THE MAKING OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILM WOMEN IN RED

Jennifer Lynne Horst, B.S., B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2008

APPROVED:

C. Melinda Levin, Major Professor and Chair of
the Department of Radio, Television and
Film
Steve Craig, Committee Member
Sandra Spencer, Committee Member
Ben Levin, Graduate Director of the
Department of Radio, Television, and
Film
Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B.
Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

Though the remnants of a stereotype created over two millennia ago still thrive in American popular culture today, redheaded women are enjoying a more positive role in society than they have ever seen before. Women in Red explores the experience of the redheaded woman in America today by examining how the stereotypes have affected a small group of them, how these women relate to the stereotypes, and why, given the verisimilitude of the stereotype, a non-redheaded woman would embrace such an identity with the simple act of dying her hair red. This is the story behind the experience that is Women in Red.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ...................................................................................................................... v

PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH ................................................................................................. 1

- Subject Matter
- The Characters
- Media Acquisition
- Funding and Distribution

INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION ................................................................... 8

PRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 13

- Schedule, Equipment, and Crew
- The Interviews
- Releases, Copyright, and License Agreements
- Budget

POST-PRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 16

- Schedule and Equipment
- Transcription and Capture
- Re-conceptualization of Film During Post-Production
- Narration and the Final Cut

EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK .............................................................................. 24

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ................................................................... 27

- Sample Interview Questions for Natural Redheads
- Sample Interview Questions for Bottle Redheads
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Jill is on frame left ........................................................................................................10
Figure 2. Jana is on frame right ...................................................................................................11
Figure 3. "Pandora" without color ...............................................................................................11
Figure 4. "Pandora" with selected color .......................................................................................12
Figure 5. Frames exported from an early draft of “Women in Red.” ........................................19
PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH

Subject Matter

The discrimination of, and hatred towards, redheaded persons, or “Gingerism” as it is known in the United Kingdom, can trace its origins to the ancient figure of Lilith, a goddess-demon who first appears in the Epic of Gilgamesh, a text that pre-dates written Judeo-Christian tradition by several hundred years. The embodiment of evil seductress, Lilith preys on the blood of children and ravishes men at will whilst brandishing hair that “is long and red like the rose,” an ornament “for the seduction of the son of man” (Patai 233).

In Talmudic tradition, Lilith was born out of the same ashes as Adam, destined to be Adam’s first wife and his equal. When prompted to lie beneath him for sex, Lilith refused and sprang from the Garden of Eden to take refuge near the Dead Sea (Patai 223). As the years passed, Lilith’s red hair and willingness to be sinful became attributes of other iconic redheads of Biblical tradition such as Cain, Judas Iscariot, and Mary Magdalene – none of whom were ever described in the ancient texts as possessing red hair (Roach 47, 161), but who have been repeatedly depicted as having red hair throughout the centuries, such as with Juan de Jaunes’ depiction of Judas in his late 16th century work, the Last Supper.

In the ancient world, a variety of gods were either depicted as having red hair (such as the Egyptian Set and Germanic Thor) or were associated with naturally occurring destructive forces including the emotion anger (such as the Greek Typhon) (Roach 50-51). Many redheads were sacrificed to these gods for any number of reasons, even as their hair became a signifier for being Jewish in some areas; the
Romans used red wigs to signify Jewish slaves in theatrical performances, a practice that continued to signify the Jew as “Other” throughout the Elizabethan period as evidenced in Shakespeare’s character Shylock in his work *The Merchant of Venice* (Roach 39).

By the medieval period, the Catholic Church had successfully incorporated a variety of pagan deities’ red attributes into its descriptions of Satan. As a result, many redheaded women “suffered the shame and pain of being stripped, shaved, and ‘pricked’ by a witch-hunter, endured torture, and were put to death, simply because they were redheads – and preferably, young and attractive” (Cooper 75). Red hair was one of several such “Devil’s Mark” identifiers: a scar, mole, wart or “constellation of freckles” were also used to great effect in hunting and killing hundreds of witches during the 16th and 17th centuries (Roach 60). While the overarching desire to kill a redhead for these reasons has disappeared, redheads are still thought of as signs of bad luck in some places (even my own grandmother disparaged having a redheaded grandchild, though she quickly changed her mind), and redheaded children are often taunted, teased, or find themselves the butt of jokes for no reason other than their hair color.

With the development of the American motion picture industry, however, things slowly began to change for redheaded women as they morphed from taboo to mainstream. In 1926 Clara Bow was declared Hollywood’s “It” Girl, her 1927 film *It* cementing her status as the Silver Screen’s first true sex symbol (Orgeron 80). The color of her hair itself played so much of an important role to her career that even though audiences could not see her red hair while watching one of her films (made before the advent of color film stock), they clamored after the color depicted both in
movie posters and fan magazines (Orgeron 77); at the peak of her career in 1928, henna sales had “tripled" because her dedicated fans “wanted their hair to be the wild red color of Clara Bow's” (Orgeron 77). Easily the first, but definitely not the last Hollywood icon to encourage non-redheads to dye their hair one of red's many magnificent shades, sales of red hair dye have increased dramatically in the last decade in comparison to previous decades: 17.2% of US home-use hair color is in shades of red (2002 figure), rose 14% in 2001 alone (Garreau) and garnered sales of $123 million in 2006 (Holland).

