

**EXERCISE AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN ADULT WOMEN
TRANSITIONING INTO SOCIETY:
A DOCUMENTARY FILM AND ANALYSIS**

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By
Stephen McWilliams
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Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Michael Sachs, Department of Kinesiology
Dr. Lois Butcher, Department of Kinesiology
Dr. Catherine Schifter, Department of Education
Dr. Mark Salzer, Department of Rehabilitation Services

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Abstract

The Role of Film as Persuasive Tool of Social Change

Since the introduction of cinema, both non-fiction and fictional films have been used by film makers, artists, and interest groups to change minds and mold opinions. Documentary films in particular, have a history of being used in a variety of ways to further political causes, raise social or patriotic awareness, or as a call to personal activism. In this project, the use of well designed, aesthetically pleasing documentaries have been advocated for potential use in the field of sport psychology to create awareness of the work of practitioners in order to promote healthy behaviors. Filmmaking can serve the field in a number of creative ways. A recent film is submitted as a demonstration of how a well crafted film can be utilized within the field as both an advocacy piece and an educational resource.

There has been a long, historical relationship between sports and film. Throughout cinematic history there have been numerous films, both narrative and documentaries, both about sports or subjects that included sports in their story. Sports lend themselves to narrative and documentary storytelling. As a filmmaker, I was drawn to a story about a non-profit organization, “Gearing Up,” which uses a bicycle exercise program to help women in recovery from drug and alcohol

addiction. The film explores the effectiveness of a therapeutic model developed by “Gearing Up” founder, Kristin Gavin. The production of the film, and my involvement as the producer and director, inspired me to explore the further use of documentary film as both a classroom teaching tool and a vehicle that can inspire behavioral change.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for Project

Media and film can be effective and powerful teaching tools in an educational setting. Specifically, the genre of documentary film can spark passionate discussion, solicit viewers to analyze entrenched views, and challenge audiences to involve themselves in behavioral or cultural change. Taking these benefits one step further, is it possible to combine documentary filmmaking with sport psychology and create a moving, effective project that can be harnessed as part of a greater pedagogical strategy within the field? A documentary film about the effectiveness of sport on exercise on mental and physical health is proposed as the basis of both a worthwhile dissertation project and an integral part of an effective teaching strategy in Sport Psychology.

As a documentary filmmaker, the author has worked for many years in the area of advocacy film. What is advocacy filmmaking? For purposes of this paper, advocacy filmmaking is defined as storytelling in the service of promoting social justice and more equitable societies. In short, it is purposeful filmmaking with the intent of creating social change. Throughout the author's career, I have focused on storytelling in the service of non-profit organizations. The majority of my creative

work has focused on stories of individuals or organization working for the greater good of all societies.

In order to make an effective documentary film, there are several issues that a filmmaker needs to consider. First, a good film normally has to contain an interesting subject with a compelling narrative. Story telling is and has always been central in every civilized culture. As noted storyteller Robert McKee explains, “a good story means something worth telling that the world wants to hear,” (McKee, 1997, - p. 14). Modern electronic storytelling through the mediums of film or television is ubiquitous and the competition for audience attention has never been more challenging for creative artists in media production. First and foremost, a filmmaker must consider his/her audience in terms of interest and expectation. An audience must be understood before being engaged. What differentiates great from uninteresting stories? And, what makes a story fulfilling for an audience? McKee (1997) further states that, “ a beautifully crafted film (non-fiction or fiction), is a symphonic unity in which structure, setting, character, genre, and idea meld seamlessly,” (p. 27). The filmmaker should understand McKee’s statement and then set out to create a work that takes the audience on an exciting, complete cinematic journey. Great storytelling touches the audience in a place where traditional academic or intellectual pursuit may not. McKee (1997) preaches the idea that stories are ideas wrapped in emotions, which for an audience, is oftentimes more memorable than the idea alone. Film, unlike

lectures or statistics, must work on at least two important levels. First, the film must present a topic worthy of the audience's time and interest. When the lights are dimmed, the film must meet the minimal expectation that the time spent watching the film is well worth it and the content, meaningful and thought provoking. Audiences gauge the worthiness of the film on its relevance to their lives. If the film fails to interest its intended audience, then in all likelihood the film can be considered a failure. Second, the film should on some level, entertain as well as inform. Most importantly, the film should evoke an emotional response. According to McKee (1997), film and its structure, is a "selection of events from the characters' life stories that is composed in a strategic sequence to arouse specific emotions and to express a specific view of life," (p. 27). As a result of this emotional involvement of an audience, film can bring awareness to that audience about significant issues that demand societal attention. As filmmakers, we often dramatize the plight of someone or a group of people that are misunderstood, overlooked, or mistreated. Documentaries, in particular, can deliver information to the masses in a relatively efficient way. The documentary tradition frequently calls the audience member to action and requires the viewer to consider becoming an agent of social change. Film is used, and has been used historically, as a propaganda tool or as an effective means of persuasion. However, on the most basic level, documentaries serve the community by representing an important slice of life in a truthful, satisfying way.

It is author's belief that documentary filmmaking, in particular documentaries about sports and exercise, can serve the sport psychology discipline in a similar way that persuades, illuminates, and affects change around subjects important to the practitioner. Can films with pertinent topics be used to broadcast key themes, concepts, and benefits of sport psychology? Additionally, can films show the positive benefits of sport and exercise on mental health therefore enhancing the public perception of the field? Ultimately, can there exist, a critical intersection between documentary film and sport psychology?

The question may be asked, why would one attempt to marry these two seemingly dissimilar fields of documentary filmmaking and sport psychology? Certainly, using media techniques in a way to disseminate information is not a completely original idea. In addition to spending a great deal of my career in the film production business and in film education at Villanova University, I have concurrently developed a passion for sports and exercise. As a young person, I participated in a variety of sport teams and activities. As a parent, I encouraged my children to do the same. As an older adult, I continue to pursue an active lifestyle with sport and exercise as a cornerstone of my health regiment. Furthermore, as a concerned citizen I have developed a deep interest in the issues of sport psychology and sociology, in particular the inequities of sports participation because of issues of race, gender, or class. My sociological interests were further developed and heightened while doing my graduate work at Temple

University, where I studied the “Sociology of Sport” course with Dr. Emily Roper. It was in this context that I first became interested in bringing my filmmaking abilities to shed light on the many problems of inequity in sport. I began to see the possibilities of my personal involvement and contribution to this idea. I began to research the topic of sports and documentary filmmaking. Certainly, I knew there have been many films produced about sports and that there has been a close connection between the two. Studying the history of the sports film made me realize that this would be fertile ground for film subjects.

In Spring, 2008, I attempted my first film with a sport sociology emphasis. The film “Coming Off the DL,” chronicled the lives and challenges faced by two student basketball managers living with Cerebral Palsy. The subjects in the film, along with their parents, reinforced the message of the power of sport for good. Frank Kineavy and Nick Gaynor, the student managers of the Villanova Men and Women’s basketball teams, provided audience members with their inspirational stories of how their involvement in team sports gave them a sense of community and belonging. The film garnered awards in film festivals domestically and abroad, and won awards from disability advocacy groups throughout the country. It was a major success on the Villanova campus because it combined stories about our students with the most popular pastime at the University, Villanova basketball. The message of disability awareness was put between the lines of these two students navigating their roles as team managers. The highlight of the

film's life was it's showing on ESPN and ESPNU during March Madness, 2009. This effort gave me increased motivation to further explore combining film with sport psychological messaging. In the Fall, 2009, while brainstorming a dissertation subject, I shared a copy of the film "Coming Off the DL" with Dr. Michael Sachs. Afterwards Dr. Sachs suggested that I might consider combining my filmmaking and sport psychology interest into a dissertation. He further suggested that I contact Kristin Gavin., the founder of the non-profit organization, Gearing Up. Soon after this meeting, I began to research Gearing Up.

Gearing Up is an organization that "provides women in transition from abuse, addiction, and incarceration with the skills, equipment, and guidance to safely ride a bicycle for exercise, transportation, and personal growth." Further, the Gearing Up mission statement includes the following:

"Through bicycle riding, Gearing Up creates opportunities for women re-entering and re-integrating into society to find ways to establish emotional, physical, and emotional health." (<http://www.gearing-up.org/>)

Gavin founded Gearing Up after developing a business plan as a requirement for her sport entrepreneurship course in the Temple Sport Psychology Master's Program. After graduation, Gavin partnered with Interim House in the Germantown section of Philadelphia and implemented her business model. Eventually, she was able to turn her idea into a fully developed non-profit

corporation. Her idea was simple. From her first rides with the residents of Interim House, Gavin had brought together women at risk with community volunteers with the simple goal to use exercise as a vehicle for personal behavioral change.

Once Dr. Sachs introduced me to Gearing Up, I immediately saw that Kristin Gavin and Gearing Up fit my criteria for a worthwhile film project. My first imaginings were that the work of Gearing Up fulfilled my personal requirement as a filmmaker. My instinct has always been to develop projects that focus on a person or persons who are creating positive social change. Dr. Sachs and I discussed the possibilities of a cooperative effort between Gearing Up and myself and how a resultant film might serve to support a dissertation requirement. Both of us agreed that Gearing Up presented a unique opportunity to both myself, as a filmmaker, and my need to complete the research component of my Doctoral program. In addition to impacting women and the local community, Dr. Sachs explained to me how Kristin regularly employed the skills from sport psychology toolbox in her work with the women. I was attracted to the idea to tell a story where sport and exercise played a major role in the recovery of these women.

Shortly after my meeting with Dr. Sachs, I contacted Kristin and arranged a meeting to discuss possible collaboration. During our first meeting, Kristin was genuinely excited about the possibility of a documentary film about Gearing Up.

She believed a film would be an excellent aid in helping her organization in several ways, most notably building brand recognition and helping with fundraising. After several meetings, the project fell through when her Board of Directors felt that it might be problematic to feature their clients, women in transition, in such a broad, public format as documentary film. The idea was rejected and we agreed that there would be no partnership between Gearing Up and myself. I was disappointed but I understood the Board's concerns about the sensitive issues surrounding recovery and confidentiality. There are always important ethical considerations that must be thought through and agreed upon before beginning any such project.

In the Summer, 2011, Kristin contacted me and explained that her Board had revisited the idea of a documentary being made about Gearing Up. Immediately, I was hesitant to become involved again with the group since I was unsure if we could agree to a reasonable, executable plan. After several months of negotiation, Gearing Up and I were able to author a contractual agreement stating that I would create a documentary about the program. I returned to Dr. Sachs and updated him on our progress. He and I then agreed that a joint film/dissertation hybrid could possibly be developed.

Pre-production began in April, 2012. During this phase, I met with Kristin and several key board members to construct the parameters of the project. Her

legal representative authored a lengthy agreement that both sides eventually signed. Immediately after signing the agreement, I began pre-production interviews with the Gearing Up leadership and several of the clients who were recruited by Kristin to be in the film. During our first meeting, Kristin and I wrote several goal statements for the film, as well as short and long term project objectives and then we constructed our timeline. Our discussions revealed the key informational content that we wanted included in the film. Next, Kristin introduced me to three women from the program, Gwen, Chene, and Tiffany. They had completed the Gearing Up 12-week program and all had maintained sobriety for over twelve months. Each had expressed their interests about appearing in a supportive film about Gearing Up. I carefully laid out the plan for the film and specifically explained to each woman, the terms of their involvement. I carefully reviewed and explained in depth, a release agreement that they would be required to sign allowing me to use their image in both the film and for purposes of my dissertation project. Everyone agreed to participate under the terms set forth.

Production on the film began in May, 2012. In consultation with Kristin, we identified all of the Gearing Up stakeholders who would be interviewed in addition to the Gearing Up members and personnel. Along with my assistant, co-Director and collaborator, Matthew Marencik, we constructed a skeletal storyboard for the film. During the months of May, June, and July we conducted

interviews with fifteen people. Twice weekly, we attended Gearing Up events including client rides and bike maintenance classes. The three clients, Gwen, Chene, and Tiffany, ultimately emerged as the central characters in our story. Matthew and I spent over 30 hours interviewing these three women on their past, present, and future. Filming was completed on September 8, 2012. Post-production, which includes editing, music selection, color and sound correction began on September 9, 2012. As of October 1, 2012, the first rough cut was completed. The film trailer was also completed and was scheduled to be shown at the annual Gearing Up fundraiser on October 11, 2012. Final completion of the film took place on November 15, 2012. The first private screening of the film, “Braking Cycles,” took place on December 1, 2012.

The Use of Film for Social Advocacy

One of the main purposes of my project is the detailed use of a documentary film as part of a coordinated outreach strategy to promote individual and social change through exercise. As a documentary filmmaker, I am primarily interested in creating films which can be used as a call to action. Obviously, not all films function as advocacy or activist pieces. However, as well as calling my audience to a fresh point of view, I must simultaneously be aware that films have other purposes as well. Audiences are varied and they enter the theater for many reasons. It is important for filmmakers to understand their audience which they

want to reach and then craft a strategy to reach that audience. A second purpose of this project is to provide a blueprint for other aspiring filmmakers (perhaps in the Sport Psychology field) who may have a desire to produce a relevant project.

