

Overview/Artist Statement:

I knew that I was going to do a film for my senior project. This was definitely a large change since I hadn't focused in on the video production field for the majority of my collegiate experience. Although New Media majors learn a wide variety of skills, unfortunately film is a subject that is really skimmed over. Since I have been interested in video production for as long as I can remember, I really wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone and make a film as my final project at UT. Although I have been editing and producing content on and off for about 11 years, all of it has been mostly DIY. Everything film related I had learned had been from either the internet or from messing around with programs and figuring it out on my own. That's why the whole DIY process of this senior project appealed to me so much. I thoroughly enjoyed myself (despite the tremendous amount of work) and I was able to take away so much from this experience.

I knew I wanted to do a film, but initially I wasn't sure on the type. As time passed, I started to really get inspired by documentaries. There's something about them that appeals to me so much. The whole concept of studying one topic for a long period of time and relaying it to video was something that really appealed to me. I decided that I was going to make a documentary for my senior project. I had no idea for a topic, so I made it a point to keep my eyes and ears open. It wasn't until one of my roommates and I were talking one day that he mentioned he was trying to put together a documentary on the current Gentrification process ongoing in the West/Downtown Tampa area. From there on out, my film took off.

At first I was a little hesitant, because I didn't really know much about the topic. I had never really even heard of the term "Gentrification" before. After much research and discussion, I realized that it was something that was apparent in my daily life, right in front of my eyes, and I

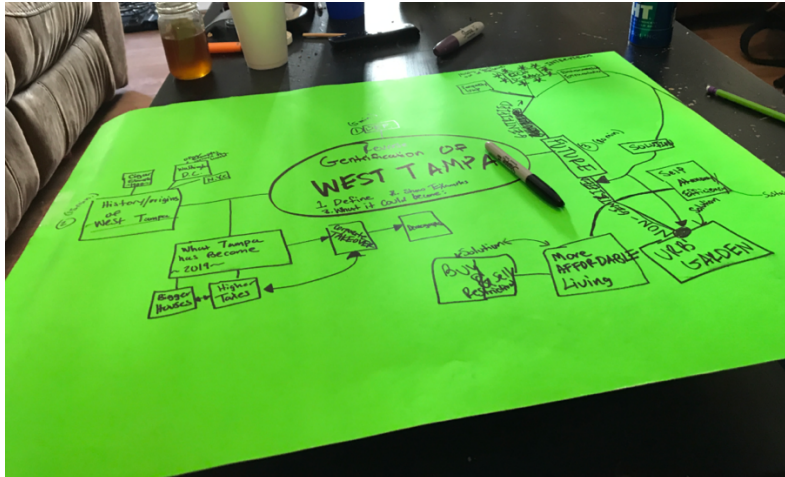
had never questioned it once. The amount of construction I see around Tampa on a daily is unreal. Roads are constantly being blocked off, stores are being boarded up, and peoples' perceptions of the city are always changing. Tampa is in a state of serious evolution and we're right in the middle. The issue is, most of us haven't stopped to question who is benefiting from these changes and who is being negatively affected. That's the whole reason why I decided to take on this topic. Yeah, I might initially have not known much about it, but I'm sure a lot of other people my age didn't either. A documentary in this digital age acts as the perfect outlet to spread awareness and educate others in a creative way.

Pre-Production/Planning:

At the beginning of the pre-production process I was insanely intimidated. It's a hell of a lot easier to say that you want to film a documentary than it is to actually sit down and take into consideration all of the steps and tasks that need to be completed in order to produce something like this. The only film classes I had taken was one Introduction and one Post-Production class, on top of never having even produced or even made a film of this magnitude before. There was a lot I had yet to learn and I realized I needed somehow implement years of experience I didn't yet have into one single semester.

For those who have never made a documentary or any film for that matter, it's very similar to doing a puzzle. At first, everything is scattered around your mind. It's the film maker's job to take it one step at a time to organize each and every idea. Only then can they start to piece everything together until the end product is a finished work of art.