Much as with the sales of red hair dye, interest in redheads and redheadedness has risen in recent years, assisted greatly by the spread of information on the Internet. A variety of websites have appeared that honor past, present, and future redheads, focusing on topics such as the history of the redhead, jokes about redheads (Redhead Jokes), celebrations of famous redheads throughout history (Red and Proud), and most interesting of all, networking sites specifically for redheads, such as the Realm of Redheads and Redhedd.

During the initial stages of research, I relied heavily on these sites as a way to delve into the ideas of redheadedness, realizing quickly that the vast majority of the information available is dedicated solely to the history and worship of redheaded women. What struck me most, however, was the idea that redheads have had a shared culture - not having many redheaded friends outside of relatives, I had never thought of myself as being a part of a specifically shared cultural experience. I began to look at being a redhead in very different terms, realizing that in some ways I always had done
so subconsciously, as the majority of people around me ensured I understood just how different my hair made me from everyone else.

It seemed that the scientific community was also out to prove this idea to redheads as well: In August of 2007, a flurry of news articles related to redheads and redheadedness resulted from a study by the Oxford Hair Foundation which says that redheads are expected to be extinct by as early as the beginning of the 22nd century; natural redheads today make up less that 4% of the world’s total population, half which alone resides in the US. The highest proportion of redheads anywhere is found in Scotland, where 13% of the population is a redhead or is a person who carries the recessive “Ginger Gene”. Scientific research in relation to red hair has also risen in recent years. Since the discovery of this gene, called the MC1R by Edinburgh scientist John Rees in 1995 (Purgavie), many studies have been conducted in relation to redheads and skin cancer, pain tolerance, blood clotting, and a redhead’s susceptibility to heat and cold.

The Characters

“Women in Red” focuses primarily on nine redheaded women whose ages range from fourteen to fifty-four. Jill (51), Colleen (45), Candace (27), Aimee (17) and Chelsea (14) are natural redheads while Jana (54), Sydney (44), Tiffany (33), and Erica (22) are bottle redheads. Julie (39), a bottle redhead, was also interviewed for the film but was not included in the final film.

Prior to going into production, I placed a want ad in several local print and Internet periodicals and newspapers, and received about forty responses. Out of those responses, I was able to pre-interview fifteen over the phone and interviewed eight on
camera; the remaining two individuals interviewed on-camera came through familial connections. Pre-interviews were conducted primarily to gather information about the women as redheads in general terms:

- Were they natural or bottle redheads?
- What were the stereotypes surrounding redheads that they were most familiar with?
- What kinds of comments have they received about their hair?
- If a bottle redhead, how are these comments different than when hair is another color?
- What sayings or superstitions about redheads were they familiar with?

Other topics of discussion included childhood experiences if a natural redhead and their reasoning behind becoming a redhead if a bottle redhead. For the on-camera interviews, each redhead was asked many of the same questions, though some were tailored to the individual based upon information discussed in the pre-interview.

Each woman presented her own challenges for the film, both in terms of their on-camera presence (ranging from comfortable to nervous and fidgety) and their experiences as redheads. While several of the women knew more about the historical associations of redheads, others were unaware that such a lengthy history for the stereotype even existed. Others still were unable to coherently relate the ways in which redheads are portrayed in the media while others were able to dissect it with ease.

Media Acquisition

The acquisition of audiovisual materials began in pre-production and extended until the end of the post-production period. Initial materials were found because they
were referenced in materials used to research the topic, such as with Roach’s discussion of Michelangelo’s depiction of the temptation of Eve in the Sistine Chapel (169). Other materials came through various Internet searches both through regular and scholarly search engines such as Google®, Google® Scholar, LexisNexis® Academic and the Film and Television Literature Index. It was through these avenues that I began to find references to works such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s The Beloved, Arthur Hughes’ In The Grass and Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s Pandora. I also searched art databases by character names, such as Mary Magdalene and Lilith, which led me to such work as Titian’s Mary Magdalene and J. W. Waterhouse’s 1905 Lamia. When I could find print copies of these paintings, I was able to scan them in at high resolution so that when used in the film, they would retain detail when cropped or zoomed in on tightly.

Other images would present themselves to me almost by accident, such as Cranach’s Adam and Eve, which is used in the opening credits of the ABC primetime drama Desperate Housewives. I was watching episodes from the first season in search of scenes with Marcia Cross’ character Bree when I noticed that the opening sequence from the pilot episode was different than the opening sequence for the rest of the season’s episodes. After discovering the difference between the opening sequences it hit me that two devious redhead women were featured in the sequence, one of them being Eve. Because I was able to find printed versions of this painting, I began the process of trying to integrate it and its use in the Desperate Housewives’ introduction into the film. For excerpts of film and television shows, I tried to think of the characters I knew to be redheads who fit the stereotype, such as Maureen O’Hara’s character, Mary
Kate Danaher, in *The Quiet Man* (1952), Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis’ portrayals of redhead women on the run in *Thelma & Louise* (1991), and Saffron Burrows’ character Nan in *Circle of Friends* (1995). For television, Lucille Ball was the first thought, particularly since travails of her dyed red hair is a running joke in the *I Love Lucy* series, such as with “The Business Manager” episode of the 1954 season.