Film production is normally divided into three stages: Pre-production, production, and post-production. Each phase contains a number of important tasks that must be carefully considered and executed to precision if the project is to have a chance to be successful. During the pre-production phase, the filmmaker normally searches for a compelling story that has the potential to shed light on an important issue, population, or problem. In my own filmmaking, my most immediate goal is to showcase an individual or group working to create positive social change. But, there is much more to consider once a topic or a subject has been located or decided upon. The filmmaker/producer must set specific goals for the project and envision the tone for the film. Is the story compelling enough to attract a diverse audience? Can the story entertain as well as inform an audience? Is the intention of the film to persuade the audience to a fresh viewpoint? Should or can the film make money for the producers, investors, or for a sponsoring organization? Can the film act as a catalyst or a centerpiece for a broader social movement?

Documentaries hold a unique position in the cultural landscape in that they can play a role in change. If an aspiring filmmaker is successful in executing the

idea for a film into a full, completed project, then the task becomes to find an audience with whom to share the film. Today, more than ever, this is increasingly more difficult. In a media saturated marketplace, a film must be exceptional enough to stand out and demand to be seen. In my role as filmmaker, I attempt to set realistic, practical goals for each project I begin. I spend a great deal of time during pre-production simply imagining the final product. I imagine the completed film and in my mind, I describe the audience who will view my film. I believe this period of planning is crucial and without careful consideration of goals and objectives, the project will likely fail. Most importantly, before I turn on a camera, I define my metrics for success. A meaningful film project is intentional, well planned, and executed with great detail.

A committed documentary filmmaker/producer studies carefully and understands clearly, the genre of documentary film in which he/she plans to work. Few people will attend a documentary screening in a traditional movie theater unless the filmmaker is critically acclaimed or is commercially successful such is director, Michael Moore. To add some statistical context for potential filmmakers seeking to make a documentary, the most recent “Batman” feature film opened to 300 million viewers on its first weekend. Academy award winning documentaries, even when mega-successful, rarely recover a six-figure return. Occasionally a film by Moore or a film such as Al Gore’s “Inconvenient Truth,” (2007), will experience box office success only because of widespread national and

international media coverage. Most documentary filmmakers are committed artists on a mission to “make a difference” in their communities by producing films that engage the political and social passions of their narrowly targeted audience.

As a case study, I will focus on a film that I produced in 2009. The documentary titled, “Coming Off the DL,” chronicled the lives of two young men living with cerebral palsy. This case study involves several lessons that I learned as the film’s producer/director that enabled me to develop a template that I use from project conception to distribution of the finished product. After explaining the steps of pre-production, production, and post-production of the film, I will demonstrate how I applied this template to my Temple project involving Gearing Up and the subsequent film, “Braking Cycles.”

Hypothesis

It is my hypothesis that the use of documentary filmmaking, in particular the documentary “Braking Cycles,” can serve the sport psychology discipline as an effective teaching tool in the classroom. I further believe that a well-made, pertinent documentary can instruct, illuminate, motivate, and affect change in topics important to the documentary practitioner and collaborators in the classroom. Additionally, this film is useful because it demonstrates for the audience, the positive benefits of sport and exercise on mental health therefore it can enhance the public perception of the field of Sport Psychology. Ultimately there exists, a critical intersection between documentary film and sport psychology.

Research Questions:

There are several important film questions I hope to answer in this dissertation project:

- 1) How does documentary film work as persuasive media?
- 2) Can documentary film be effective in promoting behavioral change?
- 3) Can documentary film be effective as a pedagogical tool for practitioners when used in the field of Sport Psychology?
- 4) Can filmmaking be used as a qualitative research?

There are several important questions that I developed specifically about the Gearing Up program and that are raised in the film “Braking Cycles”:

- 1) Do clear gender differences exist in the treatment of substance abusers?
- 2) Can exercise (cycling) effectively treat the underlying mental health symptoms (depression, low self-esteem, cycle of usage) of substance abuse?
- 3) Does exercise (Gearing Up) provide a unique social network that improves the chances of recovery in women?
- 4) What is the role of exercise in the reduction of drug and alcohol dependency?

Limitations

This dissertation advocates the production and the use of documentary film as an educational tool in the service of sport psychology. In addition, the author recommends that teachers consider using film more creatively in their teaching. However, this recommendation is not without limitations. Several factors need to be considered and the research contained within must be viewed within the context of a filmmaker's preferences, not a tenured college faculty member.

The film submitted with the dissertation, "Braking Cycles," works very well in a Sport Psychology classroom because the planning and execution of the film was carefully planned with classroom use as a goal. The production team was fortunate to have a full-time Kinesiology professor as an advisor to the film. Therefore, pre-production planning allowed for the producers to pay attention to important sport psychology issues. Many producers might not be as deliberate in their focus as they shoot a film. Second, the subject of the film, exercise in the treatment of addictive behaviors was a natural fit between film and sport psychology. It should be noted that not all films with sports themes are useful in the classroom.

Lastly, it should be reiterated that the use of film in the classroom is a practice fraught with potential criticisms. Careful planning, specific content use,

and time considerations must be considered carefully. The suggestions contained herein are not to be considered as a replacement of traditional teaching methods.

Definitions:

Advocacy Filmmaking: Visual media that is used as a targeted tool to bring about a change in policies, laws, or people's behavior.

B-Roll: Supporting video footage that acts as visual evidence that supports what is being stated by subjects.

Documentary Film: A film or television program presenting the facts about a person or an event.

Cinema Verite': A style of filmmaking characterized by realistic, typically documentary motion pictures that avoid artificiality and artistic effort and are generally made with simple equipment.

Narrative Film: Fictional film or narrative film tells a fictional or fictionalized story, event, or narrative. In his style, believable narratives and characters help convince the audience that the unfolding fiction is real.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Advocacy Documentary Film

Documentary films reflect the personal interests and political ideals of the filmmaker and ultimately present an artistic vision of the filmmaker's marriage of imagination and reality. The common thread among documentary films is that oftentimes, they work in the public sphere to affect the perceptions of the viewer. The entire purpose of the enterprise is to evoke a response from the audience. These responses can vary from intellectual to emotional, but without an audience reaction, a film has little to no purpose. Since the late 1920's and the introduction of "talkies," documentary films have been used repeatedly to inform, educate, manipulate, and in some cases, induce cultural change.

John Grierson, who is often called the "father of documentary film," was resolute in using his films to create social change (Nichols, 1991). Grierson working alone and with the activists of his day, coupled documentary filmmaking with political dissent. Early documentary filmmakers, like Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov and British filmmaker Basil Wright, made a concerted effort to present non-fiction filmmaking in a far different light than its cousin, the fiction film (Nichols, 1991). Early documentary filmmakers "drew harsh and unflattering

comparisons between the fiction film industry and both the formal potential of cinema and the social purpose of documentary,” (Nichols, 1991, p. 8). During this infancy period of filmmaking, Grierson was one of the key drivers of a consciously, organized effort to link documentary film to political and cultural change. Throughout the 1930’s, as a reaction to the Great Depression, artists of all backgrounds, painters, musicians, writers, used their art to call citizens to new forms of social and economic participation. The films of this period reflected the problems and displacement that took place across society as a result of Stock Market Crash of 1929. Filmmakers quickly became aware of the power that this enhanced medium placed in their hands. Films quickly sprang up in theaters that displayed the underbelly of capitalism and the fallout that came from Wall Street greed. According to Michael Denning (2004), political and social movements took root as a direct result of this artistic shift in focus.

Documentaries, specifically played an important role in bringing information and perspective to the masses, and helped lay foundations for cultural change. “These Lives,” (1930), a film by the Federal Writer’s Project, interviewed struggling families throughout the country, showing the deep rooted national suffering of the times. “12 Million Black Voices” (1941) broke new ground, while being one of the first documentaries that presented the point of view of the powerless, black American minority. Socially minded artists had as their intention, the expression of democratic values, with the primary goal of bettering the human condition.

Filmmakers used their influence to communicate to larger audiences, to call to accountability, those who chose to ignore the pleas of the suffering.

Grierson, in several of his films, was specifically concerned with the extent of social upheaval and disillusionment that permeated U.S. citizenry (Aguayo, 2008). Grierson, a British citizen, studied at the University of Chicago. While there, he traveled the United States and became interested as a filmmaker/cultural critic on the workings of the American melting pot (Aguayo, 2008). His films of this period repeatedly demonstrated the scale and scope of the helplessness that infected many Americans and the failure of American democracy as a grand participatory experiment (Aguayo, 2008). Grierson expressed confidence that his films and that media in general, could “acquire leverage over ideas and actions once influenced by churches and schools,” (Aguayo, 2008). Barnouw (2001) explains that Grierson hoped that his work and work of other like minded artists could educate and transform the troubled nation from hopelessness to a renewed faith in their democracy. It was Grierson who was one of the first pioneer to us film to prevail upon and influence the views of his audience (Denning, 2000) . Up until this time, Hollywood studios held the monopoly on filmmaking and distribution. What exposure audiences had to film were popular silent films presented as large Hollywood studio entertainment. The big studios of the day produced films for the sole reason to generate a profit. Aguayo (2008) explains that Grierson was prophetic in claiming that film had the

potential to influence a society's collective consciousness. He confidently extolled the use of film to inform, what he believed, was a detached, apathetic populace (Denning, 2000).. A Griersonian film's underlying objective was to accelerate democratic participation. During the 1930's, following Grierson's example, a culture of film activism developed. Artists across in the United States turned their art towards politics and embraced the opportunity to agitate and stir political passions. Apart from film, artists in other field as well took up the banner of activist art. The Group Theater in New York encouraged audiences to confront the malaise the hung over the country and involve themselves in the body politic. Led by Lee Strasburg and Harold Clurman, the Group Theater like Grierson, saw an opportunity to bring art to new audiences with new purposes. From an artistic perspective, the Group promoted the principles of Konstantin Stanivslavki, but their real aim was to use theater to promote their leftist sentiments (Brockett and Findlay, 1973). The Group Theater, supported by the Federal WPA, saw an opportunity to bring art to new audiences and culture (Brockett & Findley, 1973).

One of Grierson's films, "The Drifters" (1929), was not an overtly political piece, but sought to show the harshness of everyday life on the American workingman. In his depiction of fishermen, Grierson elevated the common man to heroic status and for one of the first times in media history showcased the character of the working man (Barnouw, 2001). It was a radical in that it was a distinct departure from all previous representations. Grierson's method was

intentional. He used film editorially to persuade audience attitudes away from the accepted political and cultural norms and offered a more heightened awareness of common humanity and aspirations (Denning, 2000). Previously audiences were passive viewers. Viewing a movie became an interactive spectator event, and a living, breathing lesson in the realities of injustice, poverty, and the large scale inequities of a capitalist society (Denning, 2000). The net result was that activist art as an intentional act, took root. A large, relatively uneducated number of citizens had a new method to get information. Grierson, and others like him, confronted the traditional foundations of power and privilege using film as their weapon. In viewing a Grierson film, the viewer could see himself in the struggles of the protagonist and at the same time, be alerted to one's own responsibility and role in social change (Giannetti, 2008). Films were not simply meaningless diversions or a type of social propaganda but were evolving to be used as catalysts for change (Denning, 2000). Audiences were called upon to exercise their democratic rights and attend to those on the fringes of society. In short, Grierson revolutionized the use of film as important feature of a broader cultural conversation but more importantly sparked generations of activist filmmakers who saw in artistic freedom, a responsibility to improve life for others (Aguayo, 2008).

Not all filmmaking in the 1930's followed in the Griersonian vein of lofty idealism. Political leaders and governments also were taking notice of film's

power. Josef Stalin in Russia, and Adolf Hitler in Germany, and their respective media machines, used the medium of film to deliver Soviet and Nazi propaganda. Hitler commissioned Leni Riefenstahl to direct a three-hour documentary on the Third Reich (Giannetti, 2008.) Using over thirty cameras, Riefenstahl's film "Triumph of Will," (1935), celebrated the Nazi's first party convention at Nuremberg in 1934. Riefenstahl presents Hitler in a God-like fashion as the "charismatic master of a master race," (Gianetti, 2008 p. 461). To understand how powerful filmic images had become, Riefenstahl's dazzling and stylistically flawless film was banned from circulation by the Allies for seven years after the Nazi defeat (Giannetti, 2008). In addition, Riefenstahl was jailed for her part in the brainwashing of pre-war Germany. The Nazi party continued to use film throughout World War II to motivate troops and paint an overly optimistic treatment of the Germany's progress in the war. The United States as well, employed documentary filmmakers to disseminate their biases and control information under wartime circumstances. Both sides manipulated images and messages to convince their respective populations of the righteousness of their aims and the weaknesses of their enemies. Film, in the form of newsreel documentaries, mobilized public opinion, solicited patriotism through the promotion of war bonds, and insisted on duty in the service of country. From 1933 through 1945, persuasive films were produced in large quantities to rationalize war and death (Aguayo, 2008).