So, the first step was to put lay all of my ideas for a plot down on paper:



Obviously, the film didn't really follow this outline exactly, but there's definitely bits and pieces that were re-organized and put together in the final product. This brainstorming session gave me a better grasp on what I wanted to film and where I wanted to go with this project. And, it's something that perfectly represents where I was with this film at the beginning.

Scatterbrained. It's really neat to look back at this and see where my mind once was, to where it is now.

Production:

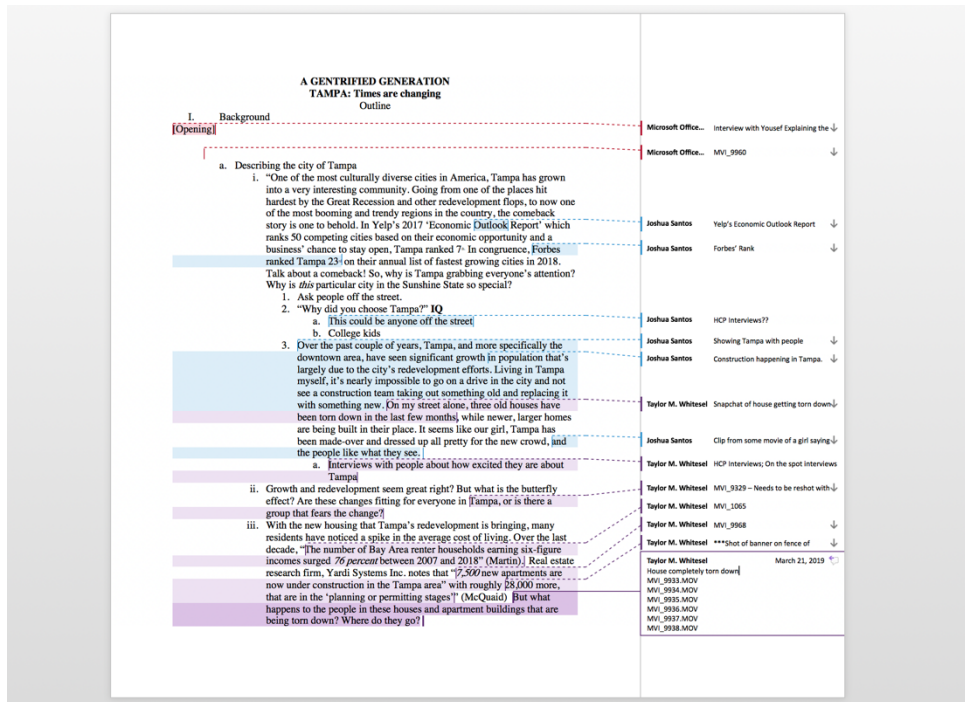
Style:

Observational documentaries are extremely hard produce and unfortunately, we struggled to find others who were passionate about gentrification to work with. We decided to go more with a Participatory style, in which my roommate and I took on a role. It's still observational in the sense that we did our research and now looked at the outcome. I have always been so fascinated by participatory style docs. Something about the researcher/narrator, going in depth and personal with his/her subject matter is really interesting for me and I think it provides a lot more to the audience. Viewers like to connect with the person they are watching and it makes it a lot easier

to see where they're coming from when you see the person directly interacting with the subject matter they are covering.

Script Writing Process:

We decided to go down a more traditional route in documentary process, so a script was indeed very necessary for this project. There were just so many thoughts and angles for this documentary and the script enabled us to have a better organizational standpoint. The script ended up being about seven pages long. The formatting included the main points and then the narration that I was planning on saying. I then went line by line and wrote in notes of what scenes I wanted. This was a very long and tedious process, but it made my life a hell of a lot easier when going into post. I could just have the script open with Premiere and go line by line with each clip.



Screenshot of page 1 of the script. On the right, you can see all of the notes containing which clips I wanted for each line.

Interviews: On the Spot

So, there's only so much B-Roll you can shoot before you need people/interviews. We ultimately ended up doing two main styles of interviews: On the spot, where we went off the street and interviewed random Tampa residents and asked them what they thought of the city; and sit-down interviews. The on the spot interviews were very hard for me initially. Being an introvert, it only makes sense that I hate talking to random people off the street, so this whole process really made me step out of my comfort zone.



