8-5-2010

Ice Cream, You Scream

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Ice Cream, You Scream

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts
Film Production

by

Erik Shaun Reuter

B.A. University of Wisconsin Superior, 2006

August, 2010
Acknowledgement

Making a film is a collaborative effort, the product of many and not just one. This idea was evidenced as I tried to do as many things as I possibly could on my film set, but I could not have accomplished this effort without the dedication, humor, and support of my crew. I hope that the final product of this film will meet their expectations and reflect the hard work invested.

I also must give credit to all my mentors at this institution, not just those limited to this project. I may disagree with them from time to time, but my mentors know that I made these choices because of the knowledge they instilled within me. I was given the true gift of education; I was not taught only what to think, but rather how to think. I am most grateful for this gift as it is the very same one I hope to pass on to every student I will teach. Whether we agree or disagree, my mentors should all be proud of what I am able to produce as a result of their guidance. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude, and it is my fervent hope that I can continue to carry forward the torch of education.
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Abstract

I set out to make a lighthearted comedy punctuated with some scary moments. I wanted this story to come from a seven-year-old girl’s point of view and match fantastic visuals with equally fantastic sounds.

I will discuss the entire creative process in this book such as preproduction, writing, direction, cinematography, editing, and the sound design process, as well as many of my own personal experiences on this set and in my life.

I have included the influence of unbiased audience members to determine whether or not I was successful in making a competent movie. This entire process, including all of the work done, rests entirely on my audience. I have done my best to include both people who are affluent in film production, as well as those who are not.

Keywords: Ice cream, Scream, Thesis, Shadow, Monster, Cow, Film, Movie, Black, White, Magic, Phone, Sister, Lighting, Doctor, Knife, Hippo, Maxi pads, Tampons.
Chapter 1

Introduction

To begin, one must understand how I decided upon this project. The entire project is based around my love for creating. I have always wanted a job that would allow me to create, as opposed to simply being a cog in the machinery. This does not mean I will create anything of notoriety or of particular value to society, but only that I will make something that did not exist before. This movie was not intended as a groundbreaking project; I simply wanted to take the bare basics and display a working knowledge of them in each category.

Creativity still requires strict discipline, and I found it important to stay grounded at all times. I am a firm believer in the KISS concept that I learned from Joe McNally in photography and again from David Mamet in Professor Karnell’s directing class. KISS is an acronym for “Keep It Simple Stupid.” I tried to use this concept while making my films, and I also incorporated it into my life while I lived in Japan. While in Japan, I learned foresight and humility, to always look ahead and think about the future consequences of my actions. I also learned not to think too highly of myself. This may sound negative, but it is not intended that way. To exemplify, a dear friend named Yuuma Yamaguchi, a gifted musician with whom I lived as an undergraduate, never acknowledges his own talent. Lauding praise upon Yuuma always elicits the same response, “No, I can do better,” or “There are people who are more talented than me.” Just as Yuuma, I want to adopt this principle for my life. I admire many at this University, both faculty and currently enrolled students, as well as some who have graduated. I know that some of them have produced work that I can only hope to imitate.
The foresight element I employed, as stated earlier, is looking ahead to see how current actions affect the future. Once I graduate, I have to prepare for employment; I will be making major life decisions. I realize that this is my opportunity to use professional equipment; therefore, I want to ground myself and get plenty of experience for the reality that lies ahead.

Mixing foresight and humility with the KISS method, I have created my own thought process that I refer to as “Who am I and where I am going?”. This concept governed everything in my thesis, from creation to execution, and to the final product. I will reference this concept throughout this paper. The reader must know that this concept is pure discipline and not negative. It is not about giving up. I feel that knowing one’s boundaries and working creatively within them is always commendable.

I must answer the questions I set forth in my concept, the first one being “Who am I?” I am a student, a pupil of basic concepts who is not a master. It is my time to learn the basics, apply them, and gain an understanding. I feel that it is imperative to learn and master the basics before I break the rules. I also know I must fail so that I can see what I did incorrectly and change it in the future. I am not afraid to fail because from this, I learn. For example, one failure with this project was my importing my project as 24p, when in fact it was 30i all the time. I did all my research, running my camera at 24p, setting my DTE to AVI type 2 to handle 24p footage. All of this 24p made me think when I made my Avid project that it should match everything, thus I made a 24p project. It was a horrible mistake; when the time came to make DVDs, the play back was completely ruined due to the squeezing of 30 frames into 24 solid frames. An unwatchable strobing effect was the result on my all DVDs. This mistake caused a re-edit of my entire movie in the correct setup. It was my own fault, and I wasted valuable time having to correct my error; but this was a mistake that I will not make again.
The idea of failing comes from many successful people in the world, and it has spawned several clichés. However, I feel that most are true; one should learn from both successes and failures. Joe McNally, a noted photojournalist, has an idea about life and shooting photographs that I agree with whole-heartedly and apply to shooting movies. He talks about learning from failures, learning basics before breaking a few rules, and finally, he talks about being loose in application. By loose, he means remaining calm and not trying to tweak the tiniest things. McNally says that by constantly tweaking the tiniest things, other big opportunities or potential mistakes can be missed due to an overly narrow focus. I agree with this philosophy and thus employed it on my thesis set, renaming it, “It’s Ok.” This mantra only applies to the small tweaks, not large and disastrous mistakes that would make “It’s Ok” an excuse.

The next question that I had to answer during my thesis process was “Where am I going?” This question employs the element of foresight, and while I know that Hollywood is not going to call me, I also know that I am not ready to make a great award winning short film like the ones seen in the student Oscars. I still need more time with the basics to hone my skills. Armed with this knowledge, I know the next step after graduation is employment and large purchases. While making this film, I carefully restricted spending and used only the equipment that I will have available to me in the future. In terms of budget, I wanted to make the best film possible within my resources, while still avoiding the possibility of a financial burden. I was able to function within this framework because I know the answer to the question “Where am I going?”
I took the path less traveled in terms of equipment use, denying myself access to the nice dollies, Steadicams, and jibs. I wanted to use the equipment that would be available to me in the near future. This was a daunting task that required creativity and inspiration, not to mention some perspiration. All of the camera movement equipment was borrowed or improvised with hardware and other store parts. I made my dolly with a wheelchair, a high hat, and some sand bags. I borrowed my classmate James Roe’s tripod because it has the crank up telescoping center column for my jib effect. Although these homemade things produced a less professional look and feel, it produced a serendipitous effect. Most of the shakes and the flaws that the “DIY” gear brought to the image served my story well. I must admit that using the “DIY” gear was a bit of a gamble, but keeping in mind the availability of equipment in the future; I feel this worked out quite well. Chances to use big pieces of professional equipment may come rarely. I have learned to work creatively within my boundaries, found ways to expand my work, and learned to create “DIY” gear.

When creating this project, I thought of referencing professional films made with vast amounts of money or made by some of the greatest directors who are still alive and working. After some thought, I felt this was not exactly what I should do. I know that I do not yet possess the necessary talent or opportunities to create something of that depth. Instead, I chose to model my work after projects that I know I am capable of achieving and that are within my grasp. I thought of Martin Scorsese’s student work, *What’s a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?* Scorsese uses voice over technique and several in-camera optical tricks, such as the jump-cut appearance of things within the frame. I used these techniques for the “magic” that brings all the dream sequences and cut-aways together in my project.
The student film, *BedHead* by Robert Rodriguez, is also an obvious influence on this story, with its camera tricks, characters, and simplistic story. I was also influenced by the *Robert Rodriguez: Ten Minute Film School* videos. He says to never let money or the lack of proper gear stop the creation of a movie; instead, think around the problems creatively. I had this mentality on my set, with the “DIY” gear and the restrictions on spending, forcing myself to plan and creatively solve my problems as I encountered them.

The early works of Tim Burton are noticeable in my project, as well, with the clear contrast between protagonist and antagonist. Burton uses stark contrasts in lighting and also in characters, in his short *Vincent*. In Burton’s short, the little boy who wants to be an evil genius is represented in dark colors and the mom and aunt are clearly contrasted in bright colors. I brought this concept to my own film by creating a monster made of shadow, and I chose to make my film in black and white so I could always maintain this stark contrast between protagonist and antagonist. In this area, I feel I was successful in portraying the stark differences in light and dark visuals in my film. Test audience reactions, and peer and professional input have confirmed my success in this area.