In the post World War II years in the United States, documentary film as propaganda, took on a new dimension when it was discovered and used by the ever expanding corporate culture and during the capitalist expansion of the 1950's (Denning, 2000). The introduction of television in American culture gave corporations the ability to use images and film to persuade captive consumers of a new American patriotic duty, buying more mass produced products. Advertising, a well established institution of the "Radio Age," exploded with new force with the invention and mass distribution of television sets. Once television became the ubiquitous staple of the American home, moving images began replacing traditional modes of mass communication. As the television series "Mad Men" (2008) portrays, Madison Avenue and filmic manipulation became a billion dollar industry. With an expanding military-industrial complex and the evolving Cold War, news media and government embraced documentaries to preach unified cultural messages against the red menace of Soviet Russia. The homogeneous, narrow media blitz that exploded in the 1950's stressed new values of conformity and material prosperity. Little attention was being paid to matters of social justice or equitable economic distribution in this new era of rapidly expanding GNP.

During the 1960's, two crucial historical events took place which reawakened a Griersonian type spirit of social activism among filmmakers. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 signaled an end of the innocence of the 1950's and the escalation of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam,

unleashed a new movement where filmmakers began again to investigate the underbelly of the American dream (Boyle, 1997). There were a number of short and feature length documentaries focusing on active government conspiracies in the death of JFK. Also, there were numerous anti-war movies were fueled by the anti-establishment “hippie” movement (Boyle, 1997). New politically left leaning filmmakers took on a country that seemed to be fracturing from within. The struggle for civil rights begged for artists to critically examine the institutions and machinations of power in U.S. society. As Diedre Boyle explains, “Television, technological innovation and the political unrest of the 1960’s re-directed the potential of activist media to create social change,” (Boyle, 1997, p. 13). She adds, “Optimism about television and its dynamic impact not just on communications but on contemporary consciousness was seized by the first generation raised on television, who found a euphoric explanation of themselves and their changing times (in television)” (Boyle, 1997, p. 13).

Frederick Wiseman, a lawyer turned documentarian, pioneered his new technique of what he called “direct cinema,” (Barnouw, 2001). He created films where the audience members were presented a slice of pure reality. Rather than intentionally edit images to present a particular viewpoint, Wiseman put the reviewer in the role of observer. After presenting a rolling account of a day in the life of his characters, he allowed his audience to draw their own opinions and conclusions. Barnouw (2001) states that, all of Wiseman’s films “became studies

in the exercise of power in American society, not at the high levels, but at the community level,” (Barnouw, 2001, p. 88). Wiseman selected topics that were out of way of mainstream thinking and issues that were underneath the radar of other popular media of the day. In his film, “Titicut Follies” (1967), Wiseman looked at an institution for the criminally insane and he examined the abuses which occurred behind the walls of a public funded institution. The film shed light on many instances of cruelty and injustice and it made public the issue of mental illness. Most importantly, it showed in great detail a failed mental health system and became a call for compassionate treatment for these patients. In another film, “High School” (1969), Wiseman examined public school education in Philadelphia. Throughout the shooting of the film at Northeast Philadelphia High School, Wiseman’s camera observes the oppressive, often times ineffective system of public education. Audiences were free to judge whether or not public education was succeeding or failing to produce informed citizens. The running camera caught an unbiased view of the school’s operations and leadership. Wiseman brought the viewers to the role of first person witness. All judgments about the school, teachers, administration, and students, were put in the hands of audience. Rather than edit the images with a particular editorial slant, Wiseman was confident in the audience’s ability to process and understand the reality he captured (Barnouw, 2001). He placed the viewer as another subject in the film, relating to and understanding the problems and issues faced by the school

community. As Baranow (2001) states, Wiseman's direct cinema technique let the subjects and audience interact and, "In the new focus on speech-talking people (rather than edited images- documentaries were moving into an area they had long neglected, and which appeared to have surprising, even revolutionary impact," p. 88). Wiseman moved filmmaking further along the activist path than Grierson had during his heyday, by placing society's victims front and center. Wiseman led a movement away from film that reinforced or celebrated American norms of the post-war generation (Denning, 2000). Wiseman challenged conventional views and provided a means of social discourse to many, who historically had been denied a voice in major societal institutions.

During the social upheaval of the 1960's, and shortly thereafter, filmmakers became emboldened to purposely use their art as a activist tool for social change (Aguayo, 2008). A new generation of filmmakers embraced the role of change maker, releasing films engaging audiences in new strategic ways. Unlike Grierson, who saw his films as educating the uninformed masses, or Wiseman, who tried to spotlight social problems, filmmakers in the era of the Vietnam War had the specific agenda of agitation. Not only would these filmmakers create films whose subjective view encouraged political conversion, their films became part of a broader change strategy, often made in conjunction or in partnership with subversive organizations. Films were made and shown as public demonstrations of the discontent and frustrations with corrupt or failed

governmental agencies and policies (Boyle, 1997). At this same time, new technological improvements in video and film equipment were making film production more available. More and more people were drawn to and encouraged to express themselves politically through film and media. Advances from the space and military programs were making their way into the video marketplace (Boyle, 1997). For the first time in history, average citizens saw opportunities to make personal political statements by using media that had for years been under tight corporate control. Lower cost technology coincided with children raised on television to produce the first true video generation, (Boyle, 1997). Television and moving images were fast becoming the central means of pop culture communication. Even at the height of the Vietnam conflict, video images played an crucial role in bringing the war for the first time, into the living rooms of American homes. (Boyle, 1997). Viewing the horrific clips of war and destruction became a common cultural daily experience. Unlike the propaganda films of World War II, war was no longer mythic and remote but raw and immediate. Likewise, the images of the civil rights struggle in the South left Americans feeling the country was coming apart at the seams. It could be argued that film was a key element in forcing a new direction in the racial discourse of the nation. Film images of dead soldiers or protestors met with police fire hoses were seared into the brains of television viewers (Boyle, 1997). For most of our history, cultural and political dialogues took place on the editorial page of the country's

newspapers. Now nightly news programs relied on videographers and filmmakers to capture and broadcast reality or, at least, the reality captured in a viewfinder. Protest groups engaged sympathetic artists, equipped with new portable, lightweight cameras to create a new media (Denning, 2000). Investigative documentary journalism was born during this period with news magazines such as “60 Minutes” and “Frontline” emerging as the main purveyors of editorial content. Political unrest coupled with freer technological availability, created a new mindset among filmmakers. Social movements began seeking out filmmaking partnerships to create social change (Boyle, 1997). Portable video cameras and democratized access to equipment shifted media content. According to Agauyo (2008), media went “from placid entertainment and negative images of youthful protest to counter cultural values and a new television reality,” (p. 18). Deidre Boyle in her book, “Subject to Change: Guerilla Television Revisited,” (1997) said that for the first time in history, baby boomers could create “a new breed of television that was configured not as a weapon but as a cultural tool for bringing people together,” (p. 17).

The 1970’s saw the birth of yet another counter-culture movement which sought to produce films that encouraged empowerment of the exploited. Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsumo in New York’s Downtown Community Television Center, became active in producing films that “fought the perceptual imperialism of broadcast television,” (Boyle, 1997, p. 29). Filmmakers of this period focused

on building community and giving citizens access to resources and power. Boyle explains that filmmakers embraced video and film's potential to offer a variety of viewpoints rather than the official, objective one promoted nightly by Walter Cronkite," (Boyle, 1997, p. 6). Not only did this new generation examine ideological differences between the establishment and reformers, but video activists were now at the forefront of strategies to change social policy. Boyle termed the movement, "guerilla television," and she claims it, "raised a critique of American society that went beyond the bounds of the political left, even if it missed essential leftist insights about power, economic exploitation, and class," (Boyle, 1997, p. 29). The activist video movement (guerilla television) coexisted with broadcast television according to Boyle (1997), "to restore balance to the media ecology of America," (p. 33). Filmmakers of a similar mindset insisted that their films take their rightful place as part of the nation's information delivery menu. Media dominated by commercial interests, such as network television, had for the first time, legitimate competition for the political interests of the population. The masses could seek alternative channels of information not paid for by General Motors or General Electric. It was not sufficient for filmmakers to produce films merely to engage an audience of like minded people. They needed to have their counter culture voices reach the ruling class. Many activist social documentaries were as committed to a larger process, that of post screening. Film was becoming the central means of promoting discourse and raising social

consciousness, (Aguayo, 2008). New visions of global unity and cooperation sprung forth as core values for film artists. In addition, film was beginning to play a “new age” role of spreading messages of personal, internal, and spiritual growth. Filmmakers took on increasing complex topics as well, producing films about environmental concerns, nuclear proliferation, and the alienation of the modern technological man. Aloneness, social injustice, and corporate greed became common fodder for filmmakers. Filmmakers called on individuals to awaken a collective sensibility and personal responsibility, thus seeking a new status quo that created a more, just equitable distribution of the social product (Denning, 2000). Filmmaker Marco Vassi commented at the time, “activist documentary filmmakers must realize that all of their complex equipment is just so much metal junk, toys and tools which have no more worth than the hands and hearts of the people who work them,” (Aguayo, 2008 p. 21).

A further film movement began to take shape in the late 1970’s and still stands today. Boyle (1997) refers to this time as a period where the use of film has facilitated critical debate in public spaces and “acts instrumentally to alleviate injustices,” (p. 130). Today, with even more immediate and accessible, personal internet technology, film coupled with new media, is a key means of creating interest and movement around key social issues, (Denning, 2000). The exploding number of cable and internet businesses such as YouTube, along with other new social media, has produced a new climate for film communication, with expanded

opportunities to influence change. Today, film images permeate every form of communication as we evolve from an essentially written culture to a visual one. New visions abound for the socially conscious artist to plan an expanded role as a significant, cultural agent. Though it must be emphasized that message driven films can easily be drowned out or made ineffective because of the sheer volume of video produced. It has become essential for anyone hoping to use film for persuasive political purposes, to plot a clear, wide arcing strategy for any messages that a film needs to communicate. Filmmakers such as Michael Moore, now operate in a completely new film environment. His films such as “Bowling for Columbine,” (2002) and “Capitalism: A Love Story,” (2009) have carved a new path for documentarians. Moore is one of the few artists in history, to successfully bridge the gap between activist filmmaker and commercial success. Because of his ability to present topics such as gun violence or Wall Street excess with a humorous, entertaining tone, Moore has reached mainstream audiences with cogent social messages. Moore’s films reach millions with significant messages about corporate greed, government manipulation, or gun violence. Whether he speaks on war or the economy, Moore, despite his polarizing presence, has been front and center in major cultural conversations. His style of blending several film techniques, has led critics to question his title of activist filmmaker. Yet, no one can deny his brilliant use of satire through film to agitate across the entire culture. Michael Moore, above all other modern day filmmakers single handedly

demonstrates the power of film to persuade and play a central role in political and social conversations (Aguayo, 2008).

The last several years have witnessed the astronomical rise of internet visual content. This media explosion has given filmmakers and non-filmmakers (interested in the form) new access to reach new audiences. Technology has impacted how media professionals can reach more specialized, segmented audiences. This has a great impact on filmmakers working to deliver a message of social change or activism. Documentarians, who once struggled to find a small, interested viewership, now with a few clicks of a computer mouse, can create a worldwide “viral” event either by design or by accident. Like minded filmmakers and organizations can partner, find a target audience, distribute their message, and follow the impact of their efforts by tracking data results. Additionally, the large scale availability of satellite and cable television programming has increased the public’s appetite and consumption of documentaries. With more programming hours available for cable companies, demand for journalistic and investigative documentaries has grown. Organizations and non-profit entities see new opportunities to distribute social message films through these same channels. A film such as HBO’s “Paradise Lost: The Child Murders of Robin Hood Hills” (1996) actually provided the motivation for a group of passionate citizens to organize into what they called “deliberating agents” (Aguayo, 2008 p. 25). The film chronicled a murder trial in Arkansas where three teenage boys were

convicted of killing three adolescent boys. One movie reviewer noted that “no documentary released in 1996 challenges an audience the way this one does,” (Aguayo, 2008 p. 25). The questions it poses are profound, and there are no simple answers. “Paradise Lost” is one of very few films that can completely absorb the attention of the audience. Watching Berlinger and Sinofosky’s film “is like witnessing an execution. The viewing experience is horrifying, gut wrenching, and impossible to turn away from,” (Aguayo, 2008, p. 25). Aguayo (2008) states that the film acted as a starting point for a large scale social movement. After watching the film, thousands of people came forth, mobilizing around several themes brought up in the film. As a result, they created the environment for a public greatly concerned with the miscarriages of justice among the poor where protests could be registered and directed. Aguayo (2008) further states that very often, film acts “as a means for counter-publics to create social change by transferring discourse from the private sphere to the counter-public sphere,” (p. 26). Habermas (1999) suggests that film such as these, “avoid not only a more pleasant and palatable entertainment platform, but turn passive consumers of communication into social conscious deliberating agents,” (p. 172).

As is often the case with documentary films, the release of the film is the first and most critical step in the process of social change. In “Paradise Lost,” as in several films that I have been involved in, the film begins a chain of events that has the potential to spark a movement. Following distribution, “Paradise Lost”

continued with the delivery of its persuasive message. The producers created a website, initiated an international postcard and letter writing campaign, and ultimately founded an organization that advocated for teenagers unjustly accused of crimes, similar to the subject of the film.

Film has in the past and will continue into the future influencing audiences and affect change. Its key role of providing timely information and context to complicated issues is critical for a healthy democracy. Today, filmmakers, just like their ancestors, use moving images and ever changing technology, to contribute to the greater public good.

