

"MISS KATHY"

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Miss Kathy is a documentary film that tells the story of Kathy Griffin-Grinan, a lead recovery coach for prostitution and human trafficking with the Harris County Sheriff's Office. Her non-profit organization —We've Been There, Done That — works in conjunction with law-enforcement to offer the survivors of prostitution a chance at rehabilitation. With endless enthusiasm, she mentors survivors as they struggle to escape a destructive lifestyle. This film also explores the relationship between human trafficking and prostitution, while addressing issues of victimization and exploitation.

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CHAPTER 1

PROSPECTUS

Note: This section is the original prospectus approved by the thesis committee in September 2013 before production began.

Title: Miss Kathy
Length: 28 minutes
Medium: HD Video

Introduction

It is difficult enough to escape a life of prostitution, but it takes a special person to dedicate their life to helping others. Kathy Griffin-Grinan is that type of person. Today, she runs a non-profit organization that works with the Harris County Sheriff's office, but several years ago she was a drug-addicted prostitute facing decades in prison.

Kathy was born in California and spent a number of years in Mississippi. Like many women who enter prostitution, she was abused as child and exposed to illegal drugs at an early age. While on tour with American musician Rick James, she developed an expensive cocaine habit. When it ended, she began selling herself as a call girl, eventually turning to street prostitution. During our first meeting, Kathy showed me five crack houses where she prostituted. It was there she was raped hundreds of times. Kathy still recognizes many of the people who live in the area.

After failing several rehab programs and facing 35 years in prison, Kathy was able to get clean 10 years ago through a specialty court in Houston. Around 2007, the state of Texas began a philosophical change in the way they addressed prostitution. Lawmakers concluded that treating prostitutes like criminals only increased incarceration rates and made it more difficult

for women to exit prostitution (Associated Press). Houston and Dallas soon introduced recovery programs that offered substance rehabilitation, counseling, housing and other resources.

Kathy's program is court ordered and works mainly with adults. Judge Maria T. Jackson, a Harris County judge, works closely with Kathy and has sentenced 20 women to the program. She understands that prostitutes need comprehensive support.

The women assigned to the program at the Harris County Jail attend Kathy's group sessions for a minimum of 90 days. Every day, Kathy and a group of about 20 women talk candidly about their experiences. She knows that healing first requires the women to let go. "To get well, you got to tell," she says (Rocha). Kathy will make a great subject for this film because she doesn't have a filter. She speaks to the women the way they speak. "She calls body parts what they're called on the street" (Associated Press). Some of the women even worked alongside Kathy years ago. She understands them, they respect her, and every day she struggles to instill self-worth into them. The younger ones affectionately refer to her as "Miss Kathy."

We've Been There, Done That doesn't stop once the women are released. Every Wednesday, Kathy holds an external workshop that the women must attend for a minimum of 18 months. She also takes the women shopping and monitors their progress. "The hardest part is making the transition to society and following the rules," Kathy says.

Her days are spent tending to their needs. I first met Kathy on the steps of the Harris County Courthouse. She looked exhausted. She was escorting one of the women to a rehab facility. On our way to Santa Maria Hostel, a housing facility, another upset woman called Kathy with thoughts of suicide.

Despite being extremely busy, Kathy also finds time to produce *The Prison Show* on KPFT, the local community radio station. It airs every other Friday. She speaks about the various issues related to prostitution and incarceration.

Miss Kathy, the story of Kathy Griffin-Grinan, will document her mission to help other victims get back on their feet.

Style and Approach

Miss Kathy will be heavily observational. This film is about people and their relationships to one another, so it requires an intimate approach. The goal is to make the viewer feel like they're with Kathy. To do this, I need to be invisible and unintrusive. The camera will be completely handheld, except for long shots. *Miss Kathy* will also use traditional expositional interviews to provide context.

Intended Audience

A strong narrative component will resonate with anyone who enjoys inspiring, character driven documentaries. The film targets western audiences in English speaking countries, both male and female, ages 16 and up. *Miss Kathy* will also be useful to university level educators who specialize in sex trafficking, sexual exploitation and women's issues. Lastly, a number of states have tried to implement similar programs, and this film could serve as a document of the program's success.

CHAPTER 2

PRE-PRODUCTION RESEARCH

Subject Matter Research

The state of Texas has a problem with prostitution and human trafficking. Since the 1980's Texas law enforcement has focused its efforts on street position because it is the most visible. In spite of this, Dallas, Houston and other cities in Texas are infamous hotspots for prostitution. Houston's proximity to the Mexican border, two large airports and the I-10 corridor (a highway infamous for human trafficking) make it the ideal hub for traffickers. Strip clubs, massage parlors and other fronts for prostitution are visible throughout the city. In the past, lawmakers sought to combat prostitution through incarceration. As a result, "Texas incarcerates sex workers at a higher rate than most other states, and it is the only state in the nation to charge individuals engaging in prostitution with a felony" (Yanez-Correa, 1). Ironically, this has made it more difficult to exit prostitution. Convictions can act as a barrier to employment and force prostitutes even further from public view.

Recognizing that these laws were counterproductive and that the cost of incarceration is nearly triple that of rehabilitation, diversion programs like Kathy's have become popular. We've Been There, Done That brings together law enforcement, and private organizations to offer housing and treatment services for victims of prostitution and human trafficking. Since its inception, We've Been There, Done That has helped hundreds of women escape prostitution.

Characters

The individuals listed below were identified during the research phase of this film. Many

of them will be featured in the production of *Miss Kathy* for their expertise:

Kenya Latour: Kenya, also known as “Peaches” worked in the sex industry for almost 20 years. She’s been raped twice and gun point and recently recovered from a major sexually transmitted disease (STD). While working as prostitute, she recorded a Youtube video titled “Self-Confessed Houston Prostitutes talk: Peaches!” which garnered over 500,000 views¹. Now she is in *We’ve Been There, Done That*, working toward her GED and well on her way to being one of Kathy’s success stories. She is forthright and boisterous, a miniature Kathy. When she speaks, the other women in the program listen.