Additional material was found after talking to the women interviewed for the film such as the film *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* (2006) and the songs “Red-Headed Woman” by Bruce Springsteen and “Stay With Me” by Rod Stewart. While I knew of several songs in my own music collection, such as the song “Rotes Haar” by In Extremo, I discovered other songs by searching online song lyric databases as well as iTunes® and other online music directories.

Final decisions surrounding which media to include in the film were not made until the very last stages of post-production as the film was in a state of constant flux. This is particularly true with the development of voice over narration as each revision shortened not only the amount of narration, but the need for a wider variety of images to supplement in the information being given as well. For a detailed list of media included in the final film, see Appendix C.

**Funding and Distribution**

Due to the condensed production timeline for “Women in Red,” funding was not sought via grants, awards, or scholarships. Instead, the film was financed via in-kind donations of time and equipment for crew during production and post-production and cash on hand. I anticipate the need for finishing services such as color correction and sound mixing as well as financing to cover distribution costs and plan on applying to
entities such as Women Make Movies and the Texas Filmmaker’s Production Fund to cover related costs.

While the film is undergoing the finishing process, distribution will begin. Initial distribution will focus on the festival market, centering heavily on festivals dedicated to film that are by, for, or about women. Examples of such festivals include Lunafest, Through Women’s Eyes, the Boston International Women’s Day Film Festival and the Baltimore Women’s Film Festival, among others. Further festival distribution will include such nationally and internationally recognized film festivals as the Austin Film Festival, the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, and the Glasgow Film Fest. After success on the festival market, “Women in Red” will seek distribution through one of several entities such as Women Make Movies or First Run/Icarus Films.

INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION

The characteristics associated with being redheaded are cultural constructs whose roots can be traced through semiotics, or the study of signs. By thinking of the color red as a sign and hair as signifier, we are able to understand how certain character traits have been assigned to redheads for over a millennium. The color red is most often associated with emotions such as anger and passion or as representing a certain political or religious position – Communists are referred to as being members of the “red” party and red is the identifying color of Satan and hell. By introducing audiences to the history of the redhead in history, literature, and art, “Women in Red” is, in turn, educating audiences about the semiotic relationship between the color (the sign)
and hair (signifier) and how those two things reflect upon the person (signified) bearing the red hair.

Beyond the base semiotic layer, stereotypes are constructed via social discourse perpetuated by dominant social groups. Because these groups have the “tremendous ability to make their definitions appear natural and unarguable,” the definitions have “taken on the form of myth… a system of communication that can turn history into nature” (Gorham 232). In American culture today, mass media has played a significant role in not only creating new stereotypes, but also in endorsing, altering or adapting historical stereotypes to suit modern ideological needs. Historically, the depictions of blonde, brunette and redheaded women relate to a woman’s virtue as seen in Titian’s 1515 work Sacred and Profane Love, where sacred love is a clothed blonde woman and profane love a mostly nude, reclining redhead. In Michelangelo’s depictions of Eve in Original Sin and the Expulsion from Earthly Paradise, she is either a blonde or brunette before the expulsion while afterwards, she is a redhead, the embodiment of sin. Modern day representations of blondes in American media tend to reflect associations with stupidity and care-free fun that developed in the “frenetic post-World War I period” of the flapper, while brunettes are thought of as being “good, intelligent, and familiar” (Synnott 386).

In terms of visual composition, natural redheads in the documentary “Women in Red” were placed on the left hand side of the frame while dyed redheads were placed on the right. Every interview was shot using daylight balanced lighting as the key and, when able, natural location light as the fill, or vice versa. Using natural/daylight lighting enhances the shades of red hair displayed by each of the ten women and, for the
observant viewer their placement on one side of the frame or another will signify their status as a natural or bottle redhead. The use of eyeline in film, much as in art or graphic design, endows the subject/object “with direction” (Pipes 202) and provides the audience a focal point within the frame.

Because Western eyes read left to right, included in this placement is the idea that those on the left side of the frame look out into the open (Figure 1) while those on the right side of the frame looking left are restricted from seeing openly (Figure 2). Symbolically, the spatial relationship of natural redheads to the bottle redheads presents the idea that the natural redheads are free to move inside or outside of the stereotypes placed upon them while the women who have chosen to dye their hair red, however, have symbolically placed themselves inside the confines of the stereotype and have become isolated within its boundaries.

Figure 1. Jill is on frame left. Frame exported from "Women in Red."
Figure 2. Jana is on frame right. Frame exported from "Women in Red."