Film and the Creation of Social Change

Changing, altering, or expanding the worldview of an individual or group through film or video requires the filmmaker to engage and invoke an emotional response from her/his audience (McKee, 1997). Many films have entertainment as their sole purpose, but many others educate and enlighten and actively attempt to shift the perceptions of viewers. In order for an individual or group change to occur, there must initially be a convincing challenge to prevailing beliefs and behaviors (Barrett & Leddy, 2008). Whether in the area of personal or community awareness, new information must be presented that effectively challenge the prevailing opinions or positions. Documentaries, as discussed earlier, have consistently competed for the public's attention, with the intent to influence

personal belief systems and broader societal consciousness. Because film works on two levels, intellectual and emotional, it has been routinely used as a call to action.

Documentaries create an argument through a narrative story. A film normally makes a case for some type of change, either individually or collectively. “Gasland” (2010), as an example, set out to examine issues of fracking and the environmental hazards associated with the technology, which is now in regular use by the energy industry. Regardless of your personal opinion about fracking, the film challenges the accepted view being put forth in public relations materials put forth by gas companies (Faulcon, 2012). The compelling visuals and the personal stories of people affected by the issue, propel the viewer into a first person experience. By this transformation, the filmmaker hopes to give the audience a deeper sense of the magnitude of the problem with fracking. Ultimately, the filmmaker hopes that he/she has contributed to a more thoughtful, intelligent discussion of the issues. Faulcon, (2012) argues that the goal of documentaries “is not merely to elicit a reaction but to provide an impetus to realign thinking to a new referential place...there is an expectation that the viewer will be altered and transformed in a deeply profound fashion,” (p. 2).

Documentary filmmakers seek to have the viewer interact with their film (Nichols, 1991). The first impulse to create a film is that the filmmaker as artist

seeks a form of artistic expression that can impact or change the world, both on a personal and global scale. Before the camera rolls, the filmmaker is personally moved to record and shape an important story, hopefully with a message for the audience. The basic act of production has as a fundamental aim, to advance our collective knowledge about the film's subject and issues. At its apex, documentary film moves the viewer to a place of individual or civic responsibility, with the further intention of translating that responsibility into some form of activism (Faulcon, 2012). A film sometimes has the effect of bringing together any number of individual change agents into a collective body. The resultant energy of this collective has the power to move societies to change. Documentaries in the post-modern world perform a valuable function in that they serve as a key delivery of mass educational content (Cunningham, 2005).

On a personal level, documentaries provide a peephole into another or others' reality. Film is one means in which we process our complex world and establish our sense of self and our relation to others. While viewing a film, we momentarily live vicariously through the experiences of others, understanding not only the intellectual facts of that reality, but also the emotional content of that experience. Film allows us to take a step outside of ourselves and experience the larger, more complex world. Film theorist Bill Nichols (1991) states that an individual's thinking is "potentially mutable through films' influence... Ideologies will also offer representations in the form of images, concepts, cognitive maps,

worldviews, and the like to propose frames and punctuation to our experience,” (p. 4). Film enables the audience member to connect a personal story to a greater cause. The subject becomes the metaphor for larger issues and sympathy/action is evoked (McKee, 1997). Filmmakers have the opportunity and the ability to create connections and cooperation between diverse constituencies in the larger world. Often, the film might be the viewer’s only opportunity to learn about a particular topic. Others, like non-profit organizations for example, intentionally use film to publicize their mission (Barrett & Leddy, 2008). Faulcon (2012) refers to viewing a documentary for the very first time as the gestational process in a transitory shift of viewpoint. She continues by saying the change from viewing a film “can be immediate or take place over time as the newly informed individual seeks information on the subject by looking beyond the film,” (Faulcon, 2012 p. 17). In the post-modern era, film viewing is one of the prime mechanisms to disseminate information and affect viewpoints.

Elizabeth Cowie (2011) in her book, “Recording Reality,” describes the effect of modern technology on perception and self-expression. “Modern technology has given us an array of prosthetic devices that enable us to transcend time and space,” (Cowie, 2011, p. 32). We now participate in a fully electronic world where define and express ourselves almost completely by machinery. Cowie (2012) suggests that we begin to grasp the far reaching impact of our new reality on our learning processes and how technology can channel our perception

of the world. Visual images set the stage for how as individuals we interact and obtain information. Learning styles have evolved where now we take for granted that teaching and learning need to be interactive (Hackley, 2012). Traditional paper books stored in libraries are no longer the cornerstone of our educational system. Since learning occurs through many modalities, documentary filmmakers, through increased access to audiences through the internet and social media, have more expanded opportunities to educate, inform, and build community. Nichols (1991) speaks of the unique way in which film educates. “Documentaries offer access to a shared historical construct... Instead of a world, we are offered access to THE world,” (Nichols, 1981 p. 5). He further adds that film processes create for the viewer, a look beyond the superficial information and the narrow confines of an old viewpoint to a new place of observation where he/she can potentially be influenced,” (Nichols, 1991, p. 5). Nichols further adds, “The world is where, at the extreme, issues of life and death are always at hand. History kills.” (Nichols, 1991, p. 5). Faulcon (2012) adds, “through careful and effective use, the documentary provides a method by which we can become aware and cognizant of issues that are of the greatest and most immediate significance,” (p. 17). Film, more than any other medium provides the most direct, powerful access to the viewpoints of our fellow citizens (Faulcon, 2012).

In my own filmmaking, I do not consciously impose a point of view or seek to manipulate or advocate a proscribed change. By locating a compelling

character or characters with compelling stories to tell, I attempt to convey through film, an authentic experience. At the core, my films must convey truth. The presentation of the truth of the experiences of the storytelling characters is a central principle in moving an audience to respond. Great non-fictional storytelling captures the audiences' imagination, and asks them to respond from a collective soul. Throughout my experiences, not only do the characters in my films present their historical truth but they speak to changes that need to be made by society. The power of film lies in its immediacy with the viewer. The intimacy formed allows for an authentic, real connection between film and viewer. Nichols adds to this by saying, "The status of documentary film as evidence from the world legitimizes its usage as a form of knowledge," (Nichols, 1991, p. 5).

A second and more critical advantage of film as an educational and persuasive vehicle is the ability of visual images to convey emotion (McKee, 1997). In our film, "Coming off the DL," two of the film's main subjects live with cerebral palsy. One of the goals that we set when we began the film was to create for the audience an awareness of issues of disability. Ultimately, we hoped that our film would contribute to disability policy discussions and resource allocation for those in society living with a disability. In one particular sequence in the film, one subject (Frank Kineavy), is shown being assisted by a nurse with his morning dressing chores. Since Frank is unable to walk or talk, he must be lifted from his bed to his wheelchair and then dressed with the help of his aide. A large number

of persons who viewed the film remarked how the visual impact of that scene remained with them long after the film was over. In post- film discussions, focus groups and surveys, there was general agreement that the visual impact of watching the routine of a person living with a disability was more memorable than had the viewers only read about disability. One viewer remarked, “I had no idea what disabled people like that go through.” Another comment we received was, “I always wanted to know what went on behind closed doors like these, thanks for sharing this.” Similarly, a film such as “An Inconvenient Truth,” shows graphic and disturbing images from Hurricane Katrina in an effort to communicate the urgency of its global warming message. The shock value of using such images to establish a point or touch a nerve in the audience, is a key element in the filmmaker’s arsenal, and when used prudently and with measure, can plant a seed for activism.

Both Nichols (1991) and Cowie (2012) describe the aspects of documentary film that formulate the process of change in viewpoint of an individual. Cowie states, “One of the most powerful parts of this is found in the presentation of knowledge interwoven with the human experience of those affected,” (Cowie, 2012, p. 20). The world and its problems can overwhelm the viewer, but documentaries, viewed in a collective, can help the audience break down complex issues into manageable terms and develop responsive strategies. Documentaries unlike other forms of communication can deliver and “in the

moment” argument “on behalf of a cause,” (Barrett & Leddy, 2008 p. 4)). In addition, a responsible filmmaker is going to call on his audience to act. A primary motivation for me as a filmmaker is to educate and to contribute to meaningful and effective change. I want to create films that are not only thought provoking but that can initiate specific, measurable changes in attitude and action. Films in the service of causes or non-profit organizations can become the rallying cry for change and appeals to justice. Faulcon (2012) states that “in a world that once understood itself via the written word, we have now traveled to a new place of orientation and a differing means by which we digest and make sense of our own current reality,” (p. 13). Finally, Cunningham (2005) defines documentary as “cultural reference points through which people learn about one another’s human experience, and ultimately better understand their own,” (p. 91).

Sports and Film

Since the birth of cinema, sport and film have been natural partners. Sport, through live performance and story, lends itself to film. Throughout cinematic history, filmmakers gravitated to the sports film both in the documentary and narrative form. Some of the earliest films in America were actual live documentaries of sporting events (Ingle & Sutura, 2013). Traditionally, sports films depicted a wide array of issues in American society while dispensing values, mores, and customs across the spectrum of American life (Pearson, Curtis, Haney,

& Zhang, 2003). The successive waves of immigration to U.S. shores and the large scale social and technological changes of the last 100 years greatly affected American culture but greatly impacted the country's sporting life, as well. It is safe to say that Americans developed and continue to possess an insatiable appetite for sports. Likewise, the sport themed film matured alongside this developing national obsession. Sport documentaries and dramatic films played and continue to play an important role in our cultural life (Pearson, et al., 2003).

During the late 19th Century, industrialization and urbanization transformed the United States from a rural, agricultural society steeped in the values of rugged individualism, to a urban, industrial machine relying more on collective bureaucratic managers (Pearson, et al., 2003). The change from a farming economy to a manufacturing one also changed the leisure patterns and the evolution of the sports culture in the nation. These rapid changes changed the way the population viewed and participated in sports. Along with the urbanization and growth of large centers of manufacturing came a commensurate growth and eventual explosion in amateur and professional sports. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, sports were activities normally associated with the ruling class. Country sports, such as horseracing and rowing, were the popular games among the rich. However, as demographic shifts took place so did the nation's taste in sports. The leisurely club sports soon gave way to sports involving physical contact. Boxing and football appeared among the working classes. Rapid sports

growth by the end of the 20th Century made sport one of the only cultural institutions that offered equality and visibility to minority athletes. The United States government, with the passage of Title IX, mandated full and equal participation by women in all federally funded programs, which eventually gave way to a truly national sports culture. Perhaps the most important event in the development of the American sports preoccupation came with the invention of the television. The media explosion, first in print, then electronically, changed not only how we viewed sports but how we felt about our games.

As usually happens, the film industry followed this trend by producing an array of films that reflected these changes. In general, Hollywood and independent film producers, then and today, became the modern-day family story teller (Bryant & Bryant, 1992). As mentioned previously, documentaries played an important educational role in the post-Griersonian documentary film era. Film was a major source of information and entertainment for the masses from the 1930's forward. Simultaneously, sports became equally popular as a significant source of national entertainment (Bergen, 1982). Early producers capitalized on the popularity of both sports and cinema to create films that entertained the masses but also attempted to inculcate American values to a burgeoning immigrant population (Jowett, 1976). Newsreels, nickelodeons, and feature films propagated standards of behavior and showed newcomers what was expected from them while they learned to assimilate into American society. Consistently,

the film industry, with its mass appeal, shaped cultural ideology. Sports business owners quickly discovered that their fortunes might improve if they could somehow arrange a marriage with the film industry. Betts (1974), states that this marriage between sports and film occurred as early as 1890. Motion pictures about sports were an easy entree into the American psyche. The films of the day reflected sports culture and its core values. The staples of hardy competition, fair play, and hard work breeding success, were communicated through games and film. Dickerson (1991), emphasized the importance of this new form of cultural communication when he commented on the history of baseball in movies: “Specifically, scholars from a variety of disciplines have asserted that both baseball and cinema have assisted enculturating the American people and are, in fact, instructional tools by which Americans have learned and acquired American values and culture,” (p. 3). Dickerson adds that “movies act as a mirror of the culture that produces them,” (p. 3).

The sports film, though ubiquitous over time, surprisingly struggled to find its identity as a singular, stand alone film genre (Pearson, et al., (2003). Though there has always existed films about sports or film with some type of sport occurring within the film, film scholars or critics have omitted classifying sports films as its own separate category. Unlike the gangster movie or the western, the sports film never occupied a similar place. Gerhing (1988) failed to list sports films as an identifiable genre in his “Handbook of American Films.”

This omission was corrected in a later edition and listed sports film as a separate genre but this is over 100 years since the first sports film was produced. One reason that sports films have been so difficult for scholars and critics to categorize is because they vary so much in subject and theme, (Lopez,1993). Mosher (1983) listed four basic types of sports films: comedies, tragedies, romances, and satires. Summerlin (1983), states that sports film reflects the times and issues of the times in which it was produced. Thus what has been produced, though may contain sports or sports themes, actually reflects the social, political, and economic issues of the day. Again, because there are so many diverse sports and differing subjects and themes within each, it is understandable why difficulties exist when classifying the “sports film.”