At times, I also looked critically at other students’ work. It was not my intention to rank myself above my peers, but rather to examine their successes and failures in order to glean knowledge from them. I never want to become complacent about learning, no matter what life has in store for me. Each day and every experience will be a learning moment for me. Absorbing as much as possible and passing that knowledge on to others has always been my goal.
Chapter 2

Preproduction

This entire project was able to flow easily due to the fact that the preproduction was very tight. I cannot dismiss the importance of other people’s creative input to our projects. I had a great conversation with some of my FTCA 2510 students where I related making films to creating a soup. It takes many ingredients to make a great soup. Each of the ingredients adds its own flavor to make the final product successful. While taking this into consideration, I wanted to have people involved as much as possible in the process of my project. I played many roles on my set, but I was never deaf to creative input. I wanted people to feel as though it was their project, too. During the writing phase, I shared the script with my colleagues in the graduate school, my committee, the advanced screenwriting class, and I was taking volunteers in both my FTCA 2510 sections at that time. I was always discussing strategy of lights, sound, etc. during the production phase, as well. On set, I was privy to the past experience and suggestions from my crew. I did my best try to keep an open attitude on set and before set.

Although I recognize the value of other people’s input to the movie making process, I again took the road less traveled and played several parts on my film, not to shut out my fellow students, but to practice for the future where I may have to play these roles. Some of the parts I played on my set were the producer, location manager, cinematographer, assistant director, gaffer, and many other positions. I wanted to be my own camera operator, as well, but I have a colleague who really enjoys camera operating, so I had him operate my camera.
The production of this movie was simple; since I was in control of the film, I made sure that everything was done. This phase was exceptionally easy because if I had a question I could handle it myself. I felt this was a huge advantage while making my film; if there was any failure, I was the only one to blame. Also, when dealing with people outside the film, I had my preproduction book and all the knowledge of exactly what I needed. Having the answers to these questions made the process of being the producer and of dealing with questions on the spot much easier.

I also played the role of locations manager, as well. I categorized most of this work under the “producing” category. I chose the locations from people whom I knew and trusted. This way, I did not have to pay location fees, and I already knew the owners, so it was much easier for me to convince them to let me use their property. I did my best by creating a production book for each location with all contact info, storyboards, dates, insurance, and everything I could think of in order to ensure good communication with the location owner. They would know when I was coming and exactly how I intended to get my material. I cannot stress this production book enough. It was a great advantage for me because I had everything I needed to know on hand. Also, I gave a copy to each perspective location owner. For example, I talked with one individual about using his back yard, and I gave him a production book. I then had a meeting with him. After looking at the production book, he found out just how involved the project would be and asked that he not be a part of it. I was thankful for having this work completed ahead of schedule. That made finding another backyard location easier.
Utilizing locations that were already art-dressed was another way I saved time and money. I needed to utilize every bit of money and time I had when I was rolling camera, so I simply chose my locations that were fully art dressed and ready to go. I realize that I sacrificed some control, but again, I simply could not afford to purchase everything to make my entire vision come true.

I also worked as cinematographer and gaffer/grip. This was another huge advantage to my production. I developed the idea of doing everything myself long before graduate school. In my undergraduate program, we had a small department. Our film teams usually consisted of three people or less. Every time I had to do almost everything, while a friend held the boom pole.

As my own cinematographer, I was also aware of the shortcomings I may have created because I was in charge of so many things. This was one area in which I did not have much outside input. I was not shutting out my fellow students, but I was simply busy in so many areas at once. From the start, I noticed mistakes, such as a light in the first shot, a matte box in the corner of the screen on another shot, and other such things. I do enjoy the creative input of my peers, and I am sure there are limitless shots that suggested from another person, could have added to my story. I always tried to keep an open mind on set to allow for others’ ideas. An example of this was in the scene where the little girl shoots the teenagers with tampons on the couch. The specific shot is the one with several tampons. This was Paul Parker’s idea. There were a few other suggestions I took from my colleague Kevin Hughes when I was shooting in the kitchen. But the main reason I chose to do the cinematography work myself was that I love it. This is not a very academic answer, but I really enjoy physically working with tools, such as the heavy lights, and the creative placement of them.
In the grip/gaff department, I would show up on set at least five to six hours before my crew. I would place the lights, run power to them, build the camera, set up the sound recorders, and basically make everything ready to go once people arrived. I was tired at the end of each day, but it was a labor of love. I enjoyed setting and placing the lights for seamless scene transitions. Once I was shooting and had grips on set, they only had to strike lights and raise them up or do some minor tweaking. Then we would continue on to the next scene. This was labor intensive, but I could then save on costs in several areas, (such as food) and I could get the maximum amount of shots out of the work day with my crew.

Discussing the duties of the assistant director is difficult for me, as I have yet to use an AD on my sets. However, I realize their value in organization of time and keeping things running smoothly on set so that each department can work more efficiently. I think my time management comes from both my undergraduate resident assistant job and my auto shop job. To clarify, at the auto shop we had daily columns with hourly appointments. We would start with our columns full, were expected to finish all work by the end of the day, and start fresh the next. I believe this experience strengthened my planning skills. Knowing that a transmission change takes more time than an oil change would allow me to schedule my appointments appropriately. Taking this knowledge even further, knowing that a transmission change on a Dodge is more time consuming than a transmission on a GMC, I could schedule my day accordingly. In my film experience, I have measured set up times on dollies, jibs and intense lighting. Then I applied that knowledge to my scheduling. I still feel that an AD was unnecessary for me, as I estimated my shots, scheduled my time, and accomplished all the work within a proper time frame.
Chapter 3

Writing

As I noted in my prospectus, I am new to screenwriting. Goal, rising action, flaw, arc, and all the other aspects of writing a compelling story were foreign to me. I have been exposed to these elements all my life, but never had experience manipulating them. Now I can spot the elements and also possess a basic understanding of them.

Displaying a basic understanding of these elements was the goal I set for myself in my prospectus. The people who read my script during the feedback stage expressed a notion of enjoyment for the comedic elements in the story and my use of imagination.

A peer suggested that my little girl’s voice is my own voice. Every time I watch my movie, I am searching for this voice. Although her words are a bit advanced for a seven-year-old, one of my weaknesses is disassociating my voice from my writing. I feel as though I portray a distinct voice in my characters. During the feedback stage in writing class, Professor Hansen commented that the first page of the script contained the distinction of this character through her opening monologue: who she was and what she liked. I have to laugh because at that time, I had no idea that I had done that in my writing. Looking back, I now see this in the construction of the very first page. A little girl, who loves ice cream, thinks of herself as a super human and has other people beneath her. I felt that this very exposition sets my main character apart from a stock or flat character, both in voice and in action.
I also received some feedback suggesting that I was missing a moment when the character reaches within herself to find strength to finish her journey. I agree that I was missing that part. I was guided to use a flashback or a device that linked her to a certain moment in her life that would give her strength to move on and conquer her demons. I related this device, to the “adventure book” in Disney’s *Up*, when at the lowest point in Carl’s adventure; he finds the adventure book from his wife about their childhood. He finally he opens the book and reads the page with his wife’s last note to him, thus giving him strength to move on and conquer his demons. I did not have this sort of device and was honestly afraid to go back and restructure my story at that time. I was more anxious to continue with the making of the movie.

I know I needed a push for my little girl, but I did not want to execute it in a flashback manner. I wanted to try something different, so I decided to create an either or situation by having the monster creep into the shed and give the idea that he would not attack my little girl, but attack her ice cream instead. I felt that this moment was the push necessary to get her off of her knees and force the choice to either go home or go all the way. I have not received much input as to whether this moment works or does not work. I can only hope that a quiet audience during this scene means that it is at least understandable.
As far as the application goes of the other writing elements, I had no special plans to do something groundbreaking. I again wanted to execute and practice the basics. I had a goal for my character, which was to get the ice cream. I followed Professor Hansen’s advice about goals, which was to make it visual and tangible. Having a physical goal can then imply the meanings and feelings the audience is intended to experience. It is very specific, as opposed to a goal of feelings, such as to be happy, or to find inner peace. The simple and tangible goal works out in the end: my character gets her ice cream and can now be happy. Having a goal helped me immensely with the direction of the story. I knew where to take her and could plug in the elements of opposition to that goal. Without a clear goal, I feel this story would have been nonsense.

As for conflict, I felt I had it present in the script the entire time. Professor Retz felt that my story was “all middles.” I can see his point because the torment between the sisters is constant and never rises. I have to agree that it is something in the middle. The only way I can justify this action was that I wanted to expose the relationship of the two sisters, set up the physical environment where the story would take place, and get a piece of each character’s life onto the screen. I wanted extreme tension to come between my little girl and her fears. I focused on that aspect and kept the story rolling with interludes of the younger sister/older sister battles to have conflict at as many turns as possible in the story.
I wanted rising action and explosive tension or conflict to come out from the Darkness monster. I felt this worked because the Darkness character is the physical manifestation of her fears. He is the one who physically assaults the girl in her journey across the backyard. The monster is the one who provides the true conflict in the story: my little girl wants the ice cream and the monster wants to get her. Each time the two characters meet, the level of assault escalates. First, the monster rushes to the little girl and she retreats into the house. Next, once outside, the monster strips her of her protective gear, taking her down piece by piece until finally he attacks the very thing she is after. During the writing phase, Professor Hansen and the screenwriting class suggested building action and tension between the monster and my little girl. Specifically, Professor Hansen made the suggestion to take the girl’s defenses apart until she has nothing left. This would give the rise in tension that the story calls for. I took all of their advice and applied it to my story.

