTERED CARE PACKAGE from the backpack.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (16MM) FLASHBACK

An open empty field, overgrown. In the distance, a derelict school bus. Jack stands and drags his leg across the field.

JACK, panting - face covered with sweat and tears.

He struggles to climb into the bus.
INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY (16MM) FLASHBACK

Jack sits staring blankly at his feet.

- The jaws of a BEAR TRAP around his leg - blood is seeping, dripping from his pants leg.

He tries to unhinge the trap and passes out with a thud.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT (16MM) FLASHBACK

- A hand tears open Jack’s pants leg.
- An EPIPEN slams down, painkillers pushed in.
- Jack wakes in a jolt, sucking in air.

The needle is removed and thrown aside. Jack is hyperventilating, reading his surroundings.

Mel, with all the concentration of a medical doctor, continues treating the wound.

MEL
It’s gonna be alright. It’s not broken, but I still need to fix it. Bite this.

Tears stream from Jack’s eyes and he slows his breathing. He bites on a stick and grunts.

MEL
I gave you some painkillers. You might feel dizzy?

Jack is chewing the stick. It falls out and he smiles.

JACK
Who are you?

MEL
You’re very lucky I found you. My name’s Mel.

JACK
Little Melon. I think I love you.

Mel smirks a laugh. She leans in and pecks Jack on the cheek

MEL
I won’t lie to you: this part’s gonna hurt.
7 EXT. STARS - NIGHT (16MM) FLASHBACK

The two lovers lying on top of the school bus. The sounds of
shuffling, breathing, lip-smacking.

Later, they gaze at THE STARS over:

JACK
What do you see?

MEL
The stars.

JACK
We’re alone.

MEL
(playful)
Does that scare you?

JACK
No. No, I’ve never been so happy to
be so alone.

MEL
I don’t think we’re so alone.

JACK
How would you describe it?

MEL
It’s like the stars: so many stars
out there. Maybe we can’t reach ’em
but they’re out there.

JACK
You want a rocketship?

MEL
Got one?

8 EXT. OUTSIDE CEMENT FACTORY - DAY (16MM) FLASHBACK

The side of a derelict 18-wheeler.

JACK (O.S.)
Mel! Come see this!

Mel packs her knapsack with a care packages, she crosses
over to Jack, who is rolling a motorcycle on the ground.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JACK
Look at this!

MEL
Careful.

JACK
It still needs gas, but we can siphon something or--

They turn the corner and begin walking away.

MEL
You want to leave already?

JACK
No, I was just - we can move around now. ... Hey, come on. We can’t stay here.

Jack reaches to hold her hand, but she dismisses it.

MEL
I wanted to leave some things behind.

JACK
What do you mean?

MEL
We’re moving too fast, Jack.

They approach the abandoned cement factory in the distance.

EXT. CEMENT FACTORY - DAY (16MM) FLASHBACK

Mel, frozen, red-faced.

Jack empties Mel’s RED CROSS bag, tearing at the care packages inside, spilling pills and bandages everywhere.

MEL
Stop! Jack!

They lock eyes. He strides toward her, winds up and slings a care package at her. It falls at her feet.

JACK
You have a problem, you know that? Everyone is gone. And I’m right here - Look at me!

Mel begins to scoop up the care package at her feet, but Jack snatches it away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He storms off, she chases behind him

MEL
Jack, wait!

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Jack is holding the same tattered CARE PACKAGE. Sound of footsteps reverberates through the empty aisles.

Jack hides the care package in his bag and grabs his PISTOL from the shelf. Slider in to the STOCK ROOM ... It’s Mel, moving toward Jack’s aisle, packing the care package into her knapsack.

Jack tucks the gun in his pants, extends an arm to hug Mel. She drops her knapsack and clings to him.

JACK
I’m sorry.

They look at each other, forgiving.

In the distance - the HISSING from earlier. Jack turns glances to the window.

MEL
What is it?

JACK
Let’s get going.

Immediately he starts to cram supplies into his bag. Mel watches Jack as she picks up her knapsack from the ground. She shoots a glance out the window -

- Flashlight beams, torches - far off, but approaching.

MEL
Jack...

A red splotch has formed on Jack’s bandage.

MEL
Slow down.

JACK
Whatever you need - get it now!

Jack tumbles over. Mel rushes to him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MEL

Jack!

JACK
Mel it’s the Takers. They’re here - we have to leave.

She stares at Jack, frozen deep with concern. She pulls the last care package from her knapsack and pours out pills.

MEL
Here. Take these.

JACK
You don’t have to do that.

MEL
It’s infected.

JACK
Mel. That’s your last one -

She removes the bandage. Jack inhales sharply.