The themes of sports movies are as different as the times that produced them. Pearson, et al. (2001) states that “sport themed” feature film, “has been a viable socio-cultural facilitator, dream maker, and opiate for American society,” (p. 1). Researchers have asserted that early sport was developed and controlled by males for upper class male development (Coakley, 2001). Therefore sport films employed the character attributes associated with sports participation and primarily appealed masculine themes of hard work, loyalty, discipline, perseverance, and altruism , (Coakley, 2001). Erickson states that these masculine themes dominated from the early talkies through the 1930’s. *The Champ* (1931) and *College Coach* (1935) both reflect these elementary American truisms. Sports

films during WW II and shortly thereafter into the 1950's, focused tragedies and biographies that demonstrated American hyper-patriotism and pride in the country's warring strength. Sports heroes during this period were placed on the same pedestal as military heroes. *Pride of the Yankees* (1942) and *Jim Thorpe All-American* (1952) demonstrated America's infatuation with their sports figures. This trend continued until the 1960's when the changing political and social climate began fracturing traditional values. For a considerable time, the sports themed film all but disappeared except for just one, ironically a auto racing film by the name of *Grand Prix* (1965). Sports figures suffered a similar shunning, as did other traditional cultural figures, and were similarly viewed as part of the conservative establishment. The sports themed film began to appear again in the 1970's but albeit, in a different form. Satires and exposes about the sports business underbelly began to appear. Coming out of the 1960's and mired in post-Vietnam and Watergate cynicism, producers and directors made films that promoted the anti-hero and explored unethical side of sport. *Slapshot* (1977) and *North Dallas Forty* (1979) are two examples where the athlete or athletes going against convention are portrayed as admirable. Because of the civil rights movement, for the first time, women and minorities began to be featured as the topical subjects in sports films. *The Great White Hope* (1970) and *The Other Side of the Mountain* (1975) were huge box office successes. During the 1980's and 90's the sports film made a comeback and there were several profitable sports

film franchises that developed. Sylvester Stallone continued his success with the Rocky Balboa series and Caddyshack (1981) let the masses laugh at the lampooning of the country club set (Pearson, et al., 2003). In the past twenty years a variety of sports themed movies with a wide menu of subjects have been enjoyed success. Whether myth building films such as Field of Dreams (1989) or hard core exposes like Friday Night Lights (2006), Americans still flock to the theater to consume sports stories. Sports films reflect the constantly evolving nature of American species and their love of their sports (Pearson,et al., 2003).

Sports Documentaries

Sports documentary films throughout history and still today, played a significant role in both the film tradition and as observer and sometime critic of sports in society (McDonald, 2007). The recent flurry of documentaries on cable networks such as HBO and ESPN, prove that there exists a ready audience interested in sport themed films. Yet, the sports documentary remains undervalued by cultural critics, historians, and sociologist as a means of significant study (McDonald, 2007). McDonald (2007) comments that “though (sports documentaries) acknowledged by scholars, they are still awaiting rigorous and systematic analysis of its defining features, policies, aesthetics, and the genres’ mode of production (p. 208). Film scholars and social historians seem to have neglected the form or have failed to locate sports documentaries in a fixed

category of study. McDonald (2007) suggests that sports documentaries are on the cutting edge of a maturing field of sports studies and part of the emerging field of documentary studies, that is now a further specialization within media and film studies. This further provides evidence of the possible contributions that may develop with further use of sports documentaries in the Sport Psychology field. But presently, there is scant academic activity around the sports documentary.

Nichols (1991) believes that documentaries and particularly sports documentaries, have not emerged as its own area of study because among academics film does not fit into what he refers to as “the discourse of sobriety,” (p. 4). However, Nichols argues effectively that documentary film (thus sports documentary films), should be seen as contributors to a wider discourse of sobriety, (Nichols, 2001). He further believes that documentary film study and criticism should have a place at the table of other non-fiction spheres such as science, economics, politics, foreign policy, education, and religion, and be counted as legitimate in its contribution to knowledge (Nichols, 1991). Echoing what was reported earlier, Nichols (1991) states that the products of the discourse of sobriety are the written essay, books, journal articles, and scientific reports. He adds, “these systems have an air of sobriety in that they have a direct relation to the real as direct, immediate, transparent,” (p. 4). Nichols argument for documentaries as a form of serious inquiry harkens back to Grierson’s original motivation to create films that can combat ignorance and prejudice, as well as

advance a progressive social agenda (Grierson, 1998). Nichols notes that the subordinate status of documentaries within academic discourse is because of film's reliance on images rather than words (Nichols, 1991). Therefore it is easy to dismiss films as "mimetic distractions and counterfeitings" to the truth (p.4). Unfortunately, documentaries associated with entertainment are not taken seriously by scholars.

Sport itself, as a cultural institution and a social occurrence, has historically been positioned far away from the discourse of sobriety as well. McDonald (2007) explains that sport has traditionally been located in the realm of the non-serious, "operating at the level of affect, expressive of the irrational within popular culture to provide a means of escape for its followers," (p. 210). Certainly the same can be said for the Hollywood film and consequently, the Hollywood sports film. But we do know that sport is serious business. Sports events have a "pro-filmic existence" and a real world presence (McDonald, 2007, p. 11). Bourdieu (1990) stated that though sports documentaries suffer and struggle to be taken seriously in academic circles, but within sports study, they offer a sober tool for observation and study. He further adds that sports documentaries, in particular, suffer from the same fate similar to sport sociology. Coakley (1991) commented that sociologists dismiss sport as a serious subject worthy of study. If sports sociology is derided by fans, players, and professionals as a credible subject then sports documentaries are just as easily relegated to

insignificance. However, McDonald (2007) argues strongly that sports documentaries constitute an important niche in the documentary tradition and because of their distinctiveness, must be considered as substantive contributions to serious cultural study.

Nichols (1991) and McDonald (2007) speak of the diversity of documentary and list four major categories of documentaries and then cite examples of important sports films under each type. Poetic documentaries, according to Nichols (1991), evoke particular moods through cinematic artistry. Films such as Ichikawa's "Tokyo Olympiad" (1965), rather than presenting a particular editorial slant or forwarding an argument, is a film that invites the viewer to enter the beautiful and sometime bizarre and beautiful world of modern sport. Ichikawa uses various filmic techniques to emphasize movement and grace rather than chronicle the sporting event itself. The aesthetic of sport and movement trumps any commentary about reality. Football fans quickly became familiar with this documentary technique when Steve Sabol and NFL films use classic film methods to turn Sunday football into Monday Night ballet. Expository documentaries are films that address the viewer directly through voice, graphics, and information to advance an argument about the historical world. Like Grierson's early films, the primary intent of the expository film is to steer the audience to a point of view. Nichols (2001) points out that narrators use as the "voice of God emphasizes the impression of objectivity and well supported

argument,” (p. 262). Viewers of traditional educational or investigative journalistic films can easily identify expository style. Bud Greenspan’s “16 Days of Glory” (1984), about the Los Angeles Olympics is a clear example of expository filmmaking. Observational documentarians act more as field reporters using the camera to record reality as close to how it happens in real time. Nichols (2001) explains that this peephole effect is not an useful way to portray events because it leaves the viewer with little to no context. As applied to sports documentaries, McDonald (2007) states that audiences need guidelines or a compass in interpreting the intricacies of sporting events. *Hoop Dreams* (1994) uses the observational approach to examine the failures of the college basketball system. The camera follows the individual characters through a slice of time where the problems of inner-city basketball players are the main focus. Nichols (2001) argues that even as the filmmaker tries not to intrude or influence the subject, pure observational filmmaking is nearly impossible. The very presence of the camera influences behavior or, as Nichols (2001) says, indirectly intrudes on the subjects. Lastly, participatory documentaries stress images accompanied by testimony or verbal exchanges. Interviews, monologues, and dialogues play under supporting visual evidence and first person witness delivers the necessary information to the viewer. Nichols (1991) observes that most films that have been produced since the early 1990’s follow the participatory model. ESPN’s popular “30 by 30” is dominated by this form of film.

Historically, documentaries, though earnest and well intentioned, were considered by many to be dull and uninteresting (McDonald, 2007). People shied away from documentaries unless they held a particular political disposition to which the documentary spoke. However, people go the movies to escape not to confront reality (McDonald, 2007). Fortunately for the documentary form, Michael Moore shifted documentaries away from the lofty Griersonian educational ideal into moods and tones associated with fiction films (Morrison, 2004). Filmmakers, both narrative and documentarians, concern themselves with pleasing an audience with a good story. Thus, sports as a cultural form and a physical activity, lends itself to good storytelling. Sports have a built in story structure with the match, the game, the career, or the event. Sports contain an emotional center and natural characters that evolve over the course of a game or a season. Wells (1999) states that “sports are imbued with persuasive narrative incident and - have an intrinsic emphasis upon the psychological, emotional, and physical limits of the human condition,” (p. 231). Rowe (2004) adds that “sport is a rich source of mythologies, allegories, and narratives which provide fertile terrain for the filmmaker,” (p.200). As the “30 by 30” series demonstrates, there is no shortage of entertaining, informative, and analytical stories of sports and their participants. Rowe (2004) concludes that sports on film need to be tailored to the needs of sport and non-sport forms alike if they are to do “justice to the sporting

elements of the former and expanding its concerns to the satisfaction of the latter,” (p. 192).

The Use of Film in the Sport Psychology Classroom

Pedagogical Concerns and Solutions

Documentaries attempt to portray truths about private and public issues. Generally speaking, documentaries are primarily concerned with issues that involve the greater good (Ellis & McLane, 2005). As I mentioned earlier, my initial motivation for making a film is the belief that film can educate or raise awareness about a sociological, political, or psychological problem. The concentrated focus of the audience’s attention to a socio-cultural phenomenon not only provides an aesthetic film experience, but impacts the beliefs and behaviors of the viewers (Ellis & McLane, 2005). The central question that I pose in this paper is, how can documentary film serve the field of sport psychology as a teaching tool, both in the classroom and in the broader society? Can it shed light on important issues in the field and shed light on the important work done by practitioners? I am not suggesting that all documentary films serve the profession. Many existing films, both narrative and documentary, are available today which heighten important subjects and can add value to a sport psychology class.

Pros and Cons of Using Film As A Teaching Tool

Films can play an important role in the teaching process. Documentary film, in particular, is a useful tool in the sport psychology classroom. For some subjects, film can cover aspects of topics that may be challenging for students to comprehend (Taylor, 2011). Film effectively concretizes abstract concepts that may be difficult to comprehend or describe (Taylor, 2011). For the sport psychology professor, documentaries (and intentionally produced films on specific sport psych subjects) offer a powerful vehicle for teaching by providing examples of real world experience of both clients and practitioners. If we think in terms of the basic sport psychological skills, we can glean insight into those skills by watching and using them in actual practice in the field. Directed films that mirror these topics and issues can be an ideal supplement for the classroom teacher. Some topics, imagery for example, do not lend themselves easily to verbal description or lectured explanation. Certainly, I am not suggesting eliminating lecture or other teaching methods. However, a well written and constructed film wonderfully supplements other teaching methods. In broader topics such as eating disorders, documentaries bring a keen awareness and emotional depth to the nature of the problem, especially with a younger video savvy college audience.

Much like qualitative and ethnographic study, documentaries record real-life experiences. A filmmaker probes many facets of an issue and frame the issue succinctly and efficiently (Taylor, 2011). The students of today have participated in the explosion of a technological revolution. Today's classroom professors find themselves in a rapidly changing educational system. The 21st Century is a image driven age (Daniels, 2012). Smith, Smith, & Boone (2009) stated that we have evolved into a nation dependent on visual aides to learn. Few educators would disagree with this observation. Power point presentations and smart boards replaced "chalk and talk" classroom sessions. It is very common to see these technologies as a foundation of teacher-student interaction. Still, the use of visual aids like film, finds resistance among some faculty (Pippert & Moore, 1999).

There has been a long standing argument against media learning for the last century (Pippert & Moore, 1999). Many educators argue that students are more active learners and participants while reading text rather than viewing text on a screen (Daniels, 2012). This is not a position with which I disagree. I do not at all advocate discontinuing the use of textbooks and journal articles. My hope is to better use visual material to supplement written text in a carefully planned and executed way. Critics of media use in the classroom cite the problem of seductive veracity, (Banks, 1992). In other words students accept everything that they view in a documentary without using their critical faculties (Banks, 1992). Daniels (2012) believes that selective veracity makes documentaries a good fit for a

college classroom if the teacher instructs the students on “how to critically read these visual texts,” (p. 6) Daniels (2012) further believes that there is a real benefit when students are taught how to critically challenge media messaging. Hobbs (2006) wrote of the “non-optimal use of video” in the classroom. Hobbs (2006) raises several objections to film use in teaching such as showing films to fill class time or as a break from real learning. There are other objections as well, and each must be considered and responded to before embracing film as a tool. It is important for any professor considering the use of film in their classroom to plot a multi-pronged approach to teaching encompassing several methods (Daniels, 2012). The goal of a classroom interaction must always be to motivate and empower the students to be active learners and curious seekers of knowledge. Therefore, before using documentaries in the classroom, the professor must create a culture of active learning where film viewing is just another strategy to achieve the learning objectives.

From my own experience, well-made documentaries are extremely effective in the classroom when I plan, in detail, how I use them. Documentaries keep students’ attention. They bring visual pleasure and present dense information in an entertaining way (Thomson, 2002). Because they are a “slice of life” films can make any situation emotionally relevant to the viewer, (McKee, 1997.) A benefit of film that tends to be overlooked is that documentaries can be an in-depth look at a particular topic. Students today can be tempted to view quick

internet searches on a topic as analysis of a subject. Thomson (2002) believes that film can help to provoke students to look deeper into a topic and cause them to expand their values, attitudes, and judgments.