Amanda Jimmie: Amanda was sold to a motorcycle gang call the Banditos at the age of 16. Since then, she’s been involved in criminal activity. During her second stint in prison, she met Kathy and volunteered for the program. Amanda is quiet and reserved, but one day she hopes to mentor women the way Kathy did for her.

Judge Maria T. Jackson: Judge Jackson presides over 339th District Criminal Court. She works closely with Kathy and has sentenced over 20 women to the program.

Lieutenant Walter Bailey: Lieutenant Bailey supervises the “tank” that holds the women in Kathy’s program. He knew her when she was an inmate. He offers a great deal of insight into the socioeconomic conditions that cause women to be victims of human trafficking and prostitution.

Jennifer Herring: Jennifer is Kathy’s niece; she also works with the Harris County Sheriff’s department as a social worker. She’s the head of Kathy’s department and they occasionally work together.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL6ttL2Rq9c>

Robert Thomas: He frequently arrested Kathy when she was a prostitute, now he regularly visits the program to speak with the women.

Sheriff Adrian Garcia: He heads the Harris County Sheriff's Department. Prior to that, he worked with the Houston Police Department for over 20 years. He granted Kathy permission to implement her program in the jail.

Funding

The majority of *Miss Kathy* will be financed in-kind by the filmmaker. A greater part of the expenses include travel and lodging. Production equipment will be provided entirely by the University of North Texas. Post-production Equipment will be provided by UNT as well.

Potential funding sources include:

- *Garrett Scott Documentary Development Grant:* This is grant for first time filmmakers. It awards travel and full accommodations to the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. Winners also participate in master class led by two experienced filmmakers.
- *Diversity Development Fund:* Applicants receive funding for research and development to develop a single documentary. Financing goes toward pre-production activities including travel and script development.

Distribution Possibilities

Miss Kathy will be sent to domestic festivals. Below, I've identified several local, niche, documentary and popular festivals. It also has a strong possibility of being shown internationally because it addresses women's issues. *Miss Kathy* will also be submitted to PBS/POV.

- Thin Line Film Festival - Denton, TX
- Dallas Video Festival - Dallas, TX
- Hot Springs Film Festival - Hot Springs, AR
- Big Sky Documentary Film Festival - Montana
- Hot Docs - Toronto, Canada
- True/False - Columbia, Missouri
- Women's International Film Festival - Miami, FL
- Los Angeles Women's International Film Festival - California, USA
- Portland Oregon Women's Film Festival - Oregon, USA
- San Francisco International Women's Film Festival - California, USA
- Vancouver International Women in Film Festival - British Columbia, Canada
- Slamdance - Park City, UT
- Atlanta International Documentary Film Festival - Atlanta, GA
- Full-Frame Documentary Film Festival - Durham, North Carolina

Goals of the Production

The purpose of *Miss Kathy* is twofold: to inspire and educate the viewer. It will engage the viewer through Kathy's personal journey of escaping prostitution. Her story is so compelling that we'll root for her as she struggles to lift other women from prostitution.

Prostitution is a complicated, global problem. There are many conflicting views on prostitution, some of which contribute to the criminalization of prostitutes. *Miss Kathy* will address questions such as; is prostitution a problem? How should we look at Prostitution? What

are the best policies for addressing this problem? Ultimately, the viewer will also gain a better understanding of the reasons people enter this destructive lifestyle and difficulty of getting out.

Feasibility

No film is worth jeopardizing someone's recovery. I'm going to allow Kathy a look at the final film to ensure nothing is shown that could be harmful to the victims. However, the director will maintain full creative control regarding the narrative.

Our production team has extensive experience producing non-fiction films. I'm a Master of Fine Arts student in documentary filmmaking at the University of North Texas. I'm also a former military combat photographer with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, I worked as a TV photojournalist in Alabama and Georgia. With my background, I feel comfortable recognizing and capturing moments.

Kathy frequently works in conjunction with rehabilitation organizations such as the Santa Maria Hostel. They are understandably protective of their victims, so gaining access will be difficult. Ideally, once I have built rapport with Kathy and the other advocates, they can use their influence to help me gain access. I will depend on Kathy to help us identify the most emotionally fit individuals who are willing to tell their story.

CHAPTER 3

RECONCEPTUALIZATION BEFORE PRODUCTION

Films evolve during and after the pre-production. Because of Kathy's hectic schedule, it was difficult to create a treatment that would reflect the narrative trajectory of the film. I only had a loose grasp on Kathy's daily activities and the people involved in her organization. Consequently, the production process was in constant state of reconceptualization.

I was continuously casting subjects during production. Originally, I intended for Jennifer Herring, Kathy's niece to play a large role in the film since she's also Kathy's supervisor. However, into production I observed that they have little interaction on a daily basis. During the same time, I asked Kathy to identify the women in her program that were most likely to be successful. This would give me the opportunity to structure the film around them, show their complete journey out of prostitution and provide an uplifting conclusion to the film. I met Kenya briefly prior to production, but I didn't realize she would be a primary character in the film. She was leaving jail on her way to transitional living home, but we did not interact. During the first outpatient meeting, she stood out and I recognized her from the YouTube video. Also, her story of escaping prostitution drew a number of parallels to Kathy's.

Kathy is at the jail every day, so I assumed it would be one of the locations featured most prominently in the film. I knew this was a strong possibility given Kathy's willingness to film in addition to the fact that my first introduction to Kathy was a newspaper article featuring photos of her in jail². However, Harris County only granted me one day of filming. Because it

² See "Texas rehab program gives prostitutes a new chance at life." Associated Press. 2013. Web. 21 June. 2013

required extra resources to ensure my safety, this was understandable. Luckily, I was satisfied with one days' worth of footage and decided extra filming was unnecessary.