I felt the resolution was simple and straightforward. She gets the ice cream, thus defeating the Darkness and receiving her reward. I had no groundbreaking intentions here, only to wrap up the story in a fitting manner.

As for character arc, I again did not intend to change the film industry. All I wanted was the bare bones of the idea. My little girl starts out selfish and afraid of the dark. After her lonely journey, she arises stronger and no longer afraid of the dark. She also becomes independent from her sister, thus completing her character’s arc. My girl’s arc is not as epic as Frodo’s or John McLain’s, but the very bare bones of the concept are present: my little girl is different from when she began. I wanted to employ this basic concept to add some dimension to my character and to also grasp this concept in writing.
I honestly believe that I have covered all the basic elements in my thesis writing phase. There are likely several elements I have left out of this paper or left out in the creation of my story. Again, I was not trying to do anything revolutionary. I simply wanted to put into practice the things I have learned. As stated in my prospectus, I wanted to show my growth upon exiting this institution. Since I have never had screenwriting in my life, I feel this stage was complete growth. I really enjoy the writing phase of movie making.
Chapter 4

Performance Direction

In performance direction, I simply followed what Professor Karnell taught us in his directing class. Using the workings of David Mamet, and the KISS method, I approached my actors and communicated with them only what was necessary and needed and nothing more. I did not embellish and tell them the entire back story and tiny details of each character. This worked out great, because I had the luxury of trained actors as opposed to amateurs, and each person was given enough information to offer his/her own creative input to the character. If they stepped outside of what I wanted to see on the screen, I would kindly make a small adjustment and roll it again.
When I was on set, I was always as professional as possible with my entire team, including my acting team. I made sure they were well fed and had things to do in order to keep boredom to a minimum in between setups. Once I needed a performance adjustment, I again applied the basic techniques that Professor Karnell had shown us in class. I used the “what, want and how” idea Professor Karnell gave to us. What is my character doing? Countless times my answer was simple: “I need you to walk from here, then stop here, then look at your sister.” For objectives in many of my scenes, I would tell my little girl what she wanted. For instance, when things were too far out of her reach, her objective was to get her sister to pick her up, or when the little girl was locked in the closet, her objective was to get out. Then I would use an active verb to generate emotion from my actors. This part is the “how” that Professor Karnell taught us. My little girl wanted her sister to pick her up. How was she going to do this? She did it by force, calling on her parents to help her out. Another time, I gave my little girl direction in the backyard. I talked about the monster attacking her: How was she going to deal with this? She was going to hide or cower. She took this direction well and did a good job with her performance.
When in the auditioning for the roles of the little girls, James Roe and Kevin Hughes would have the girls read lines, James from his FTCA 4530 class script and Kevin from his thesis script. Then James and Kevin would have the girls read the lines with an objective or an emotion in mind. This approach worked really well, so I made sure I would always be the last director to work with the girl on the stage. Since I could see how they reacted with reading the words, I decided to sit and talk with them and warm them up a bit. Then we did an improv technique where I had the girls wash dishes, take out a dish, and react to it. Also, we opened Christmas gifts and reacted to those. I wanted to see whether or not the girls would listen to me and then measure their ability to imagine and vary their reactions. Based on this idea, I eventually chose Juliette Enright to be my lead. The imagination and facial range of this little girl was above and beyond what I needed.
The auditions and the contracts were set up and handled by a casting director. His name was Jeremy Evan Kerr; this was my first time working with a casting director. In the future, I will be extremely cautious when choosing to work with one again. The problem with my casting director was that he cost me more money, time, and stress. The only advantage this young man had was an incredibly large contact list. When he sent out the word, lots of people replied, and the people who replied were experienced and very professional. However, his performance (not answering phone calls, texts, or emails, last minute paper work, and throwing things together in a shoddy manner) adversely affected me. My directorial end was always ready ahead of schedule: filling out paper work, making choices and contacting people. Never was my end of the team late or last-minute. When contracting, my shoot date drew ever closer and I never knew if I had access to the little girl. Then, as my date approached, the agreed price went from $330 to $660. I had trouble verbally expressing my dislike for this situation. The most important thing I learned from this experience was to always exercise caution when contracting an outside source for workers and perhaps have a few back-up plans ready.

One final performance and general directing tool I gathered from this production was the value of a thru line. The thru line for my story was, “In order to overcome one’s fears, one must face them head on.” Professor Griffen pushes the thru line very hard in his directing class. The book he uses, Changing Direction, is wonderful, but I think the book could explain the concept a bit more simply. The example in the book is from Ordinary People, which was way too dense for me. It took me about a year to understand it, and I still struggle. However, application of a thru line helped me to stay focused while going through my creative process and to make sure every decision served the story as well as possible. I feel this tool has become invaluable.
Chapter 5

Cinematography

I am truly excited about how the cinematography of my thesis worked out for me. Several shots, if not all, leapt off the story boards and onto the screen. I want to start on my choice of color, or lack thereof. Most of my audience members complimented me on shooting black and white. I was told it was “daring” and “something you don’t see anymore.” I am not trying to be pompous here, but I knew this would happen. We are alive in a vibrant world and almost everything we see on TV and computers is in color. I simply took the norm and snapped it in half. This was not a determining factor in choosing to shoot black and white, but was a simple gamble I took knowing that my audience would be my peers and people involved in my project and their own projects.

The real reason I chose black and white is a more practical one. As a student filmmaker, I realize that my control of the tiny visual aspects and some of the larger visual aspects is not complete. I am talking about colors: wardrobe color, set color and some prop color that are outside of my control. I do know that I can have much better control over the gray scale than I can have over the color spectrum. I used my actors as my wardrobe creators. I let them bring me some choices and I gave them very general guidelines per character. For example, the little girl was to be in neutral grays and the sister was to be in darker colors for contrast. I wanted the most important objects to have a dominant force in the frame. The best example is my main character’s cape. I sewed a cape made of cow patterned material from Joann Fabrics. Since this blanket is pure black and white, it reads very clearly as the dominant item and draws attention to it on screen.
I used black and white to my advantage in the character aspect of visual, as well. The little girl’s interests are represented in light colors, either white or a light gray. A main example of this is that she loves vanilla ice cream, which is white. It works well in contrast to the things she dislikes: chocolate ice cream, the dark, which is represented by a shadow monster. Shooting in black and white allowed me to create these stark contrasts and bring out these little aspects of character.

Although I immensely enjoyed shooting black and white, it did have its drawbacks. Not only was it hard to light the ice cream, but even harder to have enough contrast between strawberry and vanilla. They look very similar in black and white. Any time that I had a shot involving the three flavors, I remedied the lack of contrast by putting an L light at 300 watts focused specifically on the vanilla ice cream and letting the chocolate and the strawberry fall dark. As the chocolate became darker and more defined, the vanilla looked pure white, and the strawberry fell into the gray area. However, it was not gray enough. I agreed when my audience commented on how hard it was to tell the flavors apart.

I would like to point out another of my failures in cinematography, which was the blood in my film. I received some feedback from people who said the blood did not work for them. The comments ran the gamut, from “It’s just too thick”, “not the right color” or “too much in quantity.” This was hard for me to figure out. I created it with Hershey’s Syrup and water. There was perhaps too much of the blood for such a little girl to spit out, and some of the audience thought she was dying. This was a difficult call on set. I wanted to make sure the audience understood that something was wrong, but I may have gone a bit too far.
Camera movement is an area in which I choose to go in an opposite direction from many of my peers. I have access to amazing equipment such as professional dollies, Steadicams, etc., but what I wanted to do throughout my entire thesis was to stay true to the question in my head of “Who I am and where I am going?”. Therefore, I restricted myself to equipment that I would have access to after my time at this institution. From my experience here and working on other jobs throughout the city, I learned that all the gear it takes to make beautiful pictures comes at a very high cost, either from professional rental houses or from small filmmakers like me. I know this is not for me, so again I asked myself, “Where am I going after school? What will I have access to?” I will always have wheelchairs and other homemade gear at my disposal. I took this concept and ran with it. All the camera movement in my film was done by a “do it yourself” piece of gear or by simple handheld work. My dollies are wheelchair, hi hat, and sand bag combos. My jib is the tripod of James Roe. His tripod has the telescoping center column; I opened the control and tightened it just enough so that the camera would not fall down on its own weight. All of these movement devices worked out perfectly for me. They were a little less professional-looking, but created several happy accidents. For example, the shaky dolly in the closet scene worked to add tension to the moment. I have had mixed reviews on whether or not my DIY gear worked. Some say it added to the mood of the scene, and others pointed out that it was shaky.
I chose simple reasons for camera movement: All my moves are motivated by the character’s thoughts and the moment in story. I was working hard to avoid putting in superfluous camera movement. I can easily explain the motivation for each of my movements. For example, in the scenes where the little girl tries to get her sister away from her boyfriend and to get her ice cream, I used two dolly-ins on my girl’s face followed by the bell ring. I actually wanted a snap zoom, but I was limited in space and could not get the framing I wanted.