In the last decade, a shift has occurred in the documentary film world. According to Daniels (2012) there have been two major events which have greatly changed the way students learn and therefore, how teachers need to approach their classes. First, there has been an explosion in the number of documentaries produced yearly (Daniels, 2012). Second, there has been a “widespread adoption of Internet technologies, which have profoundly changed the distribution of documentaries,” (Daniels, 2012 p. 8). The expansion of the cable television industry has created a demand for content, and documentary filmmakers have been primary beneficiaries of this change. Simply, there are more films being made today than at any other point in media history (Renov, 1993) Coupled with the widespread availability of low cost digital equipment, it is easy to account for the plethora of video content (Bernard, 2007). Today’s students are exposed to hours upon hours of “reality television” and documentary styled news magazines or made for television documentaries (Hogarth, 2006). Some media experts suggest that we are living in the “golden age” of the documentary, (Howker, 2008). The DIY (do-it-yourself) documentary movement has been sparked by lightening quick distribution opportunities in websites like YouTube or Halo. For the classroom teacher, this can be viewed in two ways. Either teachers lament the

fact that students “no longer read like they used to,” or they take advantage of cheaper, more readily available teaching tools. There remains the difficult challenge of sifting through an endless sea of choices. It can overwhelm the senses when one tries to find an appropriate or suitable video. But today more than ever, an array of choices awaits the classroom teacher that address nearly any topic in any subject taught in colleges and universities (Daniels, 2012).

Mayer (2001) cites research that indicates that students learn more deeply and retain knowledge longer from visual media than from spoken words alone. Kellner, (2004) states that for the past two decades scholars have recommended teaching critical thinking through visual media. Popular culture often acts as the gate to a new world that the teacher may enter to student engagement in the classroom (Daniels, 2012). Daniels (2012) suggests that teachers take advantage of the opportunities that come from using media in their teaching. He recommends that instructors capitalize on student enthusiasm that comes from using popular media in the classroom. He further recommends that teachers find strategies to mingle media with more difficult concepts in order to capitalize on media’s effectiveness as a tool. The impulse to effectively use documentary film is not new nor is strictly the product of the technological revolution. Thomas Edison believed that film’s educational power was so great that it would revolutionize the educational system (Cuban, 1986). Even as early as 1922, the journal *Visual Education* was launched, and in one article a teacher from

Indianapolis describes the use of motion pictures as a means to teach writing (Orndorff, 1921). In the article, the teacher describes in detail the process of watching and processing a contemporary film to students (Orndorff, 1921). There were a number of educational organizations that developed in the early 20th century which supported bringing film into the classroom (Saettler, 2004). In 1937, there was large scale use of film in the classes of many urban school districts (Saettler, 2004). For many years film companies and educators worked in tandem. But soon, film companies and educators began to part ways. Initially, film companies profited greatly from purveying films for classroom use. School districts were buying films, projector, and screens. Soon however, the lines between commercialism and education began to blur. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, a rift developed between educators and businessmen around the notion that the film companies commercial interests didn't necessarily align with educators' goals (Saettler, 2004).

During the 1970s and 1980s, attitudes began to shift back to the legitimacy of film use in the classroom. According to Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) there was widespread fear for many that the media and entertainment world was changing personalities to reflect a pure, technological perspective at the expense of other historical forms of information delivery. A whole generation of educators believed that there was an assault on the traditional print medium used in classrooms (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). Into the 1980s, a new critical mass of

teachers began to “not only acknowledge film and television as new legitimate forms of expression and communication, but also explored practical ways to promote serious inquiry and analysis in higher education using these forms,” (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, p. 3). There is today and has been through the years, some resistance from those who worry that media use in the classroom hurts critical skills of writing and reading. Hobbs and Jensen (2009) discuss the core educational objectives of developing critical thinking skills through instructional skills passed down from the Greeks. It is important that teachers understand their key function. Teachers facilitate learning and the acquisition of knowledge through “questioning practices that deepen analysis and reflection,”(Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, p. 3). It is at this junction where teachers must know and balance their approach to this role. Film use is but one of many strategies to accomplish this task.

How To Use Film Effectively in the Classroom

Using film in the sport psychology classrooms is an excellent supplement to textbooks and articles when teaching things such as the core mental skills for athletes. Movies, both fiction and documentaries can demonstrate a wide breadth of psychological concepts including: cognitive psychology, ethics and leadership, and developmental psychology (Boyatzis, 1994). Green (2009) states that there are several good reasons for using film to teach psychology. One good reason is

that film complements course content. The most basic reason “is that theatrical movies and educational videos can complement text, lectures, and discussions,” (Green, 2009, p. 1). In addition Green states that “one of the most basic rules of communication is redundancy, that is, communicating the same point in a number of ways, (Green, 2009, p. 1). Anderson, (1992) states that “movies can present important information sometimes, in a way, grabs the class by their collective lapsels and gives them a good shaking,” p. 155) He offers a choice to teachers. A professor can lecture about the power of Milgrim’s Obedience to Authority experiments until “they are blue in the face,” risking boring the students “to tears,” or the professor can have the students view the film “Obedience,” and “they will squirm and wiggle uncomfortably,” (Anderson, 1992, p. 155). This echoes Robert McKee’s earlier point the film is memorable because it evokes an emotional response from the viewer and therefore is more memorable (McKee, 1997). Green gives a second reason for using film in the classroom when he states that it improves students’ discerning eye. According to Green, filmmakers like to use psychology as a topic because, “we are all amateur psychologists at heart,” (Green, 2013, p. 1). Green (2013) further suggests that film with psychological underpinnings can often contain inaccurate portrayals of practitioners in the field. Students may become critical viewers of psychological stereotypes and challenge misconceptions portrayed in popular media. I am concerned mainly with documentary film and this point is relevant to my

discussion. Well-made accurate films encourage and give example to practitioners and serve the field by putting forth a positive image of skills and services offered through sport psychologists. Lastly, Green speaks to the ability of film to talk in a language that students use and understand (Green, 2013). Again, this speaks to the theme presented throughout this paper that teaching in the technological age requires using tools familiar to the students.

Despite the reasons listed above for using film in the sport psychology classroom, there are limitations in the use and the medium. When preparing to use film in a classroom, the teacher must be concerned with time constraints and how the film will be used. Should a film be shown in its entirety or short it be viewed in short clips? There are other things to take into consideration and good teaching reflects careful preparation. Teachers need to communicate clearly about the film that is shown to students. Objectives should be clear and well understood by the students before viewing. Teachers must always pay heed to Hobbs (2006) recommendation that teachers avoid the stigma of using film as a break from “real teaching.” In order to avoid criticism from department chairs and administrators, teachers should document a clear rationale for using a film product in the classroom (Marcus & Levine, 2007). Marcus and Levine in their book, “Teaching History with Film” have many useful tips for using film in college classrooms. Although their focus is on history courses, these same tips apply to any one using film in the sport psychology classroom. Marcus and Levine (2007)

ask that, “if doing history should involve more than just passively watching a story about the past, then what should students do before, during, and after a movie to tap into its educational value?”, (p. 25). This point can be translated into advice for the sport psychology professor. Make film use worthwhile. Prior to classroom use, watch a great number of films, select appropriate, relevant content, and design lessons that authenticate use of that material, (Marcus and Levine, 2005).

Daniels (2012) describes how the use of documentary films helped his teaching in his sociology classroom. Daniels suggestions can easily be adapted for the sport psychology class. Daniels combines documentary films with peer reviewed articles or other assigned readings around core topics (Daniels, 2012). Daniels believes this overlap between films and the readings is useful since repetition between film and written text reinforces learning, (Daniels, 2012). Daniels emphasizes that peer reviewed literature and textbooks are still the primary sources for his classes but carefully viewed films are a valued asset as well, (Daniels, 2012). Daniels (2012) distributes a video worksheet that includes questions about film content and analysis, key lesson concepts, and connections between the film and the assigned readings, (Daniels, 2012). He describes specifically an example of a pedagogical strategy that works when teaching medical sociology and race. In one example, Daniels (2012) uses reading and text to cover the historical context for contemporary health disparities due to race.

Students are given a thorough grounding in the readings about racial discrimination in the U.S., and ethical violations in medical experimentation (Daniels, 2012). After the students have a solid understanding of the issues, Daniels shows the students “The Deadly Deception” (1993). This documentary deals with the Tuskegee Syphilis Study conducted by the U.S. government from 1932 through 1972 (Daniels, 2012). The film is a series of first person accounts by several black men who were used in the study, along with interviews with the medical investigators. Also contained in the film are interviews with medical sociology experts. Daniels (2012) states that the film is particularly effective with today’s students because many students know little about the Tuskegee history. According to Daniels (2012) the film provides “an engaging and critical background to the history of racial discrimination in the United States and its attendant health consequences,” (p. 10). The film adds emotional power and immediacy to the racial issues which deepens the meaning of the written texts that the students read previously to viewing the documentary. In addition, the film brings to life a difficult, sometimes underpublicized issue and brings the characters to the classroom. The net result is that the film helps present a visual argument to support the academic arguments, (Daniels, 2012). Daniels (2012) concludes that “combining teaching sociology using documentaries and written texts, along with critical media literacy, addressing how director, editors, and

authors construct a narrative or an argument with images and word choice – can transform learning for students,’ (p. 11).

Daniels’ experience with the use of film for his medical sociology class can be paralleled in the sport psychology class. Movies do very well in exhibiting varying psychological states of mind and extreme mental states, (Wedding, Boyd, & Niemec, 2005)

Hundreds of Hollywood films have covered mental illness and therapeutic approaches to clinical situations. Still, my focus is on the use of documentary films, not narrative ones. I would like to present a suggestion for the use of a terrific film that illustrates several sport psychology issues.

Classroom Example: “Unguarded” (2012)

Award-winning filmmaker Jonathon Hock has produced and directed several films that have aired on the popular ESPN program “30 for 30.” Hock’s most recent film, “Unguarded,” 2012, follows the career of basketball player Chris Herren. Herren, a standout basketball player from Falls River, Massachusetts, battled substance abuse for many years as he rose from high school star to the pinnacle of the NBA. Herren began his college career at Boston College but dropped out after his girlfriend and he conceived a child together. Soon after, Herren transferred to Fresno State where he played for legendary

coach Jerry Tarkanian. Fresno State, a school with a tarnished basketball reputation, fought numerous behavioral and legal problems within the program. Herren succeeded as a top notch basketball talent but after failed drug tests, he was dropped from the program. Nonetheless, Herren was still drafted into the NBA by the Denver Nuggets. Eventually, the Nuggets traded Herren to his hometown team, the Boston Celtics. As a Celtic, Herren showed flashes of brilliance as a player, despite battling a spiraling off-the court drug addiction. Hock's film chronicles Herren's career for better, for worse, and then for better. Herren, after reaching bottom, entered treatment several times before finally achieving his present long time sobriety.

Hock's film is a must-see for anyone interested in the high pressure world of college and professional sports. For the sports psychology classroom it contains a gold-mine of pertinent material. Herren's struggle with addiction to alcohol and drugs and ultimate redemption contains many lessons for athletes, coaches, educators, and students. Herren, while a young basketball protégé, faced enormous pressure to succeed. He speaks in the film and in his book "Bouncing Back," about his problems with self-talk and arousal control. A case study on Herren through Hock's film provides a worthwhile experience for any sports psychology class. Herren's fall from grace and subsequent recovery, not only provide practitioners with a compelling first person account into the world of an addictive personality, but it shows pitfalls of the modern day sports business. The

professional pressures of sport can bring out the worst in an athlete. Herren learned early on about the double standard afforded to athletes. He skipped classes without penalty, played by his own rules, and remained unaccountable in his early adult years. As long as Herren fed the “winning” machine, coaches, administrators, and fellow players turned a blind eye.

Specifically, here is the example I propose as a class plan for the film, “Unguarded” (2012).

There are several ways for the film to be used and certainly, the ultimate way a film is used should be determined by the needs and objectives of the professor. I have used this film and I followed a few simple steps to insure that I was using the students’ and my time effectively. I used the film in several presentations around the subject of problems associated with high pressure college athletics. I follow Green’s (2013) critical steps when presenting a film for class.

- 1) View the film several times before the class views it. During this process, I look for critical questions which I can pose to the class. I identify all of the issues in the film that are related to the issues the students have previously read about. Also during my original viewing I make sure there is no inappropriate material that may be considered offensive.

- 2) Watch the film with the class. It is important that the students see the teacher involved with them viewing the film. Taking personal time off sends the wrong message that the students are getting a free period (Hobbs, 2006). Also I distribute a pre-viewing sheet. I have the students take inventory of what they already know about the topics in the film. This takes the form of a short questionnaire. I distribute a “What To Look For” sheet. It is effective if the student know what purposes and goals there are for viewing a particular film.
- 3) Test the classroom equipment. Whenever a teacher uses a form of technology in the classroom, it is important to perform a test run. Equipment failure contributes to an attitude that the teacher is unprepared and not fully engaged in the activity.
- 4) Plan time efficiently. I outline a time frame for the actual time I will use in class for film study. In some films, I may only want to show clips where in other situations, the full film should be viewed.
- 5) Copyright laws must be obeyed. Under normal circumstances, working through the University library insures that a film can be used for educational purposes without violating any laws.
- 6) Post film discussion. I decide before hand, how many class minutes will be devoted to film discussion. In a film, like “Unguarded,” I found enough topics to cover several classes. I assigned several groups to delve deeper

into the several identified issues in the film. The subsequent class, each group presented a ten minute group reaction to the class.