Figure 3. "Pandora" without color. Frame exported from "Women in Red."
Further emphasis is placed on the use and importance that color plays in the function of the stereotypes by eliminating color from non-essential portions of artwork, such as what is done with Lawrence Alma-Tadema's 1881 painting, *Pandora* in the historical segment of the film (Figures 3 and 4), or as is done while combining portraits of Elizabeth I and experimental footage of hair of a similar shade.

Focusing on elements such as these aids the audience's understanding of the overall wholeness of the film and its topic, the film's *gestalt* as it were. The term *gestalt* refers to the unity of a composition such as in graphic design, where each individual element aids in the creation of a unified whole and thus the overall meaning conveyed by the work. "The human brain always tries to make sense of things, and if an obvious pattern cannot be found, it will either try to create one or reject the image. The artist, consciously or unconsciously, will offer up clues for the viewer, and the more puzzling and tantalizing they are, the more we enjoy the challenge" (Pipes 177). Similar
examples to this can be found in such films as Les Blank’s *Gap-Toothed Women* where the audience is shown close-up imagery of gapped teeth, the frame pulling out wider to reveal the women who own them. Additionally, in Jennifer Arnold’s *American Mullet*, close up imagery of a wide variety of mullets is shown throughout the film, illustrating the diversity of mullets that can be found in a given population.

**PRODUCTION**

**Schedule, Equipment, and Crew**

“Women in Red” began production in December 2007 and completed principle photography in February 2008. Interviews were conducted on location at participant’s homes throughout the North Texas area, though the majority of the interviews were shot in the city of Dallas. Interviews were shot on the JVC 5100 and were lit with daylight-balanced light kits. Audio was recorded via Sennheiser lavalier and boom microphones routed through a field mixer to the camera.

Due to the personal nature of the topic, I wanted to keep the crew to a minimum and in order to ensure that the women were completely comfortable during their interviews, made sure that the crew was entirely female. The production crew initially consisted of Anna Dewell-Bussart as camera and Liz Daggett recording sound; however, due to time constraints, Liz was present for only three interviews and Anna for eight – I shot and recorded sound for the two remaining interviews myself.

**The Interviews**

With the exception of Jana’s interview, conducted at her place of business, all of the interviews were shot at the participants’ homes, each presenting its own series of challenges to the crew, both visually and in terms of sound. By the last interview,
however, we had become quite adept at setting up in a short period of time, therefore leaving plenty of time for a thorough interview. In terms of the interview image itself, the most challenging interview to shoot was Erica’s, due both to spatial limitations in her apartment, as well as the quickly diminishing supply of natural daylight. The spatial limitations were compounded by the contents of Erica’s apartment (large, immobile furniture and primarily blank walls) and meant that we had very little room within which to maneuver both the lighting and recording equipment. As a result, she is lit from the right side of the frame instead of the left.

Prior to each interview, I reviewed the pre-interview notes and composed a list of questions based upon both the conversations I had previously held with the women as well as the list of topics I wished to cover with all of them. On the way to the interview location, I would discuss the shoot with my crew and give them information on the particular person we would be interviewing. I invited crew members to suggest additional questions or topics that needed to be covered during the interview. Once on location, we would explore our options in terms of where we could set up to get the most pleasing image for the space and participant. We would then set up the necessary equipment, position the participant for last minute adjustments such as for lighting or sound, and begin the interview.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours and was followed by acquisition of experimental footage of each woman’s hair and facial features. Though these images were not used in the manner as they were originally intended in the final film, they add an interesting visual background to the film’s varied factual breaks and help organize and structure the film.
Releases, Copyright, and License Agreements

Signed release forms were obtained for all participants and locations as well as for any personal photographs or other media they allowed be part of the film. Artwork used in the film artwork that falls in the public domain, such as stone carvings, woodcuts, or paintings made prior to 1900. Media, such as film clips and song excerpts, when not in the public domain, fall under the conditions of fair use as set forth in the Documentary Filmmakers’ Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use as published by the American University Center for Social Media in 2005. This document details the legal arguments used to support the use of copyrighted works in documentary films as “documentary filmmakers should have the same kind of access to copyrighted materials that is enjoyed by cultural and historical critics who work in print media and by news broadcasters” (1). By following these guidelines, I am maintaining that the copyrighted works used in the final film are used to support the argument that stereotypes of redhead women are perpetuated in popular media, both visually and audibly.

While visual images such as excerpts of television shows and movies support the argument by themselves, music clips are used to support an idea or stereotype particular to redhead women detailed in the accompanying graphic. The best example of this comes early in the film when an excerpt of Sonny Burgess’ 1956 song “Red-Headed Woman” alludes to the fiery temper of redhead women: “Well now a red-headed woman ‘bout the meanest thing I know!” This chorus is accompanied with a title that states “Queen Elizabeth I was known for her violent temper.” The fact that Queen Elizabeth I had a healthy temper has been well-documented in her many biographies, but is perhaps most eloquently summed up by the following:
To keep those around her in fear of her Elizabeth cultivated – or perhaps simply unleashed – a capricious temper. One hour amiable and approachable, she was peevish and ill-humoured the next. Her “terrible fancies” were dreaded, when she “gave no one a gracious answer” and, if even slightly provoked, laid about her with words that cut as cruelly as swords (Erickson 251).