CHAPTER 4

INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION

Prostitution

Much of my experience with the women in Kathy's program is supported by my initial research; women involved in prostitution share similar backgrounds. In *What are the causes of Prostitution*, Louise Gerdes explains that "a majority of prostitutes are poor, illiterate, and from broken families" (7). Kenya Latour, for example, comes from a lower socioeconomic class. She dropped out of high school, as did many of the other women in the program.

The majority of women in Kathy's program also experienced high rates of sexual abuse at an early age. At 16, Amanda's father sold her into prostitution. Because this is a significant determining factor in why the women enter the world of prostitution, several participants in the film introduce themselves by describing the sexual abuse they suffered as children. Most of them tell stories of being raped as a child. This was the most difficult scene to film – it felt exploitative and I was terribly uncomfortable. I made the decision to include that scene because it is informative and fosters empathy. Most people outside of prostitution do not understand the circumstances that cause these women to be where they are.

The women inevitably suffer from "poor self-esteem, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, runaway behavior, difficulty in interpersonal relationships and wide array of other emotional and physical problems" as result of their victimization (Berg and Kramer, 11). For Kenya, drug addiction and prostitution are linked. She prostituted for drugs – she needed drugs to prostitute. Programs like Kathy's work because they are comprehensive in addressing the causes of prostitution in addition to substance abuse. Kari Lydersen found that several former

prostitutes testified that “they were finally able to leave the lifestyle after finding support groups and programs that addressed both substance abuse and the physical and psychological issues involved in their early lives” (50). Kathy says that during her time in rehabilitation, she only discussed substance abuse, not the trauma that caused her to use substances. Even Kenya acknowledges that speaking openly and honestly about one’s experiences is part of the healing process.

Before I worked on this project, I was unaware that trafficking and prostitution are related. Public perceptions of prostitution and human trafficking differ immensely, but Kathy’s program helps to inform the public of their correlation. “Street based commercial sex becomes trafficking when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to maintain control over the victim and cause the victim to believe that s/he has no other choice” (Polaris). Inversely, many women who are not rescued from human trafficking as children eventually become prostitutes. I address this in the film since many of the women in Kathy’s program were unwitting victims of human trafficking. Some of them entered the sex industry before their teens.

I was most surprised that setbacks in rehabilitation are normal for most women escaping prostitution. Relapsing is part of the process. Both Kenya and Amanda have relapsed multiple times. Some of the women have been in and out of Kathy’s program for years. Kathy herself failed multiple rehab programs before getting clean.

Some literature does explore the link between race and prostitution. Much of it suggests the pathway to prostitution differs slightly for minorities. Minority women tend to suffer greater socioeconomic and educational disadvantages (Berg and Kramer, 16). However, I decided it was unnecessary to explore race in the film because prostitution and human

trafficking spans all demographics and “the vulnerabilities traffickers exploit are unique and specific to each victim (e.g. a developmental disorder, past child abuse, cultural beliefs)” (Polaris). Moreover, Kathy does not overemphasize racial differences because they are slight, and therefore, less important. To acknowledge those differences could undermine the unity fostered among the women in the program. It would also complicate the film unnecessarily. However, the subject may be worthy of further research.

Victimization

In the first outpatient meeting, it was immediately obvious that I was an outsider. I was the only male in the room. I was the only person holding a camera and I did not have the same experiences as the women in the program. I undertook this film partly because I thought the struggles the women face would present a dramatic, compelling story, but “filmmakers who set out to represent people whom they do not initially know but who typify or possess special knowledge of a problem or issue run the risk of exploiting them” (Nichols, 52). In contemporary documentary, this exploitation often comes in what Brian Winston describes as “the tradition of the victim.”

For decades, documentary filmmakers have been drawn to the disadvantaged. “Flaherty’s contribution to the notion of the documentary (individual as subject, and the romantic) when mixed with Grierson’s (social concern and propaganda) leads directly to privileging “victims” as subject matter” (Winston, 272). As a result, poverty, inequality, and injustice have become conveniently accessible topics for filmmakers. To some extent, I continued this tradition.

I made mistake of presenting Kathy as a savior figure and the women in her program solely as victims despite Dr. Larke Walsh warning me in pre-production. I focused so much on learning about prostitution and human trafficking, that I failed to present the women with an identity *outside of* prostitution. Violence is the subject of *The Interrupters*, but the filmmakers attempt to flesh out the lives of subjects by showing them doing things unrelated to their work. In hindsight, showing the women of *We've Been There, Done That* doing or speaking about things unrelated to prostitution would have helped avoid victimization and aided in presenting them as three-dimensional people.

Exploitation

Working with a vulnerable population, it was inevitable that I had to make a number of ethical decisions to avoid causing pain or further embarrassment. There was always the lingering question of how much I was willing to exploit my subjects for the sake of the film. It is a common idea that, “documentaries have a clear social and ethical purpose. Typically, this is seen as justifying a degree of exploitation of the subjects” (Ellis, 135). The social purpose of *Miss Kathy* is to advance knowledge and the most effective way to educate the viewer on the experiences of human trafficking survivors is to show their struggle. Anything other than the observation would have been less personal and impactful.

I have also learned that the social purpose or “the greater good” can conflict with the welfare of subjects. For example, during the first outpatient meeting, several of the women recounted their earliest memories of child abuse. One of the women was raped and impregnated by her father. In rough cuts of the film, I hid their faces as they shared their

experiences. I debated covering footage with cutaways and making the confessions anonymous to prevent the subjects from potential shame and humiliation. However, even “with the best intentions in the world, filmmakers can only guess how the scenes they use will affect the lives of people they have photographed” (Pryluck, 197). Ultimately, I decided to keep the scene in the film.

For most documentarians, an appearance release is sufficient as proof of consent. In scientific fields consent is only valid if was made “(1) under conditions that were free from coercion and deception, (2) with full knowledge of the procedure and anticipated effects, (3) by someone competent to consent” (Pryluck, 201). By these standards, my appearance releases might be questionable since some of the women in Kathy’s program would not be considered “competent” due to of years of drug abuse or lack of formal education. However, documentary is not a science. “For many, the explicit cooperation of the subjects in making of the film is the determinant of whether exploitation took place” (Ellis, 144). Most of the women trusted me because they trusted Kathy and were more than willing to be on camera.