- 7) Normally, I ask the students to select a topic from the film that piques their interest. I assigned a 3-5 reaction paper where I ask students to outline the key dilemmas posed by the film. Additionally, I ask the students to pose solutions as practitioners or administrators in the form of a “What Would I Do If I Were In Charge?” question.
- 8) Lastly, I inform the students that any discussions or topics covered are fodder for testing.

(Green, 2013)

Movies are a great way to cover sport psychology. The benefits of documentary film use only accrue with painstaking preparation. I would assume that most people qualified to teach a college course would understand that there are many avenues to help motivate student learning. Documentary films are one useful tool that tends to be overlooked.

CHAPTER THREE

CASE STUDY: “COMING OFF THE DL”

The Production and Distribution of a Sport Themed Documentary

For the past 20 years I have served as the academic advisor to students with physical disabilities at Villanova University in suburban Philadelphia. This is a position for which I volunteered in 1994. At that time, I viewed it as a way to give service to the University community. Initially, there were only a handful of students registered with the school as having a documented disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The President of the school at that time, Father Edmund Dobbin, asked me if I would oversee the special needs of this population and insure that the students receive the necessary accommodations to help them obtain academic success. The task was both enjoyable and professionally satisfying and soon I became fluent in the language and substance of the ADA. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, there was a steady increase in the mainstreaming of students with disabilities by public school districts across the country. This trend continued and many students, who previously were not attending colleges and universities, now qualify for admission today. In the past 10 years on the Villanova campus there has been a substantial rise in the number of students who identify themselves as “disabled” or as having “special needs.” They provide the necessary documentation in order to receive accommodations.

The numerical increase was accompanied by a variety of types of disabilities. Several students arrived on the campus with multiple disabilities and some students are impaired to the point where they require full-time nursing care.

This change in the number of disabled students and the magnitude of their needs on our campus caught many offices unprepared. Suddenly, there existed many unprecedented academic and social situations. The administration, faculty, and staff were exposed to a new, challenging reality. From facility upgrades to academic issues, the University faced a host of decisions we had never imagined. As a volunteer advisor, and as often happens on college campuses, I was deputized to lead the campus through these complex issues that now faced the community. I discovered quickly that, as a private institution, we were not fiscally prepared for the large outlay of monies needed to provide the many accommodations. Accommodations are costly, and this is especially true for a private institution, such as Villanova. The University receives no government funding sources or reimbursements for any financial output for disability services. The University's revenues come almost exclusively from tuition, coupled with a small income from the University endowment and institutional savings. An unexpected spike in expenses for the school, can quickly and drastically affect a number of programs. In the last 10 years we, as a University, embarked on an ambitious building plan to provide sufficient, state of the art, facilities for the disabled community. We provided services that include, but are not limited to,

services such as sign language interpreters for the deaf, Braille signage throughout the campus, and one-on-one academic aides.

In addition to acting as the Disabled Student Advisor, I teach a six-credit course entitled Social Justice Documentary Film. The course, an elective available to any University student, consists of taking 15 students each semester and producing a film about an important social issue. The students participate in both an academic and a filmmaking experience. For the first several weeks the students research the topic selected, listen to guest lecturers, and learn the basics of film production. Actual shooting of film footage takes place between week 5 and week 10. The last part of the semester is devoted to post-production and developing a business plan for the film's distribution and use. The course is an overwhelming success both internally at the University and externally. Our films gathered numerous awards and national recognition for Villanova. In the Fall, 2008 semester, as I searched for a topic, I had an idea to combine my film background with my first person experience with the needs of the disabled community. I felt that it was important for the broader University community, Board of Trustees, and Alumni to be made aware of the growing needs, financially and socially, of this expanding population. I decided to tackle the issue of disability on a college campus as a topic for our spring semester project.

Two of our students, Frank Kineavy and Nick Gaynor, were born with cerebral palsy. Both men have serious impairments. Each uses a wheelchair. Each is a sports fanatic. Frank is the manager for the Villanova Men's basketball program and Nick manages the Women's team. On a personal level, I worked closely with them and their families. I knew their backgrounds and their stories. These two gentlemen are extremely personable and charismatic. As a filmmaker, I imagined that they might be excellent subjects for a documentary. Most importantly, I felt I wanted the students to develop a film that would build awareness about students living with disabilities on our campus. Villanova University has traditionally fielded a strong, national basketball program. Their coach, Jay Wright, is the most popular and highest paid employee on campus. Since basketball is a University obsession, I felt that there was a unique opportunity to deliver a social justice message through basketball. Instinctively, I knew that if I featured two basketball managers, surrounded by coaches and players from the programs, I had the hook to reach the campus audience.

My first challenge involved approaching Frank and Nick and their families about their participation in the project. Before I could present the idea to the class, I made sure I had commitments from the families. This is the first and most important aspect of documentary filmmaking. Without compelling characters,

there is little possibility of an interesting film. Getting family cooperation required my personal promise and a guarantee that I, nor the students, would in any way exploit or misrepresent Frank and Nick, or their families. Filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to show and tell the truth but, at all times. They must respect and maintain certain boundaries. Presenting the visual truth of a subject does not mean that artists have carte blanche to invade personal and private spaces of the principals. In this case, the parents wanted assurances from me that their sons would not be shown in any way that would bring embarrassment to them or their families. At our first meeting, I agreed to allow all of the participants to view any or all footage at any moment in the process. Also, I promised to strike from the finished product, any material that they felt they needed to keep private. Our initial meetings established clear guidelines for our mutual involvement. Fortunately, both families felt strongly that a film about their sons could do much for promoting disability awareness on our campus and beyond. Both the Kineavy and Gaynor families saw an opportunity to help other parents of children with special needs.

Pre-Production

Once, I secured an agreement with the two families, I began the all important pre-production process. I met with the students. I emphasized, as I do with each class, that they were part of a production company, as well as an

academic class. During our first meeting, we discussed working as a team and we did several team building exercises that I had actually learned in my sport psychology classes. Like any team, our first order of business was to establish clear goals for the project. We agreed that we would divide our goals into short and long term goals. This is an extremely important first step in pre-production. The goals set the purpose and direction of the film. As a group, we discussed carefully what goals we wanted our film to accomplish.

Our short term goals involved the Villanova community and promoting a culture of disability awareness. One thing that everyone associated with the project agreed upon was that the social opportunities for disabled persons were limited on our campus. Disabled students often voice complaints that, because of their disability, they feel isolated socially. A second thorny issue is that disabled students state that the non-disabled students see and judge the disability without getting to know the disabled person. We wanted our film to address these two problems and offer information to the audience that might alter their perceptions of persons with disabilities. One very important goal that we established was that we wanted staff, faculty, and alumni to understand the complexities associated with attending college with a disability. One of the major areas we deal with as advisors is the lack of support or understanding from faculty and staff. Faculty with no prior experience of teaching students with disabilities, sometimes react with fear, or worse, disinterest. We have listened comments from faculty that

border on insensitive and we have had faculty who were entirely uncooperative when accommodations are requested for a disabled student. We felt our film could be an excellent training tool for faculty and staff. Additionally, reaching out to alumni and donors was a key part of our early strategy. We tied donations to the University's Disability Services Department as a key measure of the film's success.

A very important component of pre-production is identifying the distribution and media strategy for the film. Before we began filming, we listed all of the local media outlets who might also share an interest in our topic. We began a social media campaign using Facebook to begin a conversation about disability within our community. At the same time, we began keeping our followers informed of our progress and generated interest within the school community about our project. We researched important film festivals to identify niche opportunities for our final project. We screened other successful films in our genre to insure that we were not duplicating a previous film or effort. Looking at similar type films was a great exercise in clarifying the message and objectives for our own film. I recommend this to anyone who is interested in embarking on an educational documentary. You can learn a great deal from the success and failures of others who have gone before you.

Long term goals for the project were lofty and much more ambitious than our short term ones. Our team was confident that they could reach a national audience and make a global statement that could address the problems of disability in higher education. We targeted national media outlets, magazines, national disability organizations, and higher education associations. Immediately, we developed a priority list and assigned two members of our team to research and report on appropriate partners and possible other like minded stakeholders in our issue. We targeted United Cerebral Palsy as one organization, who we believed, would be willing to cooperate with us. A brief synopsis of the project was generated and sent to UCP, so that we might pique their interest. At this point, we had generated a comprehensive media and partnering plan and we had not shot one frame of film. I want to emphasize an important point to potential filmmakers, that it is crucial to consider why you are making the film and what you plan to do with the film, assuming you can complete and produce a worthwhile film.

At this point, we were ready to establish a timeline and a specific action plan for the project. We assembled a production team and assigned tasks according to individual talents, skills, and desires. Our production team consisted of the following personnel:

Producer, Director, Line Producer, Cinematographer, Sound Director, Lighting Director, Editor, Writer, Public Relations Coordinator, Music Director, Web Site Designer, Researcher, Continuity Coordinator.

Two other major areas were considered before beginning the actual production. Both of these areas need detailed consideration before shooting begins. Our team wrote a comprehensive budget for the film and then identify appropriate sources of funding or funding in the form of in-kind services. The first time filmmaker needs to develop a strict budget and a strategy for finding the resources that are required to make the film. Lastly, before production started, we created metrics for our success. On a white board in our studio, we listed success goals in terms of numbers of views for the film, fundraising dollars that came from the film's showings, and post film attitudinal changes. Throughout the life of the film, we charted our successes and failures according to measurable goals. Much like a sports team plots out pre-season goals, our pre-production goals that kept us motivated and on task. We were ready to move to the next phase of our project, production.

Production:

Our production schedule called for an eight-week plan that included story development and shooting the raw footage. My own personal preference, and the method that I use, is to research and know intimately the subjects of the film before turning on one camera. It is important to note that people, who agree to participate on camera in your film, face a substantial risk. Additionally, personalities often change once the cameras start to roll. Our first order of business was to research cerebral palsy and the issues associated with students attending college with a disability. Each member of our team received instruction from various experts in the disability field. Readings were distributed to each crew member so that everyone associated with the project had input on what points we needed to communicate with our film. Once everyone was grounded in the subject, we assembled a list of the main and supporting subjects whom we would interview. Aside from our two main characters, we composed a list of important witnesses including family members, teachers, disability activists, coaches, and fellow students. From this list we prioritized the order of interviews. A pre-interview with a subject, without a camera, allows that person to think about their feelings and organize their thoughts. This added time allows them to relax. A film interview can be scary and intimidating. If time permits, this is something I recommend. Though some critics would say that it interferes with the spontaneity of the moment, I find that most people calm down and give deeper

and richer responses afterwards. At the very least, interviewees need to be prepped as to what questions and material will be covered in the interview. Often, I mail the questions to an interviewee in advance. This way a subject can emotionally prepare and it builds trust. I would not recommend (unless the filmmaker is engaged in investigative journalistic films) that the interviewer inject any surprises that can disarm the interviewee, unless that is communicated beforehand.

Our first interviewees were the two main subjects, Frank and Nick. During these interviews they discussed their physical conditions, their daily issues on a college campus, and their hopes and dreams for their future. These interviews set the tone for the rest of our work. Following Frank and Nick's first day of filming, we began to piece together a three-act storyboard for the film. Though stories always evolve through the shooting process, I like to begin to establish a story board or outline for the film as early as possible. Once we identified key story points, it simplified our shooting and made our production days flow more smooth and more efficiently. I have come to know that filmmaking depends on detailed planning. Random shooting of the camera produces hours and hours of useless footage. What we did on this project, and I recommend this to new filmmakers, was to develop a story as early as possible, and shoot to that story. This method allows you to cover the basics. Our three act movie structured at its core was an Act One introduction of the main subjects, an Act Two chronicle of

their difficulties in a college setting, and an Act Three summary showing their successful adaptations to campus life.

After the main subjects' interviews, we spent several days with each family. In addition to the issues the students faced in college, we felt it important to represent the fears and concerns of parents of children with disabilities. We explored the emotions of parents when they send their sons or daughters off to college for the first time. These interviews were moving and powerful and gave us insights into some issues that we hadn't previously considered. Also, we spent considerable time speaking with former high school teachers and coaches, and their interviews added further depth to the backgrounds of our main characters. There was a crucial set of interviewees whom we needed to bring uniqueness to the film. Since our original intention was to use the basketball programs at Villanova to help deliver a message about disabilities, we needed the cooperation of players and coaches. Head coaches Jay Wright and Harry Perretta agreed that our project was worthwhile and something in which they would happily participate. Both, Jay and Harry, and several star players, spoke on camera about the roles Frank and Nick played within the respective programs. Our writing teams developed excellent questions for all of the interviews that we conducted. We concluded the interview phase of our project with informative and entertaining results. Something that can easily be overlooked by a novice filmmaker is the importance of what is called visual evidence or b-roll footage.

