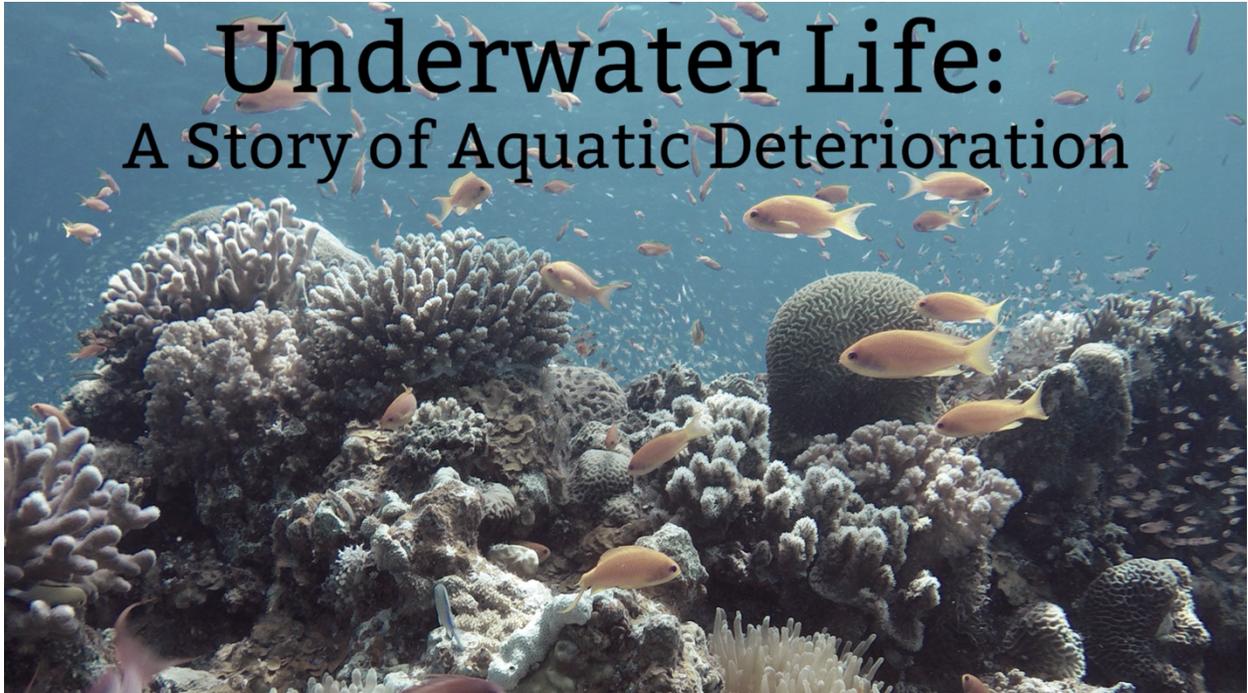


Underwater Life:
A Story of Aquatic Deterioration



By: Eric Lax

Pre-Production

Going into my last semester of college I was thinking about a project that I wanted to do for my senior project. Coming up with an idea was much harder than I thought it would be. I kept thinking I had to do something with animation since a lot of people in my class had already figured out what they were doing. A lot of them wanted to do some sort of animation. About 2 weeks before the semester started, I got the idea of doing an underwater documentary. This came from my love of scuba diving and photographing nature. Bring two things I love to do made this project turn into an exciting new challenge.

Starting my documentary was a little difficult over winter break because there is no scuba diving in New Jersey in the middle of January. This being said I began brain storming on what I wanted my documentary to be focused on. I figure making a documentary about the environmental issues plaguing the world today would be a meaningful and powerful video.

Production

During my research I knew I wanted to go to places that were different in what it was



and the life that is present in those different places. I knew from the beginning I wanted to go to the natural springs that are all around Florida. One of the biggest spring systems in Florida is Crystal River Springs which is a

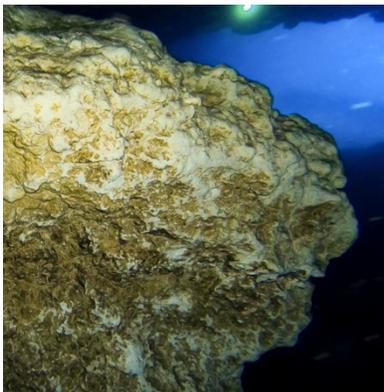
popular destination spot for tourists. This is because Crystal River has the largest population of



Manatees. I knew that if I was going to do a documentary I need to have manatees. The idea of getting to film manatees seemed as if it would not happen due to the fact that the first time I went to Crystal rivers they were not in the place that I went. It was not until the second time going

that I picked a different part of the river where there were at least ten swimming around. I honestly thought that filming manatees would be the easiest animal to film. This is because they are in one place in Florida and the fact that they are so big.