Much of this discussion of ethics and consent “is based on the belief that filmmakers are powerful and their subjects powerless; nevertheless this is typical in drawing such conclusions from observations of the nature of filmic encounters” (Ellis, 146). On the contrary, I found that both Kathy and Kenya are extremely media savvy. Kathy’s husband is a news anchor for a local network and well known throughout the Houston area. She appears regularly on the local and national TV as an expert on human trafficking and prostitution. She undoubtedly allowed me to film because she knows the potential good a documentary can bring to her program. In Kenya’s YouTube video, she confesses to wanting her own reality TV show.

My subjects were acutely aware of the camera; I initially questioned how much they were performing. For documentary, the idea of performance is complicated because is associated with artifice and narrative fiction (Navarro, 225). However, performance is not new to documentary. Even Robert Flaherty asked Allakariallak to perform when making *Nanook of the North*. In pursuit of *Salvage Ethnography*, Flaherty encouraged Allakariallak to use traditional hunting weapons instead of rifles. I never staged anything, but I don't believe performance necessarily detracts from the authenticity of the film. Her outgoing, candid nature is a one of the reasons she makes a great subject. Moreover, "one cannot always distinguish between performance and natural demeanor when assessing representational performances" (Navarro, 232).

Some would question the subject's responsibility in regards to their performance. John Ellis says that subjects have a responsibility to be "honest and sincere" (147). Conversely, "there is an argument that all documentary (and, indeed, all social interaction) involves people 'acting' in some sense of the term" (Ward, 36). In my opinion, Kathy appeared to be consistent on and off screen.

Documentary Modes

The documentary modes established by Bill Nichols are sometimes regarded as simplistic. On the contrary, they provide a useful taxonomy that can aid filmmakers in identifying the most appropriate rhetorical devices to support the goals of any film. For me, *Intro to Documentary* is a field guide. Throughout production, I used my knowledge of documentary modes to tell Kathy's story.

The observational mode served best as the spine of the film, carrying the narrative and the emotional tenor. It is typically characterized by the filmmaker who merely observes a subjects behaving in the same manner they would without the presence of the camera. It works well when, “characters are caught up in pressing demands or a crisis of their own” (Spence and Navarro, 194). This mode is appropriate because Kathy is an active subject. Furthermore, the observational mode is also useful in capturing subjects as dynamic, three-dimensional characters.

Observational is a broad term encompassing many approaches including direct cinema and cinéma vérité. Direct cinema filmmakers observe subjects without intervention or interaction; whereas cinéma vérité filmmakers recognize the act of filmmaking in a more practical way. They do not hide the subject-filmmaker relationship. Even provoking subjects into action is an acceptable practice in representing truth. Nick Broomfield’s early films, *Solider Girls* (1981) and *Chicken Ranch* (1983) in particular, heavily influenced me as a filmmaker. They are mostly direct cinema, but they do contain elements of cinéma vérité. Initially, I expected my observational footage to draw more from the direct cinema tradition. However, making a direct cinema film presented unexpected challenges. It was much more difficult to *not* interact with subjects than I expected. Kathy and Kenya were comfortable around the camera and would occasionally address me without being provoked. In doing so, they were unconsciously drawing on reality-TV for their instruction on how to interact with the viewer. These types of interactions pushed the film into the closer to cinéma vérité. For example, when Kenya gets a job, she excitedly calls her friend to let them know. She tells her friend, “the camera man was here and everything!” That moment ultimately became an uplifting climax of in the final film. It

would have been selfish of me to deprive the viewer of that moment for the sake of maintaining observational “purity.” In Kim Longinotto’s film, *The Day I Will Never Forget* (2002), there is a scene in which a little girl speaks directly to the camera and recites a poem about her genital mutilation. It is one of the most powerful moments in the film. Direct cinema was my goal—cinéma vérité was more practical.

One perceived deficiency regarding observational filmmaking is that it often lacks context. Had I operated solely in the observational mode, the audience would not understand the complex societal factors that cause many victims to enter prostitution. Observational films require the viewer to interpret the footage to comprehend its significance. I needed expository interviews to address that deficiency. As a result, the beginning of the film is disproportionately heavy with interviews. Kathy, Officer Walter Bailey and Judge Maria T. Jackson help set up the film, introduce the subjects and explain how program works. Judge Maria T. Jackson clarifies that most of the women come from environments where members of their family abuse them. When possible, I also use illustrative footage to visually support interviews. Aside from its expository function, the interview “also captures the personal feelings of the interview subjects, which may invite viewer identification” (Pramaggiore, 288). It affords the women a chance speak about themselves directly to the audience. “When all these testimonies are organized into a coherent whole, what we have is not just a record of individual experiences; it is a broader and more ambitious statement about those experiences” (Spence and Navarro, 65).

Editing

Certainly no director can claim to be an “auteur” unless he can edit or fully supervise the editing of his own films, and the extent to which a director’s films approach the full potential of excellence will depend as much on his mastery of the editing craft as on his knowledge and practice of story and filming techniques. (Murch, x)

The post-production process has made me rethink the Auteur theory: the idea that director is the primary creative force in the making of film. For documentarians that operate in the observational mode, post-production is where we sculpt story, pace, characters, and structure from the raw footage. This is when the filmmaker decides which rhetorical devices will be most prominent. *Miss Kathy* could have been either fully observational or fully expositional, depending on my editing choices.