She begins treating the wound using the last care package.

JACK
... I love you, Mel.

MEL
You can’t keep this up. You won’t make it. You have to let yourself get better. And when that happens I’m not gonna care for you anymore. Alright? I love you, Jack, but it’s - different.

JACK
I’m sorry.

MEL
Just forget it.

JACK
No. I keep thinking I know what’s best for you. And that’s something you want to decide for yourself. That’s how it should be. I thought it was caring. But. I didn’t understand what that meant all the way, ya know?

Mel has stopped working. She’s listening to Jack, snifflles.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 8.

JACK
That’s not the last care package.

JACK
I saved one. When I hit you. I
wanted to keep it for you, in case
you were hurt.

Jack removes the tattered care package from his backpack.
Mel swallows. She accepts the care package.

JACK
(attempting to stand)
I want you to have it. Leave it in
town. Somewhere they won’t find it

MEL
Jack.

JACK
I’ll pull out on the motorcycle.
Give them something to chase.

MEL
Jack -

JACK
You’ll have plenty of time.

MEL
Jack, your leg.

JACK
It’ll get better.

Jack holds onto Mel. A BEAT.

JACK
You need to do this.

Is she going to kiss him?

11  EXT. ROADS - NIGHT  11

Sound of engine revving. Jack lights off down the road. He
looks over his shoulder, breathing nervously.

- Flashlight beams/torches bounce around in chase.

His discomfort evaporates into excitement.
12 EXT./INT. CAMPER - NIGHT
Mel dashes towards a lone camper in the distance.
She breaks in the door and places the last care package on
the stove.
She hurriedly scribbles on a notepad.

13 EXT. ROADS - NIGHT
Jack continues speeding.
- The flashlight beams shut off, torches extinguish.
Jack pulls the motorcycle to a stop. They’re gone.

14 INT./EXT. CAMPER - NIGHT
Mel still writing she glances out the window - torches
approaching quickly.

MEL
Shit.
Mel tears the note from the pad and snatches up the care
package in a panic and flees the camper.

15 EXT. APPLIANCE MAZE - NIGHT
Mel dashes through a maze of abandoned refrigerators and
washing machines, gripping the care package close to her
chest.
Takers give chase, unrelenting.
A Taker grabs onto Mel’s knapsack. She struggles loose
She escapes the maze and runs out into a clearing.

16 EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT
Takers close in, circling Mel. She stands still, tossing
looks to the surrounding Takers. No exit. They close in.
- The motorcycle flies in, Jack speeds directly for Mel.
- Takers grab hold of Mel.
- Jack attempts to brake with his bad leg.
The motorcycle slides to the ground.
Mel is fighting Takers for the last care package.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jack scrambles to his feet and hops toward Mel. Pistol extended, he fires at the Takers as he moves.

Takers scatter from the gunshots. Mel falls to the ground, the care package hits the ground in the scuffle.

In the commotion, a YOUNG TAKER snatches the last CARE PACKAGE from the dirt.

Jack sees this and fires a warning shot.

    JACK
    Stop!

The Young Taker freezes, cowering. Jack moves in point blank

    JACK
    Put it back. I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU!

The Young Taker looks up at Jack, crying. We see her: dirty and ugly like the others, but also young and frightened.

Jack lowers his gun.

    MEL (O.S.)
    Jack.

    JACK
    Go.


    JACK
    Little Melon.

    MEL
    What -

    JACK
    They wanted the medicine.

    MEL
    Did they get it?

    JACK
    Yea.

    MEL
    Oh boy.

Mel moves her hand, revealing she is GUTSHOT.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:          11.

JACK
(starting up)
Shit. Mel-

MEL
Stop.

JACK
No, that’s a bullet. That’s -

MEL
It’s too late.

- Mel clutches the note.

JACK
Mel.

MEL
Why didn’t they eat us?

JACK
What?

They look at each other.

JACK
... Maybe you were right: There’s no such thing as Takers. Just other people.

MEL
If this happened sooner. Think it would’ve worked out? You and me? (chuckling)
I need you Jack. Finally it’s me that needs you.

He laughs through tears and kisses her forehead.

She smiles, looking up at - THE STARS. DISSOLVE:

THE NOTE - handwritten by Mel, DISSOLVE OVER:

17
EXT. OPEN ROAD - MORNING

Jack drives down a long open road alone.

MEL (V.O.)
Our love, our emotions, our care.
We dish these out in small doses.
Little packages. Who’s to know if it gets through? Who’s to say we’ve made a difference in this world?

(CONTINUED)
He rides with a crutch tied to the motorcycle and Mel’s RED CROSS knapsack, the NOTE hanging out.