All the POV shots are handheld sped up in post. For those of the little girl, I wanted to express a sense of excitement for her new idea to succeed. I felt that the sped up handheld work helped confirm this idea.

James Roe’s jib was used to expose the size of the ice cream and exaggerate the point of how much she likes her ice cream. I put it at the end of the story to wrap up everything. I chose to use his tripod over our jib on a time and space based decision. The house where I filmed was way too expensive to risk damage and the jib takes too much time to set up. My research in preproduction led me to remember James’s tripod and the telescoping function. The only downfall was that I could not get the tripod low enough to crane up and over the table to expose how full the bowl was with ice cream.

The other handheld camera work was motivated by necessity of time or space. When I dolly/jib into the bathroom cabinets, I wanted to exploit the fantastic nature of the story, with doors opening by themselves and objects magically flying everywhere. There was not enough time or space to safely operate the dolly or jib in that bathroom, so I had to have my cameraman do it handheld. He did a tremendous job.
Perhaps the hardest thing I will have to deal with is why I chose to go the opposite way in technology from my peers. My fellow students choose to use depth of field adaptors, high definition cameras, and perhaps other equipment that I have not heard of yet. I made the choice to shoot my project in standard definition. Some view this as a strike against my project. I disagree. Whenever my 2510 students complain that the cameras they use are inexpensive, I encourage them by reminding them that all cameras make a square and the story takes place within that square. No matter what camera they use, they should fill the square with a good story.

My deciding factor in shooting standard definition is that I have to hide several things in the frame. Most importantly, I had to hide the wires for special effects. This worked, but it failed me at the same time. It failed because there are a few areas where my strings are clearly visible. This was not completely the fault of the camera. It was also a fault of placing the strings. The strings are visible when they are over the color black or white. The examples I am citing are in the early scenes when the refrigerator door opens and the later scene when the older sister is left alone to watch her younger sister and she makes the phone fly off the table. This could have been avoided by reframing a book or moving things around a little bit to make sure the strings never got in front of contrasting colors. I will know this the next time I use string to make things fly around the frame.

Standard definition was beneficial because the detail in the frame was less than the high definition cameras, which, through a few camera tests made the cables stand out even more. With the HVX, as long as there was exposure, there was the string, either by the background being lit and the string being silhouetted, or the string being lit and visible.
I support my decision to shoot SD, but I do feel that I learned something. No matter what camera I use, I should take the higher road and carefully place my strings and other secrets of the production process out of frame.
Chapter 6

Editing

Editing has always been a learning curve for me. Again, one of the mantras for my entire project is to learn the basics and apply the KISS method. I sought nothing new in terms of editing; I simply put the shots in order on the time line. Because of the strict time restraints I had working with my child actor, I had to take a different approach to what I had learned. For better editing, it is stressed that we get coverage and cover the scenes in as many angles as time will allow. Even before I started this project, I knew the value of having coverage. Since I had tight time restraints working with a child, I took the Hitchcock approach to shooting: immense preproduction and storyboarding the entire film and then getting the exact shots on the storyboards. I storyboarded extensively and got the shots exactly off my storyboards without additional coverage. Largely, I feel this approach worked well for me, with only a few failures. Everything has cut together well and actually worked out like it did in my mind.
This Hitchcock approach is one that I really do not care for, as a single mistake can have potentially disastrous results. I did make a mistake when shooting, but was able to recover. The mistake I am referring to is when my little girl goes into the bedroom to get Hippo and gather some courage to go outside and face her monster. My classmate Andrew O’Brian said there needs to be a pause in the action, (a moment for her to think before going outside), and I couldn't agree more. I had that pause storyboarded with my little girl removing her cape and then letting it drift down over the camera as the transition. The problem was that when I had her switch costumes into the body armor, I decided to have her leave the cape off to make the joke more visual. This interfered with my planned coverage. I have shots of her removing the pin from her cape and taking it off, but when I was in the editing room I realized that this shot was useless. When she had on the body armor, she never wore the cape. Fortunately, I was saved by another happy accident. Since I could no longer afford to schedule time with the little girl, I searched my footage trying to figure out how to solve this situation. Finally, I played the cape coming off shot in reverse, to show her suiting up to go outside. This added shot played well to other audience members and then also gave the story the moment it needed before she went outside.

There other times the approach of getting exact frames from my storyboard failed me were during performance. I really had to watch the timing of reactions and performance while on the set. An example was when the little girl told her sister that a monster almost ate her and then she had to look up. She stared at the teens on the couch for what seemed an eternity, and then finally looked up. In the cutting room, I was able to let her deliver her line and then have a beat and cut to the water damage on the ceiling to keep the story going.
I am still stuck in one shot, though. It is when the older sister takes the bowl away from her little sister and the younger girl jumps up and down to get it. There is a moment there that needs help, and my audience said so. I couldn't agree with them more. My little girl took her time to charge up her jumps, and I didn't write anything for her to say there either. This is where some coverage of her jumping would have helped out. The suggestions are to add some voice over lines to help it along. Sadly, it will have to remain the way it is, as I am out of money for working with the little girl. Another suggestion was to scan the said lines and put something together since her mouth is not visible. I really wanted this to work. I scanned everything, but the delivery of the lines from the girl was radically different each time. I did have a little moment of bliss; I made sure that my composer was aware this scene needed some sort of audio support to help sell or pass the moment. He has supplied me with a declining trombone noise for each jump; this, thus far, has helped.
Another editing, issue I had was a time crisis versus a coverage issue. I had planned for a close insert shot of the photo in the photo book in the scene where the little girl makes her final attempt to get her older sister off the couch. I wanted the audience to see the picture that the little girl shows her sister to make her mad. I had planned the insert of this shot, but I had to release my little girl from her work day; I also wanted to get out of the location on time to keep everyone happy. I had planned to take all shots involving actors first, and then return at a later date to get the inserts without actors. This approach would have worked; however, the owner of the property never returned my calls or any communication once we finished the main shoot. This has always baffled me, as we did not break anything and never went over time. Working in those parameters, I chose to put a freeze frame and a sound effect of a fight bell over the frozen frame to help the audience get the point. The success of this effect has been hard to gauge. Some people say they get it and some do not. The good news is that it reads in succession: little girl gets a book, stops on a photo, and then shows it to her sister, which makes her mad. All the parts add up, but I really wanted my visuals to support the joke and make it stronger. In that respect, I failed.
As a last note on the topic, coverage was a tough lesson for me. I like the idea of coverage, to be able to shoot a scene in several angles and then have all the options I could ever imagine in the editing room. However, again, I could not afford this luxury. Instead, I did what I have done throughout this entire process; I made the best of the situation. This decision to edit before I shoot, believe it or not, was not governed by the, “Who am I and where am I going?” mantra. This was entirely a time saving method that I needed to use because I was bound to eight hour weekend days and four hour weekdays. This was because the law considers school time the same as work time for children, so I had to move fast on Fridays to get even the basic coverage I wanted. The other days, I had eight hours of shooting time, but with one hour lunch, that leaves seven working hours. The immense thought and preplanning on the weekdays with the little girl saved me, but also put severe restrictions on the amount of coverage I could get in a single day.
Since day one, I have been nervous about the pace of my editing in this movie. I have made a conscious effort to watch this film from the point of view of someone who has not seen this movie before. While sticking to the KISS method, I was not trying to be inventive, but just letting the story dictate the pace of the cuts. I have edited the shots down and down and now have reached a point where I am comfortable. I want the audience to have the time to let the images sink in. This task is incredibly difficult because I know the story so completely, so I tried asking myself, “When do I understand the point of the shot?” Once I do, I add five frames before moving on to the next shot. So far, this method has worked well. I have been able to prevent the film from being too long or over-cut. I was sincerely worried about over-cutting the movie (a promise I made to myself). I have seen many other student works over cut, such as a thesis film from last year on which I worked. There was time, planning, and effort put into this student film making it a well-directed movie. I had not read the script, so I could watch this particular movie more objectively. There was one problem with it, though. The cuts struck the audience like lightning bolts. The only things I understood were the opening credits and a black girl. I was completely confused for the remaining 25 minutes. I was not alone in this thought process, either. Other audience member said the same thing when I talked with them after the film. I promised myself to be conscious of over-cutting and let my piece breathe or even be a bit long so the audience can follow my girl on her journey. I feel this is much better than being rushed in and out of the theater in confusion.
This balance is incredibly hard to achieve. The pace of television shows and movies today is rapid and audiences are growing accustomed to this fast paced style of editing. Films from the late 90’s and early 2000’s seem sluggish to me because of the new style in editing. When I cut my movie, I had to pace myself and try to ensure that my audience would not be bored by slow editing.
Chapter 7

Sound

I was and still am excited about my Foley mix on this movie. Every sound except the fight bell on the photo freeze frame and the cartoon pops on the make-up entering frame, I made entirely myself. My learning curve here was steep. I had never Foleyed a film before, so I was not sure how to make the sounds, let alone make them work with the film. I wanted to create a cartoon, or child-like, theme in the Foley mix. My story is about a little girl, and it is told from my little girl’s perspective, so I felt that the theme of games and cartoons would work well for my story.