When appropriate song lyrics could not be found to match the factual title presented, royalty-free music suitable to the context of the information as well as the pace of the film at that point was used in its place.

Budget

“Women in Red” was produced primarily through in-kind donation. Production and post-production equipment was provided, via class access, by the University of North Texas’ Department of Radio, Television and Film. Production and post-production crew time was provided by in-kind donations as well. Total cash spent on the film to date is $810, distributed amongst the following categories: transportation (gas, vehicle maintenance), food (snacks and meals for crew), and media (MiniDV tapes, DVDs, hard drives).

POST-PRODUCTION

Schedule and Equipment

Post-production began in December 2007 with initial interview transcriptions; the last transcription was completed early February 2008. The film itself was edited between early February and late April 2008, with the final edit in place on April 25, 2008. The film was cut on an AVID Xpress® Pro HD non-linear editing system while animation
and titling were composed using Adobe’s After Effects® CS3 visual effects design software.

Transcription and Capture

Because “Women in Red” is an interview-based documentary, having complete and accurate transcriptions of each interview was vital to the success or failure of the documentary. Accurate transcriptions give the editor the ability to quickly search and retrieve information based upon keyword searches, often leading the editor back to material previously dismissed, skipped over, or forgotten about during various stages of the editing process. One example of just such a keyword search came with the word “natural”: not only did the search find statements regarding the participants’ status as a natural or bottle redhead, but also their opinions regarding people who dye their hair red (in the case of the natural redheads), or what the bottle redheads thought natural redheads would think of people who dye their hair red.

Each transcription took roughly six to eight hours to complete and was dependent not only on the length of the interview but the complexity and rapidity of the participant’s speech patterns as well. Once the transcriptions were completed, they were merged into one PDF document with which I as the editor could perform keyword searches. After the footage had been captured in AVID®, each interview was subdivided by question and then organized further by themes or ideas I believed needed to be addressed in the film. I then began to assemble sequences based upon those themes and ideas.
Re-conceptualization of Film During Post-Production

I made the decision during the production period to exclude academic experts from the film and, as a result, had to revise my conceptualization of the film prior to post-production. The original intent behind including academic experts was to expand upon the role of women’s hair in history in general, then the role of red hair in particular. I came to realize, however, that I was making a film about the experience of being a redheaded woman as much as it was about the stereotypes surrounding redheaded women and that there were no better experts present to explain the situation than the redheaded women themselves.

Another significant decision made during production that affected post-production was the decision to not shoot observational footage with each participant. I had originally intended to return to the participants if it turned out that I needed this extra imagery during the editing phase of the film but because the shape of the film changed both during production and post-production, the need for additional footage became a moot point. Additionally, as the women were relating experiences that had happened in the past versus experiences that I would be able to document on-camera, I decided that including footage not specifically related to the topic at hand would muddle the story and distract viewers from what the women were saying.

During the transcription process, I had begun to mentally edit the film with all ten characters in mind. It quickly became apparent, however, that at least one character would be eliminated or I would not be able to maintain an acceptable balance of visual presence between the characters. As both the director and editor, I found that there were several elements to consider in making the decision to eliminate a character,
including not only the visual appeal of each interview, but the amount of onscreen time each character would receive as well. I had to decide if I would be able to introduce all of the characters early on in the film, and if not, to determine how this would affect audiences as they watched the film – would it confuse them to meet a new character after all of the other characters had been introduced? Additionally, I wondered how audiences would react to seeing an interview that contained visual elements not found in the other interviews (Figure 5), even though I could manipulate those elements in post-production – would this distract audiences from what the women were saying? Had I shot all of the interviews on the same background, as director Meema Spadola did in her interview-based documentary Breasts, these visual elements would not have been taken into consideration as each interview would have looked the same.

![Figure 5. Frames exported from an early draft of “Women in Red” that illustrate the visual differences between Julie’s interview (middle frame) from Tiffany’s (left) and Aimee’s (right).](image)

While the questions above played an important role in my decision, the determining factor to eliminate a character came down to the speech patterns of each woman and their ability to provide an interesting statement in a concise but compelling manner. The inclusions of extra words such as “and” and “uh,” elongated pauses or stammering while contemplating their statements would provide nothing extra for audience members, perhaps even causing them to disengage with the material. Unfortunately for Julie, these phenomena were especially problematic, as she often repeated herself within the same sentence or would stumble over what she was trying
to say, meaning that her dialogue would need to be edited considerably in order to achieve a concise statement on any given topic. Given the lack of other visual materials to cover these multiple edits, I made the decision to exclude her from the final film.

One of the most problematic aspects of the post-production process was in determining the film’s structure. When I had still thought of including myself as a character, I had anticipated that my own experiences as a redhead would provide the backbone of the film, as well as a means by which to provide a greater amount of historical information related to the stereotypes. As I began to work with these ideas, however, I began to wonder what ideas such as ethnicity really had to do with being a redhead woman today. While it is true that most people assume redheads to be of Irish origin more than of general Celtic descent “to the degree that Irishness has colonized the meanings of Celticness, including the identity signifier of red hair” (Third 229), that particular stereotype is one that is related to all redheads, not just women in particular. I realized then that I had been attempting to make a film outside the realm of which it had been produced and that I needed to eliminate any information not specific to the experience of redheaded women. As a result, the topic of ethnicity and redheaded men were removed from the film, though I determined it was best to retain the characters’ childhood experiences as redheads given how important childhood experiences are to the shaping of adulthood.