MEL (V.O.)
All that matters is that we do this. It’s what being human is all about. We’ve run out of first-aid kits. And we’re running out of human beings. Being human is all we have left.

THE END
Appendix B: Budget

CP BUDGET 1.12.13

FILM
Processing and workprint: 5 cans = $700

CAMERA
Rentals and G&E allowance = $100

WARDROBE
Costumes = $100

MAKEUP
Artist rate = $180
Supplies = $40
TOTAL = $220

ART
Allowance = $500

LIGHTING
Allowance = $100
Generator
1 genny $50 + $70 gas; 1 genny $50 + $25 gas = $195

CRAFTY
Food = $1000
Supplies = $100
TOTAL = $1100

EXPENDABLES
Allowance = $200

ACCOMMODATION
Lodging Allowance = $150

GASOLINE
Carpool
$25 per car (8 cars) per weekend (2) = $400

MOTORCYCLE
Repairs = $300
Gas = $20
TOTAL = $320

GRAND TOTAL
= $4085
+ 121 owed to Bruno, camera expenses = $4206
# Appendix C: Jazzland Proof of Insurance

## Certificate of Insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSURED</th>
<th>51 Broadway, New Orleans, LA 70116</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB NO.</td>
<td>5500000123456789012</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Certificate of Insurance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>October 3, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>POLICY NUMBER</th>
<th>INSURANCE LIMIT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL LIABILITY</td>
<td>01234567890</td>
<td>E&amp;O 25K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTO LIABILITY</td>
<td>12345678901</td>
<td>50K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKERS' COMPENSATION</td>
<td>23456789012</td>
<td>250K</td>
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</table>

**Description of Operations/Location/Other Special Items**

- Used for operations in the state of Louisiana, located at 123 Broadway, New Orleans, LA 70116. (May 2001)

**Cancellation**

- This policy is cancelable upon twenty days written notice given to the issuing company. Written notice shall be given in person or by mail to "The Insurance Company of North America," 1900 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Notice of cancellation shall be given in writing.

- Authorizations required for cancellation.

**Signature**

- Melissa Harris, Underwriting Manager

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**Note:** The page contains a certificate of insurance with details such as the insured's address, policy numbers, and limits. It also includes a section for the description of operations and location, which specifies the use of the premises in Louisiana. The page mentions the cancellation conditions and the signature of the manager responsible for the insurance.
Appendix D: Crew Credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Lee Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Hector Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>Sarah Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lizzie Guitreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tyler Laperouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Producer</td>
<td>TJ Burrescia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Producer</td>
<td>Lizzie Guitreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Sarah Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Assistant Director</td>
<td>Christine Carey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Photography</td>
<td>Bruno Doria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadicam Operator</td>
<td>Bruno Doria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera Operator</td>
<td>Adam Lipscomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st AC</td>
<td>Alex Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd AC</td>
<td>Connor Redmond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIT</td>
<td>Jae Labat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeff Bruno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaffer</td>
<td>Matt Guidry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Grip</td>
<td>Zac Manuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grip and Electric</td>
<td>Mason Lipscomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sean Vincent Hager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Haney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jae Labat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seth DiSalvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Designer</td>
<td>Lauren Chriceol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>Liana Cockfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Dresser</td>
<td>Zoe Cuneo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prop Master</td>
<td>Sean Vincent Hager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume and Wardrobe</td>
<td>Evi Geiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Effects Makeup</td>
<td>David LeBlanc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brandon Snakebites Melancon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeup Assistants</td>
<td>Courtney Callais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evi Geiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Mixers</td>
<td>Zac Sutherland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Gremillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom Operators</td>
<td>Mark Twain Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoe Cuneo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tyler Laperouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stunt Coordinator</td>
<td>Willie Weber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrotechnics</td>
<td>Brandon Snakebites Melancon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tyler Laperouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting Director</td>
<td>Lizzie Guitreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Scout</td>
<td>Madeleine Hebert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Managers</td>
<td>TJ Burrescia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jay Coffey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Services</td>
<td>Malcolm Mansour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Jeff Bruno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Photographers</td>
<td>Sarah Smith</td>
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<td>TJ Burrescia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jeff Bruno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malcolm Mansour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Score</td>
<td>Taylor Clements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Lee Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Editor</td>
<td>Spencer Kancher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorist</td>
<td>Bruno Doria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Location Map
This is to certify that Lee Michael Garcia has successfully completed his Senior Honors Thesis, entitled:

Care Packages

[Signatures]

J. Hampton Overton
Director of Thesis

Robert M. Racine
for the Department

Abu Kabir Mostofa Sarwar
for the University

Abu Kabir Mostofa Sarwar
Honors Program

April 24, 2013
Date