In *On Film Editing*, Edward Dmytryk makes the distinction between different types of film editors. On the lowest tier is the mechanic. “He (or she) learns a few simple rules, follows the script and/or the director’s instructions, and delivers a film to which the cutting has added not one whit of anything ingenious or original” (2). This is how I would describe my current level of editing. On the other end of the spectrum is the creative editor, “the person with an understanding of dramatic structure, [and] a keen sense of timing, a compulsion to seek out the scene’s hidden values” (Dmytryk, 2). Through the process of editing *Miss Kathy*, I tried to make the transition from mechanic to creative editor. This required me to break the habits that I learned early on in my filmmaking career. As an Army photographer, we were taught to assemble observational footage in a coherent manner. My job was to document combat operations, which could easily exceed 12 hours a day, then condense that footage into a five-minute clip that summarized the operation. This meant that matches on continuity took precedence any other type of editing. During my time in graduate school, I’ve learned that

cutting for continuity should be secondary to other, more important types of cuts. Walter Murch, established a criteria for identifying a good cut in order of importance:

1) it is true to the emotion of the moment; 2) it advances the story; 3 it occurs at a moment that is rhythmically interesting and “right”; 4 it acknowledges what you might call “eye-trace”-the concern with the location and movement of the audience’s focus of interest within the frame; 5 it respects “planarity”-the crammer of three dimensions transposed y photography to two (the questions of stage-line, etc); 6 and it respects the three-dimensional continuity of the actual space (Murch, 18)

To edit this film successfully, continuity had to be secondary to emotion and story. I had to cut based on what works on screen and not “rules” of editing. It is reasonably tempting for a filmmaker to want to show off the most aesthetically appealing shots, but it should not distract the audience from the content of the film. *Whores Glory* (2012) by Michael Glawogger is one of the most beautiful documentaries I have ever seen. It examines the lives of prostitutes living in India, Thailand and Mexico. Their situations are hopeless and depressing. In spite of this, the film was shot on Super 16mm film and the colors are vibrant. All the shots are very carefully composed. However, there is a clear disconnect between the ugliness of the women’s situation and the beautiful cinematography. Observational filmmakers must be cautious. In cinematography or editing, Narcissism often tempts us to place greater importance on aesthetics over content.

Story and Structure

The narrative framework is entirely dependent on meeting the goals of the production: to inform and inspire. The women in the film are dynamic characters that are actively overcoming uncommon hardship. To me, their journey sounded like narrative fiction. “Narrative films generally focus on human characters and their struggles. Characters possess

traits, face conflicts, perform actions, and undergo changes that enable or hinder their pursuit of a specific goal” (Pramaggiore and Wallis, 63). Kenya, for example, tries desperately to reform her life after dropping out of school and prostituting for over twenty years. I decided to manipulate the chronology of events to increase drama and give *Miss Kathy* a narrative film structure. Michael Renov reminds us of this documentary tradition, “documentary filmmakers since the days of Flaherty’s *Nanook* have frequently chosen to build stories around the heroics of larger-than-life figures plucked from their “real” environs—in short, to narrativize the real” (6).

The term *narrative structure* in this instance refers to a very loose three-act structure. Act 1 establishes characters, goals and conflicts. Act 2 introduces obstacles; Act 3 offers resolution (Pramaggiore and Wallis, 68). The documentary *Undefeated* (2011) was an inspiration to me. The film follows a high school team of underprivileged football players as they pursue a spot in the playoffs. The film does have problems, but structure is not one of them. On the surface it rehashes the tired white savior trope in which a white person saves people of color. Aside from that, it is an emotionally uplifting film that has the same narrative structure as its fiction counterparts. In order to make the film flow like a narrative, I had to rearrange events. In the historical world, Kenya was hired for her job before she went to the final outpatient meeting. I reversed those events in the final film because the job scene is an emotional high point and adds a sense of closure. The reality these women face is complex and I am cognizant of dangers of simplifying reality for the sake of narrative. Filmmakers can run the risk of relegating current and very pressing issues to the past. For this reason, the final

sequence in the film includes an interview from Kathy that reminds the audience many women are currently victims of prostitution.

Documentary Films

These films explore related themes or contain stylistic elements similar to *Miss Kathy*.

- *Sisters in Law* (2005) by Kim Longinotto. This documentary follows a progressive judge and female prosecutor in Cameroon as they combat society's complacency with child abuse, rape and domestic violence. The subjects are women with strong, charismatic personalities. The film is shot in a Cinéma Vérité style.
- *The Interrupters* (2011) by James, Steve. For a year, the filmmakers follow the Violence Interrupters (former gang members) as they confront street violence by developing relationships with at risk youth in Chicago. This film serves as the thematic and stylistic template for *Miss Kathy*.
- *Undefeated* (2011) by Daniel Lindsey and T.J. Martin. A character driven, mostly observational documentary that focuses on an impoverished African American football team with a long history of losing. Their coach, Bill Lindsey, inspires them to believe in themselves. It has a specific narrative arc. Thematically, this film is very similar to *Miss Kathy*. It's full of character interaction and emotionally moving moments. It also touches on issues of socioeconomic inequality.
- *Solider Girls* (1981) by Joan Churchill and Nick Broomfield. *Soldier Girls* is a purely observational documentary that follows a platoon of women through U.S. Army basic training at Fort Gordon, Georgia under a sadistic drill sergeant. The film

displays strong character development as some of the women excel and other become more detached.

- *Chicken Ranch* (1983) by Nick Broomfield. This documentary explores life of prostitutes who live at the Chicken Ranch, a legal brothel in Nevada. Broomfield succeeds at developing the women as three-dimensional characters. Sandi Sissel's camerawork is fluid, confident and inconspicuous.
- *Happy Endings* (2003) by Tara Hurley. This film uncovers the Asian massage parlor business in Rhode Island, and debates the advantages and disadvantages of legal prostitution. This documentary is unique because it uses expository interviews to give prostitutes an opportunity to tell their side of the story.
- *Whores Glory* (2011) by Michael Glawogger. Stories of prostitutes in Thailand, Mexico and Bangladesh. It's a bleak, haunting exploration their hopes, dreams and experiences. The dichotomy between the beautifully composed images and the ugliness of the content is problematic.

Other (Websites, Blogs, Listserves, Interviews, etc.)