Yet even as I excluded topics not wholly related to redheaded women, I was unable to include one that I had really wanted to explore: the present-day effects of the historical association of redheaded women with witchcraft. I decided to abandon the effort as it became problematic for a variety of reasons, including the fact that Colleen
was the only woman who had experienced anyone tying her to witchcraft because of her hair color and that the only other woman who knew of the historical association of redhead women to witchcraft had, by this point, been almost entirely eliminated from the film. Additionally, because I had made the decision to exclude academics during production, I realized that I would not be able to build a segment around this topic without the inclusion of voice over narration detailing the historical significance of the association as well as the ways in which it had been sustained over the centuries. Had I done that, I would have greatly changed not only the visual design of the film, but the overall flow as well, something I felt would be detrimental to the success of the film.

This situation also caused me to reflect on how the questions I asked each woman affected the shape of the film during post-production (for examples of these questions see Appendix A). I came to realize that while it is true that each woman is an expert in being a redhead as she defines it for herself, she should not necessarily have been treated as an expert in everything related to being a redhead, past and present. For example, asking questions about comments they received from strangers about their hair or how they feel they fit into the stereotypes they knew related to redheads reflect their experiences as a redhead, while questions related to the historical depictions of redheads or their current place in popular culture refer to the world’s view of what being a redhead means. For some of the participants, the lines between these types of questions blurred and they were unable to discuss the larger picture while for others, such as Erica, they were adept at discussing both in detail, providing a full analysis of the situation on the spot even while mentioning that they had never thought about that particular idea before.
Examples of how the identification of participants as experts are used to the benefit of the subject matter can be found in other interview-based documentary films such as *Mirror, Mirror* and *Fog of War*. Though they discuss very different subject matters and are constructed in very different ways, both of these films rely on their participants to both a) carry the topic of discussion and b) be the experts on that particular topic. Jan Krawitz’s *Mirror, Mirror* is composed of a series of interviews with a variety of women discussing what they do or do not like about their bodies. Only once does a woman say anything about the impact society has had on how she views her body when she says, “If it were up to me, it really wouldn’t matter what size I was, but because society feels size is important I think that it has caused me to be very aware of my size.” As this statement is made towards the end of the film, it reveals how the women were treated as experts with regards to their experiences with body image, but that they have not been relied on to provide expertise on the issue on a broader scale.

In contrast, Errol Morris’ *The Fog of War* is a one-interview film that tells the much broader, yet simultaneously personal story of former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara’s role in the shaping of America during the twentieth century. Because of his high-profile role in key events of American history during the past century, McNamara is the expert in both the personal and public sides of the tale, providing not only his own views of the events that shaped America during the past century, but the cultural and political information to contextualize those events as well. Because the characters in “Women in Red” are experts in some ways but not others, it is my voice, when combined with examples of social media given that plays the role of expert, providing audiences with fact rather than opinion.
Narration and the Final Cut

As my role as a character in the film diminished, so too did the need to convey large amounts of historical information even though historical context was supposed to assume a significant role in the original design of the film. The debate over which historical information was most important to convey became directly tied to the use of narration. As such, the narration needed to highlight important aspects of the history of the redheaded woman while being concise, entertaining, and directed in such a way as to smoothly lead the audience into the rest of the film.

With the structure of the film in place, narration had to be recorded before the final titles and graphics could be integrated into the final film. Several written versions of the narration were composed even before recording began, but with each recording session the narration was altered based upon my ability to say certain words clearly as well as my ability to say words or phrases in a certain manner to help convey context to the subject. Additional revisions were required when I began integrating the voice over with visual materials as the spoken words were often too fast for the screen time required by a particular image.

Once the final narration was in place, additional adjustments were made to the timing of visual elements not only in the historical section but throughout the film as well. The last visual element added to the film was the end credit sequence, created as both a way to include some of the more outlandish remarks about redheaded women and as a means to provide thought-provoking entertainment to the very end.
EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK

All told, “Women in Red” is quite a different film than I had originally set out to make. Though the subject matter and use of participants is the same, the look and feel of the film have changed significantly from that of a first person adventure story to that of a visual conversation between a small group of people chosen to represent a larger population. Given the time and budgetary constraints for this project, however, I believe that the shorter film (as opposed to the originally anticipated feature-length film) does in fact present a more intimate portrait of what the experience of being a redheaded women is in America today than what I would have been able to accomplish with the larger, more wide-ranging piece.