One device I used numerous times was my own mouth. For example, I created all the swooshes and the pops on the magazines that appear around the older sister’s character. I was worried that making splooshes, explosions, and pops with my mouth would be completely contrived. However, when I made them and placed them in the film, the sounds not only blended into the mix, but they added the cartoon mood I wanted to create.

Other sounds came from silverware scraping. Also, I dropped a plunger and recorded its pop from the floor. Another trick involved a tube that protects my boom pole. I popped the top off and recorded the echo pop and used it to mark the appearance of a freezer. I tried several times to create explosions from my mouth, but it never worked, so I used the school’s sound library. Also, I used the cartoon pops from a web site with royalty free sound shared with me by another student.
I knew going into the movie from the preproduction phase that this movie would rely heavily on zany sounds and a fun sound design, but I never realized so much would be added to the picture by the sounds I created. This was one of my favorite experiences on this project.

As for the music, I know that some have raised an eyebrow at the fact that I used Cindy Lauper’s *Goonies* theme song. This certain bit of song was always meant to be in my thesis, and this is my own personal insert to sell the joke. I like how directors make something special for themselves. For example, Steve Hank’s idea of three’s in *The Hold Up* or Kevin Hughes’ hidden spigot in his films. I feel entitled to have my own personality in my film, as well. I am from the *Goonies* generation, and I am showing this to the *Goonies* generation. Hopefully, they will get the reference and share the same laugh I had when I thought of it. My other audience members who are on the outside of the joke will see it as I set it up, the older sister using her headphones too loudly to hear her sister’s knocks for help. This simple situation is common and plays off the idea that teenagers are all too busy with music and themselves to care about anyone else. The audience on the outside of the *Goonies* joke will share a laugh at the common situation, and the song will just be some random loud song to them.
I found that in copyright law there is a doctrine entitled Fair Use governing the use of copyrighted material. The specific passage I am talking about is section 107.

§ 107 · Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use
Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 106 and 106A, the fair use of a copyrighted work, including such use by reproduction in copies or phonorecords or by any other means specified by that section, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include—
(1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
(2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
(3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
(4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.
The fact that a work is unpublished shall not itself bar a finding of fair use if such finding is made upon consideration of all the above factors.

The breakdown of the sections of the document describing how to determine if fair use is applicable is too long to cite, but I will summarize it here. The first important thing to note is that fair use does not govern the size of the of the song for use; there is no set limit on the amount used, but in precedent cases, the less used, the more likely the case is found to be in fair use.

In section one, the court wants to know why the material is being used. For example, are copies being made to sell or are they being used to teach a class? Is the use of the material defaming the original piece or artist? I am not defaming Cindy Lauper with partial use of her song, nor am I making copies of this movie to sell.

Section two simply wants to determine if the original material is copyrighted and not public domain to avoid someone from suing over public property. This song has been around for a long time and is well-known from its popularity, and is known copyrighted material.
Section three talks about the amount used versus the original source to help determine if
the use is fair. I stated in my introduction to this section that this particular section does not set a
solid number on percentage for fair use, but the idea is the less the better. The run time of the
song is three minutes and thirty eight seconds. I have used a total of eight seconds and nine
frames; rounding to eight seconds I have used .27% of the total original work. It is hard to cite a
precedent case here because cases range from citing 400 words from an essay as being illegal to
Sony versus Universal City Studios, where Sony was found in fair use when it created the
Betamax and allowed its distribution for private homes. My use of the original material is
virtually negligible, and again I will not be selling copies of my movie.

The fourth section assesses if the use affects the market for or hinders sales of the original
work. Again I am not selling this piece, and the few places where people can publicly view my
work will not have a market great enough to stop or outsell the whole original piece.

In conclusion, if I were to have a court case, my percentage use of original material,
nonprofit, educational, and non libelous use of the material would not constitute copyright
infringement against me, and since the university is an institution for learning, there certainly
would not be a case against this school.

I had the rest of the piece originally scored by a music student and now friend Brittney
Stewart. Working with a person who is talented musically has been a dream. I first spoke to him
like an actor and approached each scene with a mood and objective, but I found that to be too
complex. I then simplified things down to the little girl, the militant sister, and a scary monster.

I left him alone to fill the score with his ideas and then met with him when he finished a
section to discuss notes and get my approval. I had only a few requests in timing and pitch. With
the rest of the score, he was entirely accurate and added a few sound effects here and there to
help slow scenes and accent certain moments. My composer brought insight and special moments to this piece that I would have never thought of. Brittney was an invaluable asset for this project.
Chapter 8

Special Effects

Special effects was another department where I truly had fun. Since my story comes from the perspective of a seven year old girl, I felt there were many things I could get away with, and this was true. A small handful of people saw strings or the odd flight patterns of things in my frames; conversely, others said that it worked completely. It was never my intention to have my strings visible, but I anticipated some strings would show up in frame. It was another happy accident moment because my audience accepted and laughed at the strings in my movie.

My motivation for having special effects of this nature was to add visibly to the jokes and the fantastic nature of my story. I had fishing line I purchased from the local sporting goods store attached to everything that needed to fly or open by magic. The phone, fridge and all the doors that open by themselves had people outside of the frames operating the other ends of the strings.

The other aspect of my special effects was more of a simple choice to use light and shadow to create a monster. Although this may belong more in the cinematography section, I classify it under special effects. As far as execution of creating a shadow and making it somewhat resemble a human form, I succeeded. The execution was simple. I blasted a surface with hard light and had my actor do the actions I requested in the light out of frame. My intention was that the monster is made of shadow and is the physical manifestation of my little girl’s fears. Largely, I was successful at this as my audience stated that they understood the monster’s goal in stopping the little girl from getting her ice cream.
Chapter 9

Wardrobe

I also designed the wardrobe for my film. I sewed the cape and the suit of maxi pads. The learning curve during sewing was comical. The first obstacle I encountered was needles jamming in the sodium polyacrylate inside the maxi pads. I tried stapling the maxi pads to the clothing, and finally I found that using safety pins would hold them in place. Several people asked me why I didn't use tape. I was looking for something more stable that would lessen the probability of wardrobe malfunctions. This proved to be true in the end as I only had one pad come loose during the entire shoot.

I had only a few simple choices I had to make. One was my cow cape for my little girl. The idea behind it was completely character driven. I took the motivation that my little girl’s goal was to get the ice cream. Ice cream is made from milk which comes from cows; therefore, a cow print materialized the thought of ice cream.

My other costumes came from the necessity of the joke, such as, the maxi pad outfit. I could have made that suit from anything, like football gear or hockey gear. I wanted to construct a joke that would cross adult concepts with the mind of a child. Since she is too young to understand the use of feminine products, I made her a suit of armor out of maxi pads to make the joke come full circle.
Chapter 10

Budget

My goal was to complete this movie for fewer than one thousand dollars. I was hoping for approximately six hundred, but I allowed myself to budget up to fifteen hundred dollars. I made a solid promise to myself to remain under the goal amount. I am using foresight here, because I know that spending a large amount of money at this point in my life is dangerous. Making movies is fun, but I have seen several people get into financial trouble because they did not think ahead.

The making of this movie was an interesting adventure. I basically made the movie over the course of a month. From paycheck to paycheck, I budgeted the money I actually had. Each weekend, my sound guy complained that I did not have wireless microphones, but I could not afford the batteries for the packs. I countered this by running two boom mics. I also made sure that there were power cords left to run the DARS as I definitely could not afford batteries to run those.