In addition, to on the spot interviews, it's also essential that I have some experts talk about this topic first hand. After talking to my advisor, I was put in touch with some people who know a lot about gentrification and how it's happening in Tampa. My partner in this, Pat also had some people he knew of that were in the same boat. Now I really just needed to figure out how I was

going to film them. I had a meeting with Gregg, my other advisor regarding this and we concluded that instead of me going through all of the nitty gritty of setting up lights and audio and what have you all by myself, I would hire someone to do it for me. And, this is where my grant money came into play. We decided to give UT alumni and creator of “Next Level Visual Studios”, Spencer Haberman a call to see if he’d be willing to help me out. I got in touch with



him and his intern, Luke a little later, and I told them exactly what I wanted out of this experience. Ultimately, these

interviews turned out really well. I rented out the black box for two weekends and we set up sessions for our interviewees. The setup was pretty simple. Since we were in the Blackbox, we



were able to use the interior lighting to brighten our subjects. One main camera, a side camera, and a closeup camera. These angles really helped add further depth to the interviews. The only problem with these interviews

was the lack of audio quality. Since we were renting all of our equipment from the Cage on campus, we were limited to what they had available. Unfortunately, they had no microphones and we had to stick with an external H6 recorder. Some of the interviews turned out a tad quiet, but overall, it wasn't too bad.

Narration:

The next step in the production process after filming the interviews was going in and recording the narration. This turned out to be a lot harder and tedious than I thought it would be. I've never



really been a good public speaker and the thought of narrating an entire documentary seemed daunting as sound is everything to a film. I had to spend a lot of time in the audio recording suite here on campus

going over each section of my script and taking the time to really enunciate each and every word I said. It was a seriously long and gruesomely redundant process but it paid off.



UPA Meeting Shots:

A big part of my documentary is showing people react against gentrification in Tampa. One of the biggest groups responsible for doing so is the Urban Progress Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding ways to better educate the public on what's happening in the



city of West Tampa. This meant that they are also actively figuring out ways to have redevelopment while lowering the levels of gentrification. My partner Pat is a member of this organization and I

went with him a few times to film some shots of the meetings.



Drone Shots:

One thing that I knew I was going to need in this doc was some drone shots of downtown Tampa, specifically of all construction that is actively ongoing. I was in class one day and my advisor had pulled up a fellow classmate, Jason Ryan's drone footage that he shot in Thailand for



matter of us going out one day and getting it done.

Post- Production:

Overall Editing Process:

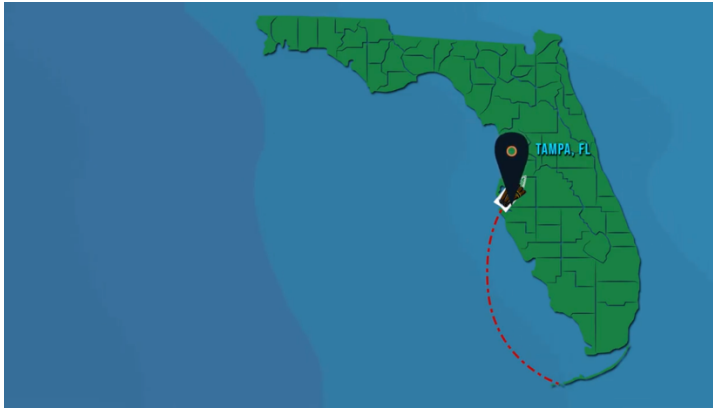
Editing was probably took the longest time out of this whole process. Total, I spent around 50 hours in the Cass building editing and cutting this doc. I mainly used premiere for the cutting. All of the motion graphics were done in After Effects, and the narration was done in Logic Pro X. Editing is what I'm good at and it's really where your project can turn from a block of ice into a sculpture. While this was a really long and gruesome process, I think it really paid off. The final film's run time is 25 minutes. It's the perfect length in my book. Some things did end up getting cut, but overall, it turned out pretty good.

Motion Graphics:

I knew from pretty early on, that I wanted to have motion graphic animations in the doc to



provide more of a visual appeal. I created four: two 30 second pieces, and two 5-10 second pieces.



I also did the name cards in after effects.