Given that I am more suited to being an editor than a producer or director, I feel that had I been able to utilize the talents of a successful producer, my original feature-length vision may have been come to fruition. I am, however, overall pleased with the outcome of the film, even though it is not the film I had originally intended to make. While I think my skills as a producer and director have strengthened to a certain degree, I believe that because I found myself in the role of producer, director, camera, and sound on two interviews reiterates that I should strive to limit myself to one role in which to place my full concentration.

Having said that, I am fully aware that my limited talents as a producer/director on this film have had a direct impact on the post-production process of the film, which in itself has presented a number of challenges for me to overcome. As a filmmaker, producing is the role I enjoy the least out of the available options as it requires many hours on the phone scheduling with and cajoling a number of individuals and entities,
thus ensuring that all necessary elements of the film will be obtained to realize the vision of the director. I believe that if I were a more adept producer and had more of a directorial vision for the entire film instead of select portions of the film that are only loosely tied to each other, that the original idea for “Women in Red” could have been successfully realized. As a director, I feel that while I am able to envision a story in general terms, I am unable to put a clear story together until after post-production has begun, which in turn puts an unnecessary burden on the editor, who then becomes more of the director than the individual who acted as director initially.

Because of these failings, I have found this film to be one of the most difficult I have ever had to edit and feel that I will be that much more successful as an editor because of the challenges presented – the lack of other visual material pertaining to each participant meant that I had to be more purposeful and exact in deciding which statements could be made when and by whom. As a result, the film is much tighter and thus shorter than it would have been had it been shot more in the style of cinema vérité, or as a combination of interviews and vérité style footage. Consequently, I feel that having this self-inflicted limitation will have real-world value if a production were to suddenly find itself without funding for further production and had to make do with the material it had at hand.

I feel that I have been successful in my attempt to make an entertaining yet educational film that makes a unique contribution to understanding the lives of redheaded women in the United States today. I look forward to seeing what the future brings for this film, including its reception overseas in the more “redheaded” areas of the world such as Great Britain and Ireland. All in all, I feel that because I have come to
terms with my abilities to function in one role versus another, my future work will continue to build off of this film and that each subsequent film shall be just as much a learning experience as this one has been.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Sample Interview Questions for Natural Redheads

Have you ever hated being a redhead? If so, why? If not, why?

How do you think your experience as a redhead changed over the course of your life?

Have you ever been treated negatively because of your hair color? If so, what happened?

Have you ever dyed your hair another color? If so, why?

Talk about your willingness to dye your hair another color? Why or why not?

How do you feel about people who dye their hair red?

What are some of the assumptions people make about you because of your hair color?

What are some of the positive comments people have given you about your hair?

What are some of the negative comments people give you about your hair?

Can you talk about the differences between the comments received from women versus those from men?

What are some of the pickup lines that men have used over the years?

What would your guess be as to how the stereotypes associated with redheads came about?

How would you say that the redhead stereotype affects you personally, if at all?

How would you say you fit the stereotype of redheaded woman?

Do you remember a time or event when you realized that being a redhead made you different from other people? If so, what was it?

How do you think popular culture affects how redheads are treated on an individual level?

How would you define being a redhead?
Sample Interview Questions for Bottle Redheads

How long have you been a redhead?

Talk about the color and how long it took you to find the color you were happy with?

What made you decide to become a redhead?

How would you describe your personality before and after becoming a redhead? Has it changed?

What kinds of comments have you received about your hair color since becoming a redhead?

Any special pick up lines that men use now versus when you were a your natural color?

Have you noticed that people react or treat you differently as a redhead versus when you were a blonde? Why do you think that is?

If you admit to it, how do people react when you tell them that you are not a natural redhead?

What do you think natural redheads think of people who dye their hair red?

Talk about the various stereotypes that you know are associated with blondes and brunettes.

What are the stereotypes that you know of associated with redheads?

What would your guess be as to how stereotypes associated with redheads came about?

Talk about how you fit into the redheaded stereotypes?

How do you see the redhead’s place in popular culture?

How do you think the treatment of redheads in popular culture affects how they are treated on a general level?
APPENDIX B

EXCERPT OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION - ERICA
Stereotypes for other hair colors, obviously I know blondes best. You know, blonde... just... everybody assumes you're a ho. And you know so slutty and so stupid and just *uh huh that's great oh my god [voice rises in pitch]*. They expect the stupid little valley girl. You know... from what I've seen of the brunette stereotype, they expect you to be very plain and mousy and boring and kind of bookworm and almost librarian. Black hair, I don't know of too many stereotypes for that. I think it would probably depend on if you tied it in with an eth, ugh... and ethnicity [laughs]. Um... I'm sure there are, I just don't know of them.

So do you know any differences in the stereotype for redheaded women versus redheaded men?

Something I've noticed when... when people look at redheaded men, for some reason they can't look at a redheaded man and go oh he's sexy. It's always like you know Opie, and you know kind of like, cute and geeky and oh look. Its more of pinch the cheeks he's cute and walk off. Whereas some people... look at [mumbles] ugh... some people look at redheaded women and its all sexy and uh alluring... so it is very different between males and females, I think. It's the stereotypes off of TV. You know the redheaded women on tv are very sexy and sultry and the redheaded men are kind of Opie and goofy and kind of cute and not hot you know.