I would have been successful in completing this film with the budget of $600 if it were not for my casting agent. I had agreed to pay my actress $330, leaving $270 for food and certain props. I finished, spending roughly $1,100 total on my movie. I was satisfied with this because I was below the upper limit I had set. All totaled, my actress cost me $660, my catering was $300, and truck diesel and other expendables were about $200.
I was able to wrangle all props and other things that might normally have to be purchased with the concept of “beg, borrow, and steal” from everyone and anyone. This is the greatest piece of advice I can offer to someone in the photographic or the movie industry to keep costs low. The only props I had to buy were the fabric for the cape and blanket and my ice cream buckets.

I applied the same logic to many of my other props in the movie to save money, such as borrowing all of the clothes from my actors. I took pajamas from another student’s film for my little girl, and I used my students and people in the equipment room to make donations in the form of props. Girls donated tampons and maxi pads and several people donated their printer paper. The list goes on of all the things I utilized to complete my film.

This was a great learning experience for me, but especially difficult since I do not have a car and do not know as many people as I did in my undergraduate studies. I ultimately learned to plan ahead and always ask to see what is available for free.
Chapter 11

Distribution

My distribution plan is simple. I will not have any printouts made or handouts for the festival table. I do not have a budget set aside for this. I will seek all the free-entry festivals first and then try for some of the less expensive ones later. I will have to have a public screening of my movie to complete the thesis process. This is planned with my classmate Kevin Hughes on the last night of the University of New Orleans film festival.
Chapter 12

Analysis

I would like to close with one last issue. I originally wanted to run this film by two test audiences: one educated in film arts and the other a general audience who watches movies for fun. The best words I heard from my undergrad master, which were then repeated by Professor Retz, were, “We react to the setting we watch the movies in.” When we watch them in a classroom, we are looking for little things; when we watch them in a large, dark theatre, our minds are at ease and not thinking critically.

Sadly, I have to report that I failed in this attempt, the reason being that I am simply too burdened with other work and have not made the time to communicate with people outside the department. This failure was on a large scale, although I have been successful with bringing people not educated in film production in at random intervals to watch and give feedback about the movie, and I have followed their advice.

I did not disregard the advice of my peers, either. I have had several screenings with fellow students during the entire creation of this project. David Leblanc is of particular note in this field, as he has provided me with insight in areas of pacing my edits and timing of the little girl’s voice over.

I sought to have the audience members not educated in film production because I believed I could get away with more mistakes or oddities in my film. Of the several continuity errors in my movie, only two main ones are pointed out: the knob on the door and the cabinets being different. The list of other errors is large and was not commented on. This, I feel, proves my point: a real test audience will show what you can get away with.
Conclusion

To conclude my thesis and my time at this institution, I am sincerely thankful to have had this opportunity to learn new concepts in all aspects of filmmaking. I can now mix those with the previous knowledge I carry from experience and my undergrad work. This hopefully exemplifies growth and advancement in my area of study.

I recall first arriving here in the end of summer 2007. My first major shoot was Kevin Hughes’ *Pulp Fiction* reshoot. I was a grip on that set, and I remember getting orders for a 2k Fresnel and then a 1k baby on a combo stand. Then I was bombarded with other terms; sand bags, high rollers, focus, spot; my head was spinning. In my undergrad, I never had these fabulous pieces of equipment. The undergrad equipment room consisted of four cameras, two Lowell 650 kits, two mics, and two boom poles. I laugh now at what we had to work with, but I also commend my teaching staff. I can point out the lack of gear at my former school, but if I were to return there, I could do an infinite amount of things with those lights. This is because of the knowledge I have gained from my mentors here.

My thesis project strayed from some norms and took some chances: refusing the top technology, grounding myself in terms of budget, and practicing with do-it-yourself gear. I can only say I did this because of the knowledge given to me. A well-known saying, that I honestly believe, is “Give a man fish and you will feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Here, I have learned to fish.
Even though my movie has countless flaws, each time my audience laughs at the jokes, my heart is warmed that I reached them for at least that moment. I then feel the movie is successful because my audience gets at least some of the jokes. Looking at myself now compared to when I started this project, I can see my growth. I now know when and where I can cut corners, how to use professional gear and think on my feet to create solutions to problems, writing, directing… the list goes on and on. Also, I learned how to respect the basic fundamentals that govern everything we do in our art.

I leave here only to become a student of the world. For the rest of my life, I hope to continuously learn and pass that knowledge to the next generation as well as it was handed on to me. As I always say to my FTCA 2510 students, “We are learning an art, not a science. Enjoy it.”
References

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Filmography


*What’s A Nice Girl Like You Doing In A Place Like This?* dir. Martin Scorsese, 14 mins. NYU University, 1963.


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The undersigned hereby warrants and represents that the undersigned has full right and authority to solely enter into this agreement concerning the above described premises, and that the undersigned hereby indemnifies and holds [Erik Reuter], and/or its agents, harmless from and against any and all loss, liability, costs, damages or claims of any nature arising from, growing out of, or concerning the use of the above described premises except those directly caused by the negligent acts or deliberate misconduct of [Erik Reuter], or its agents.

By: ____________________________
Signature of Authorized Property Representative

Date: 1-21-2010
LOCATION RELEASE

SERIES / PROGRAM TITLE: Ice Cream You Scream

PRODUCTION DATE: 1-1-2010

Permission is hereby granted to [Erik Reuter] to use the property located at

1620 Elysian Fields Ave

Cannero's Market

for the purpose of photographing and recording scenes for the above program produced by [Erik Reuter].

Permission includes the right to bring personnel and equipment onto the property and to remove them after completion of the work. The permission herein granted shall include the right, but not the obligation, to photograph the actual name connected with the premises and to use such name in the program(s).

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By: ____________________________

Signature of Authorized Property Representative

Date: 1-1-2010
TALENT RELEASE FORM
(Rev. February 22, 2002)

I authorize the undersigned Producer to make use of my appearance on:

PROGRAM TITLE: Ice Cream You Scream
PRODUCER’S NAME: Erik Porter
PRODUCER’S PHONE NUMBER: 219-616-1748
DATE OF TAPING: 1-1-2010

I understand that I am to receive no compensation for this appearance. The Producer shall have complete ownership of the program. I give the Producer the right to use my name, likeness and biographical material to publicize the program and the services of the Producer.

The Producer may:
1. Photograph me and record my voice and likeness for the purpose of the production mentioned above, whether by film, videotape, magnetic tape, digitally or otherwise;
2. Make copies of the photographs and recordings so made;
3. Use my name and likeness for the purposes of education, promotion or advertising of the sale or trading in the photographs, recordings and any copies so made.

I further understand the master tape remains the property of the Producer and that there will be no restrictions on the number of times that my name and likeness may be used.

Name (please print) Edward R. Cox Date: 5/13/10
Address 732 3rd Frenchmen St
City New Orleans State LA Zip Code 70116
Talent Signature (Parent or Guardian if under 18 years of age) Edward R. Cox Date: 5/13/10
TALENT RELEASE FORM
(Rev. February 22, 2003)

I authorize the undersigned Producer to make use of my appearance on:

PROGRAM TITLE: Ice Cream, You Scream
PRODUCER'S NAME: Eric Bressler
PRODUCER'S PHONE NUMBER: 219-616-1745
DATE OF TAPING: 1-1-2010

I understand that I am to receive no compensation for this appearance. The Producer shall have complete ownership of the program. I give the Producer the right to use my name, likeness and biographical material to publicize the program and the services of the Producer.

The Producer may:
1. Photograph me and record my voice and likeness for the purpose of the production mentioned above, whether by film, videotape, magnetic tape, digitally or otherwise;
2. Make copies of the photographs and recordings so made;
3. Use my name and likeness for the purposes of education, promotion or advertising of the sale or trading in the photographs, recordings and any copies so made.

I further understand the master tape remains the property of the Producer and that there will be no restrictions on the number of times that my name and likeness may be used.

Name (please print): Michele Enright  Date: 5/14/10
Address 1121 Leonine St.  
City New Orleans  State LA  Zip Code 70115
Talent Signature (Parent or Guardian if under 18 years of age)  Michele Enright  Date: 5/14/10
Ice Cream, You Scream. (Thesis Project)

By

Erik Reuter
SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

People eating ice cream in various types, cones, bowls, sundaes.

LYDIA (V.O.)
Did you know that in old times kings sent servants into the mountains to get ice so they could mash fruit with it? And this was the first ice cream dessert of record.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Ice cream buckets rolling down the check out belt at a supermarket.

LYDIA (V.O.)
I too have servants to fetch me ice cream. Mom brings home a fresh bucket every week.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

LYDIA, 8, stands in superhero pose, garbed in jeans and a t-shirt with a cow patterned cape flapping in the wind.