Polaris:

<http://www.polarisproject.org/index.php>

The Polaris Project is an organization that fights various forms human trafficking, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking and international trafficking. They partner with government leaders and victims' rights organizations to advocate for policy and offer client services. Their website is a useful resource for statistics. It also shows how to identify signs of trafficking.

We've Been There Done That
<http://www.wevebeentheredonethat.org/>

This is Kathy's website. It details the mission of her organization and offers some testimonials from participants in the program. It appears to not have been updated recently.

CHAPTER 5

PRODUCTION

Overview

The production of *Miss Kathy* took place entirely in Houston, beginning October 2013 and ending April 2014. Over the course of several months, I traveled to Houston sporadically. I was taking two classes in addition to fulfilling my teaching assistant duties; so shooting was allocated to whenever my schedule would permit. Overall, I made 14 trips.

Shooting was intermittent but production was the smoothest part of the entire process. The first half a production included filming as much observational footage of Kathy as possible. Once I had a better grasp on the narrative trajectory, I spent the second half of production filming specific characters, scenes and shots that were necessary to complete the film.

Certain days in Kathy and Kenya's schedule were more predictable than others. Outpatient group meetings were every Wednesday, and Kathy hosted the *Prison Show* every other Friday. Occasionally, she would ask me to come and film an event, a community meeting on police brutality, for example. It was not always relevant, but it helped foster our relationship. Other times, I would just travel to Houston in hopes of getting lucky. Persistence was key. For instance, I drove to Houston three times to film Kenya's GED class, and every time it was canceled. I did minimal logging during production and reviewed footage mostly to confirm the equipment was functioning properly.

Production Schedule

- 10/11/2013: Observational footage of *Prison Show* 1.

- 10/15/2013: Interview with Officer Walter Bailey. Observational footage of Kathy at the Harris County Jail.
- 10/23/2013: Observational footage of 1st Outpatient Group meeting. B-roll of Houston.
- 10/24/2013: Observational footage of Town hall meeting at the University of Houston on Police accountability.
- 10/25/2013: Observational footage of Prison Show 2 hosted by Karlton.
- 11/8/2013: Interview with Amanda Jimmie. Observational footage of Prison Show 3 with Carlton and Amanda.
- 11/12/2013: Observational footage of Kenya's job interview.
- 11/13/2013: B-roll footage of Barbara Johnson Healthcare Center.
- 11/14/2013: Observational footage of Radio Show with Amanda and Kathy.
- 11/15/2013: Observational footage of Outpatient group meeting 2
- 11/22/2013: Interview with Judge Maria T. Jackson. B-roll of Harris County Courthouse.
- 11/27/2013: Observational footage of Wednesday meeting 2
- 11/29/2013: Interview with Kathy Griffin-Grinan. Ride along through Kathy's old neighborhood.
- 1/6/2014: Interview with Kenya Latour. Observational footage of Outpatient group meeting 3, GED class with Kenya.
- 1/7/2017: B-roll of Houston, Harris County Courthouse and street prostitutes.
- 3/26/2014: Group Outpatient meeting 4.

- 3/27 /2014: Observational footage of Kathy and interns in Harris County Courthouse and Interns.
- 4/19/2014: Final interview with Kathy.

* This schedule only includes times that I went to Houston and filmed.

Crew

With the exception of one filmed interview, I shot and edited this entire film. My colleagues were also in their final year of graduate school and busy fulfilling their own academic duties. Traveling to Houston meant that each trip was a minimum of two days, and the shooting schedule was so irregular, so it was difficult to plan in advance. Being a “one man band” on a film like this was not ideal, but it was practical.

- Jeff Alexander – Director

I was born in Buffalo, New York. I earned degree in film studies before joining the U.S. Army as a combat cameraman. I’ve documented a variety of missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. I also worked as a TV photojournalist in Georgia and Alabama. Currently, I’m pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in documentary film production at the University of North Texas. When not attending class, I work as a production assistant for various Reality TV productions. My interests include cinematography and observational film

- Estevan Medrano – Sound Operator

Estevan Medrano was born in Brownsville, Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and currently works as a freelance artist. He is a published illustrator. He

also worked as a production assistant for the film, *One Night in Old Mexico* (2013). His thesis film *On the Fence* recounts the experience of a former border patrol officer.

Equipment

Camera technology has always played a critical role in documentary history so it is necessary to address that role in the production of *Miss Kathy*. In *Crafting Truth*, Louise Spence writes, “new technology does enable documentary filmmakers to explore different shooting methods, which in turn have influenced the objectives and aesthetics of their work” (208). It then follows that, “the way the cameraperson pictures the subject helps determine how the audience perceives that subject” (189).

Louis Lumiere’s Cinematographe paved the way for documentary filmmakers. “It was an ideal instrument for catching life on the run—“sur le vif,” as Lumiere put it” (Barnouw, 6). In contrast to Thomas Edison’s large unwieldy camera, the Cinematographe, was a portable, single operator camera that doubled as a projector. As a result, Cinematographe operators were free to roam the globe documenting life. “He could be sent to a foreign capital, give showings, shoot new films by day, develop them in a hotel room and show them the same night” (Barnouw, 6).

In the 60’s, lighter 16mm cameras and portable sound equipment made it possible to document the intimacy of human interaction. Filmmakers could focus on speech, which had been neglected since the advent of sound. Unfortunately, the mobility of the camera operator and the sound-recordist was hindered by the synchronization cable connecting them. While employed at Time, Inc., Robert Drew developed a wireless crystal synchronization allowing the camera operator and sound recordist to move independently. As a result, “non-interventionist”

filmmakers such as Richard Leacock, the Maysles brothers and Frederick Wiseman blossomed, creating Direct-cinema films such as *Primary* (1960) *Salesman* (1969), *Titicut Follies* (1967). This isn't a history lesson, but shows the importance of choosing the right equipment for documentary.