What about between redheaded children... as opposed to redheaded adults?

Stereotypes for redheaded children, from what I've seen, it really seems to be... the cute. Oh my god so cute oh my god oh I bet that's a little hellion. You know... its all the cutesy cutesy cutesy whereas adults it seems to be more tied in with aesthetics in general. They don't make a whole lot of intelligence assumptions or anything like that. Its all just you know oh you're very sexual, you're very aggressive, oh you're very... and its all kind of personality and looks.

Do you remember when you first learned about the stereotypes surrounding redheads?

[laughs] Uh... I... I had always vaguely knew of the stereotypes. You know, I had always been around, you know natural redheads growing up or as I got older, people that colored their hair red. And um it wasn't until I started coloring my hair more of a dark red, once I moved away from the strawberry blonde into the darker colors that I saw the stereotypes kind of thrown into my face. You know where people will come up and comment or you know you'll be online and post pictures online and people respond to them in a completely different way then when you were a blonde or strawberry blonde. And that's kind of where I got more of a feel of how people perceive, you know, based on those stereotypes.

And where are you posting these pictures?

[laughs] I have a lot of pictures on, you know, my MySpace® is covered with all my pictures. You know, a while back there were some forums that I would go to and it would be kind the post yourself thread so everybody could see who're they're talking to and you'll post little goofy pictures of yourself and people have to comment back. [Plane] You know whether its oh you're ugly or oh you know I like your hair or whatever. It's kind of strange.

Do you know anything about the historical stereotype for redheads?

Vaguely, I... I have in my younger days I would kind of go online and research you know those kinds of historical stereotypes. You know it still seems like those are the women who were more aggressive and willing to speak up - the Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth the first, Mary Magdalene. Where it was these women that were in positions that most women weren't, where they really stood out and tried to make a difference, tried to make a change, tried to do something everybody else was scared to do. That's what I've seen, at least.
APPENDIX C

“WOMEN IN RED” OUTLINE WITH MEDIA DETAIL
“Women in Red” Outline with Media Detail

I. Introduction

II. Historical Section

a. Lilith – Sumerian terra-cotta relief, ca. 2000 BC
b. The Creation of Eve, Michelangelo, early 16th century
c. Original Sin and the Expulsion From Earthly Paradise, Michelangelo, early 16th century
d. Mary Magdalene, Frederick Sandys, 1862
e. Judith, Cranach the Elder, c. 1530
f. Pandora, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1881
g. Queen Guinevere’s Maying, John Collier, 1900
h. Lady Godiva, John Collier, 1898
i. Witches Burned in Harz in 1555, Anonymous.
j. The wonderful discouerie of the vvitchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower, daughters of Ioan Flower neere Beuer Castle: executed at Lincolne, March 11. 1618, 1619
k. Detail from Santa Maria del Soccorso, Anonymous, ca. 1470
l. The Beloved (The Bride), Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1865-6
m. In the Grass, Arthur Hughes, 1864-5

III. Stereotypes of Redheaded Women in Media

c. The Quiet Man (1956)

IV. The Redheaded Temperament

a.  *Elizabeth I Coronation Portrait*, c. 1600, unknown artist, copy of portrait made in 1558

b.  *Elizabeth I*, attributed to John Betes, c1585-90

c.  “Red-Headed Woman” Sonny Burgess, 1956 (song)

   i.  Plays under Elizabeth I montage

d.  “Stay with Me” Rod Stewart, 1986 (song)

   i.  Plays under French Proverb : Redheaded women are either violent or false… and usually are both.

V. Blonde, Brunette, and Redheaded Stereotypes

VI. Childhood Experiences

a.  *South Park*, “Ginger Kids,” 2005

   i.  Cartman’s class presentation.

b.  *South Park*, “Ginger Kids,” 2005

   i.  Ginger kids are evil.

VII. Things Men Say About/Do Towards Redheaded Women


VIII. What Natural Redheads Think About Bottle Redheads

a.  “Red Headed Woman” by Deke Dickerson, 1999 (song)

   i.  Plays under 2006 hair dye sales statistics

IX. Bottle Redheads/Comments People Give Them
X. The Price of Being a Redhead
      i. Thin redhead or a fat brunette.
      i. Black beanie.

XI. Having Red Hair Makes Me Different

XII. Conclusion

XIII. Credits
APPENDIX D

DISTRIBUTION OUTLETS
Film Festivals

Austin Film Festival http://www.austinfilmfestival.com

Baltimore Women’s Film Festival http://www.bwfilmfestival.com/

Boston International Women’s Day Film Festival http://www.usahostels.org/IWDDF.php

Chicago International Film Festival http://www.chicagofilmfestival.org

Edinburgh International Film Festival http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk/

Glasgow Film Festival http://www.glasgowfilmfestival.org.uk/

Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival http://www.hsdfi.org/Festival.html

Lunafest http://www.lunafest.org

Through Women’s Eyes http://www.throughwomenseyes.com

Distributors

First Run/Icarus Films http://www.frif.com

Women Make Movies http://www.wmm.com
REFERENCES