LYDIA (V.O.)
I think it's my cape she fears. After all, it's the source of all my power.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lydia stands on a crate to reach the double sinks, one filled with soapy water and the other empty for rinsing. She is washing dishes. The kitchen is large and well equipped, with a nice refrigerator in the corner.

LYDIA (V.O.)
Ok. So sometimes she's not afraid of my power. But I'm really working for what awaits me in the freezer.

Lydia turns her head. As she speaks, the freezer door opens itself.
CONTINUED:  

Page 1  

LYDIA (V.O.)  

In there is a fresh bucket of Neapolitan ice cream. I wish mom would just buy vanilla. But she always says that Neapolitan is like our family, different flavors stuck together in a box and we all have to get along.  

Page 2  

A large girl figure rushes across the frame and closes the freezer door.  

LYDIA (V.O.)  

That's my sister Leah, she's a teenager. Obsessed with things teenage.  

Page 2  

Leah rolls her eyes. LEAH, 16, sits at the kitchen table and opens her magazine.  

LYDIA (V.O.)  

You know, magazines and make up. She has a billion of them! Just look.  

Page 2  

Leah sits at the table as stacks of magazines magically appear all over, filling her space.  

LYDIA (V.O.)  

Think that's bad, you should see her room.  

Page 2  

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY  

Leah has the standard teenage room, pop posters on the wall, her name on the door in puffy letters and photos and clothes galore. On her dresser top various articles of make up appear out of thin air with a popping sound until the dresser is full and they spill over.  

Page 2  

LYDIA (V.O.)  

Yikes... Oh and her favorite magazine, yeah you guessed it.  

Page 2  

INT. KITCHEN - DAY  

C.U. on Leah as she brings a magazine into frame and smiles.  

LYDIA stands facing her sister with a stack of washed dishes in her hand. Pointing up to the high cabinets.  

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Shot 11

PAGES

LEAH

You're a big girl now, you can do it. Besides, it's not my turn for dishes.

Lydia scrunches her face at her sister.

What?

LYDIA

MOM! Leah won't help with the dishes.

Lydia smiles at her sister.

MOM (O.S.)

Shot 13

Leah help your sister.

Leah sighs.

FINE. Go get your stool.

Leah takes the stack of dishes from Lydia. Lydia heads to the closet door. Lydia studies the closet door before opening it. Finally, she opens the door.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

This is a small walk-in closet without a light, cluttered with cleaning supplies and kitchen needs. Lydia's stool is along the back wall.

Lydia steps into the closet. The door closes behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah presses her body against the door, trapping her sister inside. Lydia's shrieks are heard.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia's face is the only thing seen amongst the blackness. Then, other lights expose the walls of what appears to be a gutted building, straight out of a horror movie.

(continued)
CONTINUED:

There is sinister laughter, followed by the sound of rubber gloves. Then a silhouette of a doctor appears, laughing. The figure opens a knife and moves toward Lydia.

Lydia runs towards a door. She stops and gasps, as a large GLOB OF DARKNESS drops from the top of the door. The glob stands up and takes a human form.

Lydia runs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah lets her sister out of the closet. Lydia runs out and gasps for air.

The doctor! Grow up, you had surgery a year ago.

Lydia sticks her tongue out and heads straight to the freezer, grabs an ice cream bucket, and heads to the counter.

Lydia smacks the bucket of ice cream on the counter. She takes a bowl and spoon from the dish rack. She sinks the spoon easily into the vanilla portion of the ice cream. Scrunches her face.

I hate soft serve. This needs some time in the deep freeze.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The back yard is small and fenced in. Various flowers line the fence. In the center there is Lydia’s play swing set and slide, behind that is a SHED. Lydia takes the bucket out the back door of the house and crosses the back yard.
INT. SHED - DAY

Shot 37

The shed is filled with yard junk, lawn chairs and an old A.C. unit. By the door there is a chest freezer. Lydia puts the bucket inside the freezer, then exits.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Shot 38

Lydia approaches the house and goes in. Behind her the shadows of the fence rumbles and the blob oozes up and over the fence into Lydia’s back yard.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shot 39

Lydia opens the freezer door and pulls out the previous ice cream bucket. Leah is at the table reading her magazine.

Lydia opens the bucket. All the flavors have roughly half except, for vanilla which has been destroyed, barely any remains.

Lydia scoops out the vanilla and with surgical precision removes the chocolate that has been fused with the vanilla ice cream, letting the chocolate plop in the sink.

LEAH

Your gonna waste that? Loser.

Lydia’s bowl is filled with vanilla. She raises the spoon to her mouth when Leah swoops in and takes the spoon and bowl from her.

Lydia bounces and pouts.

LYDIA

MOM! Leah took my bowl!

LEAH

She hasn’t finished her homework yet.

MOM (O.S.)

Honey, finish your work first and you can have all the ice cream you want.

The sisters make faces at each other.

Lydia opens her school bag and pulls out her math book. She sets up at the kitchen table. Leah is across from Lydia at the counter eating her bowl of ice cream and making every spoonful a big deal.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LEAH
What's with you and vanilla anyway? Why not try something different? Like strawberry.

LYDIA
Strawberry is red.

LEAH
So?

LYDIA
Blood is red. If you cared about me you would remember that night.

INT. LYDIA BEDROOM - NIGHT
Lydia's room is decorated with her pictures and awards from school. Everything is fuzzy. Lydia tosses in the bed. Then gets out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT
The hallway has bare walls. The only thing in the space is Leah's bedroom door. Everything is fuzzy. Lydia pounds on her sister's door.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT
Leah is in her room dancing to her headphones on max volume. She sings, deaf to the knocks at her door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT
Lydia gives up on her sister's door and heads downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT
Lydia leans over the sink and spits blood into the sink.

LYDIA (V.O.)
Doctor said it was my tonsils. I still don't trust him. Nothing was right about this.
INT. SURGERY ROOM - DAY

Bright light fills the area. Looming above Lydia are the faces of a SCARY DOCTOR and his TWO NURSES. They smile and laugh manically as they put on their masks. The doctor opens a large knife and moves it toward Lydia. The lights become blinding.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Lydia's own room with a bed and tv. She is alone and groggy in the bed.

LYDIA (V.O.)
After the surgery was over my family wasn't even there! Their youngest child and they abandon me!

Shot 56

A tall man in scrubs carrying a tray enters. He is the crisis nurse DERRICK. He carries a bowl of vanilla ice cream and a small package with him.

LYDIA (V.O.)
And then my angel appeared.

Shot 57

Derrick sits besides Lydia and feeds her a spoonful of ice cream. Lydia eats in total ecstasy.

LYDIA (V.O.)
So... Smooth, soothing. So caring. I'd never known anything like this before.

Shot 58

Derrick hands her the box. Lydia opens it. She picks up a cow patterned blanket and hugs it as tight as she can.

LYDIA (V.O.)
Later my family popped in with flowers and gifts. They said they got them for me while I was sleeping. Hmmmph.

Shot 59

Lydia's MOTHER, 42, FATHER, 44, and sister all appear in the room holding flowers and balloons. They come closer to her to give her hugs and kisses.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah rolls her eyes at her sister.

You should get an award for your drama. Finish your homework.

Leah puts the empty bowl in the dishwasher and heads out of the kitchen.

Lydia has completed three problems on her worksheet. She fusses and stares off into space, pondering the evil properties of subtraction.

Duugghhh subtraction. Why would you ever want to take something away?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Three buckets of ice cream sit on the counter top. One vanilla, one chocolate and a strawberry.

Unless of course it's chocolate.

The chocolate one disappears.

Or strawberry.

The strawberry one disappears. Only the vanilla bucket remains.

And you can't take this one away without eating it first.

The bucket then gets large chunks out of the ice cream until it is empty and then the container gets large bites out of it until there is nothing left. A large burp is heard.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia at the table staring off into space.

I can't wait until math allows for endless ice cream. Just picture it!
INT. GROCERY FREEZER SECTION - DAY

An empty freezer, then a box of ice cream pops into it, then another, then four boxes appear followed by eight boxes. Boxes appear until the door opens and they spill out.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia is smiling and staring into space.

3 MUM (O.S.)
Sweeties, we're leaving.

INT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

The doorway is grand. Leah and Lydia hug Mum and Dad.

LYDIA (V.O.)
They go out every Wednesday.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia sits down and works a math problem.

Suddenly the lights go out. Lydia screeches in fright. The lights come back on. Leah is flicking the switch.

LEAH
No Mum and Dad to save you now.

The lights go back out. They come back on and Lydia is covered by her cape.

LEAH
Little baby uses the blanket.

LEAH
Shut up.

Lydia puts out her hand and with magic causes the phone to fly out of Lydia's hand and into her own. She answers and flirts into the phone.

LEAH
Jake? Hmmm. Yeah. They're gone, you can come over now.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Leah looks at her sister at the table, and tilts the phone back.