As of this writing, DSLR cameras are a favorite among students and documentary filmmakers. They are relatively inexpensive and their large sensors mimic the shallow depth of field popular in narrative filmmaking. I decided to shoot with an atypical choice, the Panasonic HPX-500, a shoulder-mounted Electronic News Gathering (ENG) camera. It produced a flatter, grainier, less formalist image. John Corner states, [the] "absence of style in documentary often imparts a greater sense of credibility" (qtd. In Spence and Navarro, 214). The less polished look reflects the "gritty" reality the subjects face. I wanted to audience to concentrate on the characters and the story, not the aesthetics.

The HPX-500 had several technical advantages. Namely, it allowed me to record sound without a sound operator since I was alone most of the shoot. The large size and visibility of the camera offered immediate credibility from my subjects. I was treated as a professional simply due to of the size of my camera. I also gained access to places I would not have otherwise. However, size is not without its disadvantages. When documenting intimate moments, like those that occur during group meetings, the size of the camera drew too much attention to itself. I can recall one instance in jail when an inmate began to speak, stopped abruptly and looked distrustfully in my direction.

Releases, Copyright and License Agreements

Participants at outpatient meetings, GED class, and the KPFT radio station gave consent through appearance releases. I also displayed wide area releases during outpatient meetings. All inmates shown in the Harris County jail sign media release waivers upon entering the jail. Music used in the film is royalty free.

Budget

See Appendix.

CHAPTER 6

POST PRODUCTION

Post-production for this film occurred from January 2014 to March 2015.

Schedule

- 11/12/2013 - 6/05/2014: Logging footage and transcribing.
- 11/12/2013: Stringouts of every shooting day into individual timelines.
- 3/27/2014: Consolidate footage into three separate timelines.
- 4/20/2014: Stringout all footage into one timeline.
- 05/15/2014: Rough Cut of Observational film.
- 06/17/2014: Rough Cut 2 of Observational 2 film.
- 07/26/2014: Stringout made entirely of interviews.
- 8/15/2014 - 11/06/2014: Rough Cut 1-11.
- 1/15/2015: Final Cut.
- 2/15/2015 – Sound and Music.
- 3/15/2015 – Picture lock.

Equipment

Editing was completed using Adobe Premiere 6 and Adobe Premiere Creative Cloud. It was the best choice for handling Panasonic's P2 file structure in its native format. No file conversion was necessary. All sound and color correction was done in Adobe Premiere as well.

Reconceptualization of Film during Post-Production

I've never been a strong editor; so post-production was by far the most difficult stage. When production wrapped, I was confident I had a film, but the sifting through footage trying to find structure was overwhelming.

The films that inspire me are heavily observational, so I instinctively began with assembly cuts of observational footage. Although it was time-consuming, I eventually identified my favorite scenes and arranged them on the timeline. Like many filmmakers who shoot and edit, I struggled to detach myself from the material. Eventually, the film had a steady pace, but it lacked any context for what was on-screen. The public perception surrounding prostitution is one of contributing factors that make it difficult to for women to leave that life. Therefore, any information about difficulties of escaping prostitution had to be clear. This is why added exposition.

I had several technical problems. Namely, the sound on Kathy's first interview was unusable. Because this was the main vein of the film, I was hesitant to structure any rough-cut around the interview knowing I would eventually disregard it.

I only invested a significant amount of time in post-production once I reshot Kathy's interview. First, I created a "paper cut" followed by a string-out using only interviews. From there, I only chose scenes and illustrative footage that supplemented the content from interview. The result was a much more coherent and informative story. After every rough cut, I took a week off to detach myself from the material. I often tried to apply my theoretical knowledge to the film too rigidly. During a critique by film scholar Alan Rosenthal, I tried to explain my methodology using documentary modes. To paraphrase, he told me "none of that

matters. It's only what works on screen." His advice helped me streamline the film. It took 11 rough cuts before I had a something I was happy with.

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK

Pre-production

Entering graduate school, I knew that I wanted to eventually explore the subject of prostitution in a documentary. The purpose of the film was always to educate, inspire, and foster empathy. I also wanted to tell a story of redemption with characters that rectify their mistakes by helping others. Upon meeting Kathy Griffin, I knew I had the opportunity to do both.

Finding Kathy was the most difficult part of pre-production. In the beginning, I was rejected by several rehabilitation organizations in Dallas. They were that understandably skeptical of my project. I refocused my search on neighboring cities and stumbled across an article on Kathy Griffin in the Texas Tribune. The process was discouraging, but my persistence paid off.

Kathy's energy and enthusiasm was reinvigorating, but in hindsight, I entered production ill prepared. My treatment was lacking the details and plot points necessary to be efficient in production. My most enlightening moment came while working as a production assistant on another documentary. While observing a seasoned showrunner, he explained that documentaries are written. He wrote the entire story, beat by beat, before entering production. It was then I finally grasped the importance of a treatment. However, I don't regret my decision to begin production. At that moment, Kathy was extremely excited to be on camera, and sometimes you have to "strike while the iron is hot."

Production

Although my research was lacking, I feel the production went smoothly. The first day I spent with Kathy, I accompanied her to several locations; the jail, the courthouse and a group home for women. It was as if pre-production and production were happening simultaneously. Thankfully, I was able to rely on my background as an Army combat cameraman and TV photojournalist. I'm most comfortable filming in unpredictable situations. The only inconvenience is that my shooting ratio ballooned until I was familiar with Kathy's schedule.

I did struggle with equipment during production. I chose to shoot with the Panasonic HPX-500 because it best fit the needs of the production. I also chose it because it has a profile similar to the cameras I work with in my professional career. We rarely use the HPX-500 in the graduate program, so there was a significant learning curve. Specifically, I didn't know how to use focus peaking. As a result, much of the early footage is soft. Often times, less style equals less manipulation in the mind of the viewer, but in this case, it is only distracting.

Picture profiles allow the filmmaker to tailor the image by changing camera settings. They control everything from black levels to color depth. I chose the flattest picture profile because it gave me the most latitude for grading in post-production. In hindsight, this was unnecessarily complicated. I should have chosen a picture profile that would create rich images and saturated colors in camera. I would have saved time in post-production and made a better-looking film.