The next spot that I decided on was Blue Grotto. Blue Grotto is the largest freshwater cavern in Florida. The cavern is a hundred feet deep with magnificent rock formations. These rocks have been sculpted over millions of years from the time that this cavern was formed.



Blue Grotto was also a great spot for me to film because it had the depths for me to get shots from one hundred feet down. This kind of shot was important to me because it doesn't matter how deep a waterway is plastic and other pollutants can find a way to get down.

The final place I filmed at was on the east coast of Florida in West Palm Beach. This location was called Blue Heron Bridge. This dive spot is very popular for divers of all levels, especially photographers due to the wide range of species living at this one spot. Blue Heron Bridge was the spot that I got the best shots of trash and beautiful wildlife. Under the bridge I was able to film many different animals like barracudas, eagle rays, sea stars and many more.

This spot was the perfect place to film because since there are so many people that go there trash was going to be present. Although I was going to be there it was far more than I expected. This is because since many people photograph these animals they would want it pristine. This was obviously not the case



knew trash would have go to to be there were

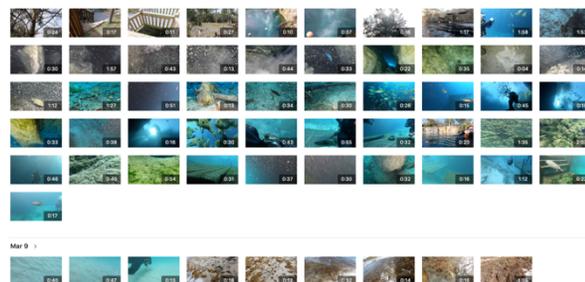
styrofoam, plastic wrappers and even latex gloves. All of those objects break down into small pieces hindering the growth of plant and animals that live in this one spot. This is a global problem which many non-profits have been fighting to clean up and protect.

Throughout my research of all of these places I looked into the effects that plastics and trash have on our what happens to plastics trash I was even more documentary to can do to help our environment.



environment. Learning about and other non-biodegradable invested in making the educated people about what we

After getting all of the footage I need my next step was to go through all of the footage. This is when I began writing down which clips I wanted to use for my documentary. The process of going through the footage was a long and drawn out. This is because I had over 5 hours' worth of footage to pick from. All thought it took me a while to go



through all of the footage I am happy that I had a lot more footage than I needed. Even though



I had a lot of footage to pick from there was a lot of clips to pick from picking the right one gave me some trouble because there were many videos that would be able to show the meaning I wanted my

documentary to portray.

Post Production

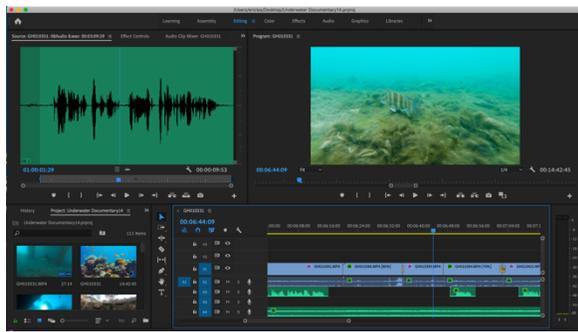
I then started putting my documentary together using Premiere Pro. The way I began to set up the documentary was starting with Blue Grotto then Crystal river and finishing with Blue Heron Bridge. The reason I set up my video this way was because during my research I watched many different episodes of BBC's Blue Planet. They stay in one location and then jump to another which I liked the way it flowed through each location.

The hardest part of making this documentary for me was definitely working with the audio of the music and narrations. The music I used was made by a Friend of Mine Alex Reed. After going talking with him how I wanted it to sound he made something much better than I ever expected I would be able to use. The music has a soft and calming sound that you would expect from a documentary. It makes you feel like you are submerged with me underwater.



For the narration I first watched the documentary all the way through seeing where and when I wanted the narrations to go. The script itself took me a while because I either could not think of something to say or how I wanted a line to go with the video. After a few weeks of writing the script I sent it off to my dad to edit it.

After all of the edits were done it was time to record it. My friend Raji Shareef did all of the voice over work which was great because he knows how to control his voice to make the narration flow smoothly. The hardest part about the narration was editing how the voice sounds along with the music. This is because since recording in the studio there is no echo to



the voice I had to tweak the reverberation in the audio clip to give it a smoother and more natural sound. This was especially difficult because I had never worked with sound editing. Although I had never had experience with sound editing I was up

to the challenge.

Once the sound and edited what I could cut to was just over cutting what was cut maybe thirty cute more than 2



entire video was fully completed with video I began going through and seeing make it tell the best story. At first the video sixteen minutes. When I first started not important to the story I thought I would to fortyfive seconds off, but in the end I minutes of video.

In the end I am very happy with what I made. I never thought I would have the chance to make as high quality of a video as I did. I feel like this documentaery will help not only me, but could educate people around the world.