LEAH

Finish your homework and I promise
I'll get you all the ice cream you want.

Leah turns and walks out.

At the speed of light Lydia’s hands move to complete her homework. Lydia slams the math book and races into the living room where her sister is painting her nails on the couch.

29 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is spacious. Couches face the TV in the corner wall and books line the shelves throughout the room. The ceiling above the couch has a large water damaged area.

Leah sits painting her nails when Lydia slides in front of her with a huge smile. Leah shakes her head. The doorbell dings. Leah rockets off the couch to answer it.

30 INT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

Leah opens the door and outside is JAKE, 16. Leah jumps into his arms and the two teens are locked together in kissy face. Stuck together they shuffle back to the couch. Lydia rolls her eyes.

31 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia steps into the living room. Her sister and Jake are on the couch locked together in kissy face.

LYDIA

I want my ice cream.

The two teenagers never budge.

LYDIA

You promised me. Now go get it.

Again the teens never move.

LYDIA

If I get it, I’m going to eat it all and get sick, and you’ll be in trouble.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

The teens are busy. 

Fine. 

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia steps out the back door. In the distance, the SHADOWS move and growl. The darkness roars and rushes toward Lydia. Inches from grabbing her, Lydia dives back inside and slams the door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia takes large panicked breaths. (LYDIA V.O.)

The darkness.

She looks outside at the shed in the back yard. Everything is quiet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The teens on the couch have almost merged into one being. Lydia enters the room and stands before them. Directly above them is the water damaged ceiling.

LYDIA

A monster tried to eat me.

The teens answer Lydia with the sounds of love.

Lydia steps her foot and pouts. She looks up above the two teens, at the water damaged area of the ceiling.

(LYDIA V.O.)

Bad hasn’t fixed the tub yet.

Lydia races upstairs.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is plush and well decorated. She turns on the cold water and rushes out. The water rushes down the drain.
36 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Water drops collect on the ceiling. The drops fall directly on the faces of the two teens. Lydia watches in expectation. The water does not ease the kissing teens. They shift over a little bit bumping the end table, knocking off the nail polish bottle. WEN
LYDIA (V.O.)
That's it. The lady cabinet.

37 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT
The cabinet door opens to darkness.
LYDIA (V.O.)
It's a place that only my mom and sister are allowed.

LYDIA pulls out two boxes. She holds in her right hand a tampon and in her left hand a maxi pad.

Oh my god.

38 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Lydia pops into frame with her body covered in maxi pads and a pipe ready to shoot the tampons.
LYDIA (V.O.)
Missiles and body armor.

Lydia takes aim, a deep breath and fires at the two teens on the couch. A direct hit, followed by several others. The teens never budge.
LYDIA (V.O.)
Alright, it's personal now.

Lydia dashes to the bookshelf and pulls out the family album, turns to the baby photos of her sister and proceeds to show them to the lump of teenager on the couch.

Leah turns to her sister with fire in her eyes. She grabs the photo album and her sister's arm and storms into the kitchen.
EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Leah flings the back door open and points to the shed.

You want it? It's right there.

Lydia looks outside and then proceeds to step on the porch. The shadows screech and growl again rushing Lydia. She turns and runs upstairs.

INT. LYDIA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lydia tears off the remaining maxi pads. She goes to her window and looks outside. She picks up her stuffed animal from the window sill.

I've got to get out there, Hippo.

Lydia looks around her room. She spots her fish bowl, grabs it and sets Hippo on the counter. She removes her cape and unfolds it to the whole length.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The back door creaks open. Lydia is covered in her blanket and wears her fish bowl on her head. Cautiously, she steps outside. All is quiet.

She proceeds with each step gaining confidence and speed. When she reaches the halfway point the shadows rumble and the darkness swoops down at her knocking the helmet off her head.

Lydia dives for the helmet but the darkness takes it into the shadows.

Lydia scrambles underneath her blanket. The darkness circles above her, snarling at the outside of the blanket.

INT. BLANKET - NIGHT

Lydia gasps for air, as each snarl makes her wince. The noise stops. Lydia waits a moment then peeks outside. All is quiet again.
EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The latch on the shed door pops up, the Darkness opens the door to the shed.

INT. BLANKET - NIGHT

Lydia watches on, as the Darkness creeps toward the open door of the shed.

PAGE 31

Lydia: No! It's mine.

The backyard falls silent.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Making a hood around her head, Lydia rises to her feet. She looks at the shed which rumbles and moves further away. She turns toward the house it, too, rumbles and slides away from her. Breathing deeply Lydia looks around.

PAGE 31

Lydia: It's time.

Lydia takes off her blanket and drops it besides her. She takes a step forward, all is quiet. She runs toward the shed.

PAGE 32

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Lydia opens the freezer and gets the bucket of ice cream.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia walks with the bucket in hand. Without warning the darkness pounces Lydia, who simply holds out her hand.

PAGE 33

Lydia: Stop! No more.

PAGE 33

The darkness and shadows scream in agony as they melt away.
INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia sets the bucket on the counter, looks at the empty dish rack and at the upper cabinet.

She looks at her sister and boyfriend engaged in kissy face on the couch and sticks her tongue out at the two.

Lydia slides a chair over to the counter and steps on it and gets a bowl out of the cabinet.

Lydia removes the lid of the ice cream bucket and shovels out the vanilla. She pauses after a couple of scoops.

At the table, Lydia sits behind a mound of ice cream with chocolate, strawberry and vanilla. She digs in, and smiles with every bite.

END.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY
SCENE: 14
ANGLE: WS. L10:A TAKES ICE CREAM
SHOTS: 39

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
SCENE: 14
ANGLE: WS. PAN FLOW L10:A
SHOTS: 40

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
SCENE: 14
ANGLE: MS. PAN TO LEAH
LEAH LINE: 5
SHOTS: 41

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
SCENE: 14
ANGLE: LEAH PULLS SPOON TO LEAH
LEAH LINE: 6
SHOTS: 42
Int. Hallway - Night
Scene: 16
Angle: Dolly Follow L1004
Shot: 48

Int. Hallway - Night
Scene: 16
Angle: Dolly Follow L1004 END
Shot: 48

Int. Leah Room - Night
Scene: 17
Angle: Dolly BACK FROM HEADPHONES
Shot: 49

Int. Hallway - Night
Scene: 18
Angle: MS. Lydia GIVE UP
Shot: 50

Int. Hallway - Night
Scene: 18
Angle: W.S. L1004 STAIRS
Shot: 51

Int. Kitchen - Night
Scene: 19
Lyric Lines: 17
Angle: W.S. Lydia to Sink
Shot: 52
Int. Recovery Room - Night
Scene 21
Lydia Line 21
Angle: MS, Lydia Eats
Shot: 58

Int. Recovery Room - Night
Scene 21
Lydia Line 21
Angle: MS, Lydia Eats Blanket
Shot: 59

Int. Recovery Room - Night
Scene 21
Lydia Line 21
Angle: MS, Empty to Family Pod
Shot: 60

Int. Recovery Room - Night
Scene 21
Lydia Line 21
Angle: MS, Family to Kiss
Shot: 60

Int. Recovery Room - Day
Scene 22
Lydia Line 22
Angle: MS, Lydia Live
Shot: 61
Int. Kitchen - Night
Scene 24
Lydia Line 26
Angle: M.S. Lydia
Shot: 65

Int. Grocery Freezer - Day
Scene 25
Angle: M.S. Empty Freezer
Shot: 66

Int. Grocery Freezer - Day
Scene 25
Angle: M.S. Box In
Shot: 66

Int. Grocery Freezer - Day
Scene 25
Angle: W.S. Boxes Grow
Shot: 66

Int. Grocery Freezer - Day
Scene 25
Angle: W.S. Door Open
Shot: 66

Int. Kitchen - Night
Scene 26
Mom Line 27
Angle: M.S. Lydia + Out
Shot: 67
Int. Shed - Night
Scene: 46
Angle: MS
Lydia gets crane
Shot: 148

Ext. House - Night
Scene: 47
Angle: MS
Lydia out of Shed
Shot: 149

Ext. House - Night
Scene: 47
Angle: WS
Dolly Rush to Lydia
Shot: 150

Ext. House - Night
Scene: 47
Angle: MS
End Rush Dolly
Shot: 150

Ext. House - Night
Scene: 47
Angle: MS
Lydia leaves
Shot: 151
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<td>Angle: LYDIA Scoops Cream</td>
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Quicktime player is need to view the movie

Get Quicktime player here http://www.apple.com/quicktime
Vita

Erik Shaun Reuter was born in Chicago, Illinois on October 3rd 1979. Adopted and raised in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. He received his B.S. in Mass Communication from the University of Wisconsin.