I also intended for the interviews to use minimal lighting in order to match the style of the observational footage. The Arri Chimera (soft box) was used as a key/base light. Unfortunately, the background in Kenya's interview is uninteresting. Conversely, Kathy's

background is too crowded. The results were subpar and amateurish – I should’ve put more emphasis on production quality. Despite my difficulties, I am pleased with the production. The content is strong enough to carry the film.

Post-production

Post-production was a long and arduous. As stated earlier, I’m not a good editor. My background in TV photojournalism molded me more into a technician than an artist. I have tendency to edit for continuity and aesthetics at the expense of emotion and story.

My greatest strength is as a camera operator, so the hours spent in the editing room often felt like a waste of time. I’m not confident that the best film possible emerged from the material, but I did the best I could. From this point forward in my career, whenever possible, I plan on working with an editor on long form projects.

Post-production was more time consuming than was necessary because of my high shooting ratio. Before I could create an assembly cut, I needed to identify all the potentially useful sequences in the film. This took months. However, it was easier to pair those sequences with the interview footage because I already had them selected. The most useful thing I learned from this experience is that it is necessary to take time away from the editing room to defamiliarize oneself with the material.

In my proposal, I stated, “the purpose of *Miss Kathy* is twofold: to inspire and educate the viewer.” Evaluating the film, I’m not sure that I succeeded at the first goal. My biggest fear for the film is that it doesn’t resonate with the viewer; that it elicits condescension rather than empathy. I don’t want it to be exploitative or ethnographic. The viewer should be *with* the

women, not viewing them from afar. It's my hope that emotional moments for the subjects are emotional moments for the viewer. Regardless, I am confident that the film is informative. The explicit and literal nature of expositional interviews makes it easier for the film to relay information.

Success in Integrating Proposed Theories

I am surprised how much the theory in my proposal differs from the finished film. I believe I succeeded in using exposition to inform the viewer, however the filming style and subject-filmmaker relationship deviate from the proposal.

In my proposal I stated, "This film is about people and their relationships to one another, so it requires an intimate approach. The goal is to make the viewer feel like they're with Kathy. To do this, I need to be invisible and unobtrusive." In hindsight, I falsely equated intimacy with being unobtrusive. On the contrary, in order to make the viewer "feel like they are with Kathy," I had to interact with her. The strongest sequences in the film are a result of subject-filmmaker interaction.

I also stated, "*Miss Kathy* will also use sit-down expositional interviews to provide context." While the film does have an observational component, it includes much more exposition than I predicted. There are so many misconceptions surrounding prostitution and human trafficking that I felt a responsibility to address them in the film. Observational footage is engaging, but it also requires effort from viewer. Expositional interviews proved the best way to convey clear, explicit information.

Final Thoughts

This has been a growing experience and I appreciate Kathy and the other women for trusting me enough to help share their experiences. It is my hope that viewer gains a better understanding of how women enter prostitution and how difficult it is to exit that lifestyle. Most the women were born into challenging circumstances, yet they found refuge in each other and they refuse to give up. Every person in the We've Been There, Done That program is admirable. Hopefully, this film can be used as an educational tool for other organizations or a motivational tool for other victims. I hope the viewer is as inspired by the women of We've Been There Done That as I am.

APPENDIX

BUDGET

ABOVE THE LINE

Item	Amount	Units	Rate	Sub-Total	Total	Requested
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02-00 Script

02-02 Researcher	1	Flat	2000	2000	2,000	in-kind
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03-00 Production Unit

03-02 Producer	1	Flat	3000	3000	3,000	in-kind
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04-00 Direction

04-01 Director (non-Union) Camera Op	1	18 days	400 / day	7200	7,200	in-kind
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BELOW THE LINE

Item	Amount	Units	Rate	Sub-Total	Total	Requested
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22-00 Camera

22-06 Expendables		flat	500	500	500	in-kind
22-07 Camera Packag	1	18 days	600 / day	10800	10800	in-kind

23-00 Sound

23-02 Boom Operator	1	1 day	300 / day	300	300	in-kind
23-04 Sound Package	1	1 day	170 / day	170	170	in-kind
23-0# Expendables		flat	100	100	100	100

24-00 Transportation

24-02 Car Rental	1	3 weeks	180 / week	540	540	in-kind
24-## Gas and Oil		14 days	60 / day	840	840	840

25-00 Location Expenses

25-07 Permit/Parking		flat	150	150	150	150
25-09 Meals	1	18 days	20	360	360	360

27-00 Videotape Stock-Production

27-03 P2 Cards	4		400	1600	1600	in-kind
27-04 Hard drive	2		200	400	400	in-kind

28-00 Travel and Living

28-02 Hotel	1	18 days	60	1080	1080	1080
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Item	Amount	Units	Rate	Sub-Total	Total	Requested
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30-00 Editorial

30-10 Editor	1	4 weeks	1000 / week	4000	4000	in-kind
30-10 Off/On-Line Edit System	1	4 weeks	1000 / week	4000	4000	in-kind
30-13 Screening Copies	20		5	100	100	100

33-00 Music

33-01 Composer	1	flat	1500	1500	1500	in-kind
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34-00 Post-production Sound

34-01 Sound Editor	1	flat	1000	1000	1000	in-kind
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36-00 Stock Footage

36-01 ABC News	1	flat	300	300	300	in-kind
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37-00 Insurance

37-01 Entertainment		flat	2000	2000	2000	in-kind
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38-00 General Administrative

38-02 Legal Expenses		flat	3000	3000	3000	in-kind
32-06 Copying		flat	25	25	25	in-kind
32-07 Postage		flat	100	100	100	in-kind
38-18 Publicity (Publicist, Festival)		flat	150	150	150	in-kind

Totals

	Total above-the-line				12,200	0
	Total below-the-line				33015	2630
	Total above and Below the line				45,215	2,630
Contingency @ 5%					2260.8	131.5
	GRAND TOTAL				47,476	2,762

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