Film is a visual medium but a filmmaker can easily get caught in the trap of making a “talking heads” film. There is a temptation to accept the spoken interviews as your primary and only footage. To make the film both visually interesting and credible, it is crucial to shoot supplemental footage that demonstrates visually what is being spoken in the interviews. We decided that we wanted our audience to have a “bird’s eye” view of a day in the life of a student with a disability on our campus. For several days from early morning to late evening, we followed Frank and Nick through their daily routines. This turned out to be the most powerful visual evidence in the film. Watching the students being assisted with their daily morning routine of getting dressed and ready for the day, drove home one of the most important points of the film. The audience sees the tremendous effort that it takes to do the simplest of tasks. This insight gives the viewers a sense of the complexities when housing students with disabilities in our residence halls. Other important “b-roll” included filming the students as basketball managers. In total we shot over 100 hours of footage for this project. This was about twice the amount for a half-hour film, but we had two stories to tell so we intentionally overshot footage.

During a film shoot, detailed records of what and who is recorded are necessary. To simplify the editing process, a filmmaker is smart if he/she assigns continuity chores to a staff member. The continuity coordinator works next to the director and keeps a record of the time code from the camera of start and end

points in a recording. This information is given to the editor in post-production and it becomes a significant help in organizing footage and in the shot selection process. Obtaining releases from individuals and locations must be assigned as well. No images can appear in a film unless permission for usage is granted. Standard release forms are available on-line and should be kept in a safe place. Subjects can change their mind about what they said on camera or they could object to what you have used in the film. Legally, filmmakers need to protect themselves from these types of situations. Another task that must be completed, though not film related, is the composition of a press kit and a website for the film. During all of my productions, I try to create a title for the film as soon as I can. This allows me to lock up the domain name, begin web site construction, and write the press kit. In today's film market, one cannot afford to wait for the film's completion to begin the marketing process. We agreed on the title "Coming Off the DL," soon after the first few days of shooting. We equated Frank and Nick's situations to being on the disabled list or DL, a frequently used sports term. Our thinking was that Frank and Nick, and people living with a disability, are on the DL list permanently, but can come off the list when given opportunity both socially and educationally. Once we had our title, we began a full scale pre-marketing campaign using social media and the internet. We distributed our press kit to local media outlets and assured news coverage for the project we were making. Of, course we had a bigger marketing campaign after we completed the

film, but during shooting we began talking about marketing strategies and potential partners for the film. In today's heavily involved social media world, creating a buzz around a film is much easier than in the past. Technology gives a filmmaker and his/her team an opportunity to build a pre-audience by re-purposing footage. We created small clips of one minute or less and placed them on our website daily. This allowed our followers to keep pace with our project and built excitement for our eventual premiere of the finished product. I strongly advise filmmakers to use this strategy for segmenting a target audience and methodically build that audience from project conception to distribution.

Post-Production:

After all of the video footage is captured on camera, the critical phase of post-production takes place. Here, the director/producer works with the editor to organize the footage into a cohesive story. In our film, "Coming off the DL," we shot over 100 hours of raw footage. That footage must be catalogued, organized, and eventually trimmed down to a 30-minute film. For anyone attempting to make a film, the editing process can be the most challenging and difficult part of the entire process. It is in the editing room where the film is assembled and story choices are finalized.

The first task involved in post-production is to take the images from the camera's tapes or video cards and begin the "log and capture phase." This process

involves taking the video format and converting it to computer files that can be stored and manipulated in the editing software loaded in a computer. We used the Apple program "Final Cut Pro" for our editing software. There are several editing software packages available and each is designed to achieve similar results. The choice of editing software depends on personal and technical preferences. Final Cut Pro worked well for us both from a financial and technical perspective. Learning Final Cut is relatively straightforward but requires time and practice to develop the skills necessary to use the product to maximum effectiveness. A director/producer can choose to edit a film alone or choose to collaborate with an experienced editor. I prefer working with a specialized technician who knows the software in complex detail. On this film, the directors and editors worked together to create the finished product. The director must create the vision and the storyboard for the project and then effectively communicate that vision to the editing team. After the video is captured onto the computer, it must be systematically organized so that clips can be located efficiently. Most problems in post-production occur from a lack of organization of video clips. Editing involves finding small bits of information strung together to tell a larger story. Very often, the editing team has to locate only seconds of a clip among the many hours captured. We spend a great deal of time organizing the footage into what are called "bins." We label the "bins" according to subject and content so that we can quickly find the information needed to move the story forward.

In this project, we began the editing process by composing a storyboard. A storyboard is simply a diagram or outline of the events that we will include in the storytelling. Our storytelling technique intentionally uses a three-act storytelling structure. We began by naming each of our three acts and then listing all of the elements that we needed to include in those acts. Our first task was to take all of the long interview footage and condense it to small, usable units or sound bytes. I have learned that one of my most important jobs as a filmmaker is to watch and re-watch footage. This can be tedious but the more familiar that one can become with the film's subjects, the easier the editing process. There is another reason to methodically sift through footage and that is to identify important information and details that may have been missed during shooting. Throughout the editing process, we sent our film crews back out on assignment to film either supplemental information or additional b-roll to be used as further supporting visual evidence.

Within two weeks of editing, we completed our first rough cut. This took a team of five persons working 12-14 hour days to complete. Once the first cut was finished, we brought in the musical director to view the footage. Film music is an extremely important decision for a film for it can make or break a film's appeal. Our composer worked closely with our team for several weeks to establish the rhythm of the film. I have been fortunate in locating great musicians who enjoy composing film music. Working with a composer who scores the music for the

film is a great learning experience. Music works on so many levels to involve the audience in the storytelling that I recommend to any first time filmmakers to recruit a musician with soundtrack experience.

After the editors and composer agree on the sound choices for the film, the final cut must be completed. The last task in post-production is sound and color correction. The team must scour through the final cut and insure that color and sound are matched and are consistent. After five weeks of post-production, we had a film that was ready for public viewing. My standard practice is to first show the completed project to the film crew and to the subjects in the film. In this way, I can receive feedback and learn of any mistakes made during the process. I always try to get assurances from the subjects that we were responsible and truthful in our portrayals of them on screen. After four months of work, we were ready to screen “Coming Off The DL” to the public.

The Business of the Film:

Certainly one of the most rewarding moments in filmmaking is the premiere or first public screening event. However, for the film to be worthwhile as a project, it must have a public life. As I have mentioned previously, the film must fulfill the purpose for which it was made. After completion, there is an important window of opportunity in which the film can have an impact. First and foremost, the director/producer must supervise the completion of a comprehensive

press kit. The press kit should contain all of the relevant information about the film's production and content and the kit should be sent out to target local and national media. A film needs to have the proper endorsements from film critics and others who can play a role of generating interest in the film. For "Coming off the DL," we held a private screening and invited all of the Philadelphia media to attend. From this event, we were able to generate several stories in newspapers and television news. Since we wanted our film to affect the Villanova community, we scheduled private screenings for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors. Within several weeks we had generated a significant buzz throughout the Villanova community. Concurrently, we entered the film in several national and international film festivals. Film festivals are important to any film in that they validate your film and give it credibility among distributors. Since our film covered a narrow topic of disability, we located film festivals who traditionally selected this type of film. For the year following the film's release, we received recognition in the form of awards, from 10 film festivals in the United States and abroad. Four months after completion, we were notified by ESPN that they were interested in screening parts of the film on their national basketball program "College Game Day." As a result of ESPN's involvement, the film ran on ESPNU for six weeks and it was also shown on the ESPN website. It was estimated that the film received over fifteen million views. This far exceeded any of our original

goals. In addition, the film received front page coverage in the New York Times edition that coincided with the NCAA Final Four.

From a public relations perspective the film was an outstanding success. Internally, on our campus, we succeeded in delivering a message to our community about the issues of disability on our campus. As a direct result of the film, donations and funding for disability services increased dramatically. Villanova University received unprecedented, free national and international recognition. Since the release of the film, "Coming off the DL" is shown to all incoming freshman as part of a disability/diversity awareness session at the new student orientation. The film is used in several classes in the colleges of Arts and Sciences and Nursing. To date the film has been shown to over 1500 audiences in schools, churches, and community groups.

The final chapter of this film's story is still being written. In 2010, our team was given the National Service Award by United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) for promoting disability awareness. UCP asked us if we would partner with them, using the film as part of a national outreach program. In conjunction with UCP, we have developed a teacher's guide to accompany the film and a national distribution plan has been agreed upon. UCP has brought celebrity involvement and large financial resources to the film. We have developed a plan that involves students with disabilities showing the film in schools, followed by an interactive

workshop on disability. The student presenters will receive a stipend from a sponsorship grant. Thus, the film has contributed to providing employment opportunities to students with disabilities.

Finally, the film is available for purchase through several on-line sites and all of the proceeds from the film go directly to an endowment fund to help families of students with disabilities at Villanova. From conception to execution, the film achieved the many goals that we originally set and exceeded even our lofty ambitions. I believe our experiences with “Coming Off the DL” can serve others who may want to use film as an advocacy or educational tool. The lesson that we learned from our experience was to write a detailed plan that was achievable and measureable. We then had to build a responsible team that could execute that plan. In the end, our film is a clear call to action and continues to ask audiences to change the way they see ability. The culture on the Villanova campus for students with disabilities has improved socially, financially, and academically, as a direct result of this film. “Coming Off The DL” is a testament to power of film for creating change.

Key Lessons For Prospective Filmmakers:

As a useful summary, here are several key questions and points for the first time filmmaker to think about throughout the filmmaking process.

- 1) Establish clear goals – What will your film be used for? Education? Awareness? Grassroots organization? Coalition building? Changes in public policy?
- 2) Specific production plan – Have you identified key target audiences? Do you know who they are and how to reach them? In addition to your film, are there both traditional and non-traditional methods that you can use to get across your message? Are there other similar films that cover the same topics? Have you viewed them? What can be learned from them? Are there supporters and partners who can be identified? Have you developed a methodical business plan? Are you clear about what you want from the audience? (direct action, donations, advocacy?).
- 3) Implementation – Implement continuously, react quickly to new opportunities, find like minded partners. Are there legislators who are interested in your topic? Other expert witnesses? Place strategic secondary subjects in your film. Are your themes and messages clear, realistic, and framed in a broad way that all audience members understand?
- 4) Establish expertise – Management team, technical team, financial team, clear lines of responsibilities, job descriptions, and accountability.
- 5) Resources – Do you have the proper funding to complete the project? Is the project sustainable over the course of 18-24 months? Have you utilized

all supportive technology? Websites, social media, traditional print and television?

- 6) Establish a timeline – Set release date, coordinate film business throughout shooting process. Set measurable goals and monitor throughout production. Reward team members for their contributions in creative ways, particularly if there is no budget.
- 7) Track goals/measure success – Track screening numbers, website activity, viewer actions, blogs, policy changes, pre-post screening surveys, fundraising.
- 8) Distribution – How can the film's work be continued? Conferences, film festivals, DVD releases, business and political meetings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRODUCING A FILM FOR THE SPORT PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM: “BRAKING CYCLES”

Production and Business Plan for “Braking Cycles”

“Braking Cycles,” a documentary film about the mission and work of the non-profit organization Gearing Up, was completed on November 15, 2012. It was screened publicly for the first time on December 1, 2012 at the Connolly Cinema on the Villanova University campus. Aside from producing and directing this film in fulfillment of my dissertation requirement, I have carefully planned out the goals and distribution plan for the film to support my equally important objective of helping Gearing Up with their ongoing effort of increasing organizational revenue.

In May, 2012, while in pre-production, I interviewed a complete list of potential participants in the film, as well as discussing with Kristin Gavin her own wishes for the project. First, Kristin and I established specific goals for the outcome of the project. The goals that we initially set for the film were:

- 1) We will improve community awareness of the issues of women in recovery.
- 2) We will address the sensitive issues surrounding women in recovery and improve public perception and support.

- 3) We will focus and honor the professionals who work with this population.
- 4) We will further develop and strengthen the community partnerships and coalitions of organizations who work within this population.
- 5) We will improve the awareness of health care providers and insurance carriers about the value of exercise as a viable treatment modality for women in recovery.
- 6) We will increase the resource base of Gearing Up by using the film in fundraising.
- 7) We will, through film screenings, convene public forums to discuss and promote support for women in recovery.
- 8) We will promote issues of awareness through the use of the film through social media and internet strategies.
- 9) We will develop an educational program to accompany the film for use in schools and youth organizations to promote healthy lifestyles.
- 10) We will develop a speakers' bureau and use the women members of Gearing Up as presenters, mentors, and peer educators.
- 11) We will promote the film and the use of exercise among at risk populations throughout the Sport Psychology community.

Pre-Production

Immediately after establishing the goals for the film, I conducted interviews with the Gearing Up clients. It was very important that I identified the women who would best represent the work and success of Gearing Up. In addition, I needed to understand the issues associated with substance abuse, recovery, and the role of Gearing Up as a therapeutic model. It was an important step if I was to tell a truthful story, to establish a trust between the clients and myself.

My very first experience with the Gearing Up clients came when Kristin invited me to a Gearing Up fundraiser/social. Kristin introduced me to several women with the opening line, “This guy wants to make a film about Gearing Up.” Initially, I felt that I was met with some suspicion yet this was something for which I was fully prepared. I gave each client my business card and asked several women if I could interview them separately in the Gearing Up offices. Over the next several weeks, I interviewed the clients in the presence of Kristin and Kaelin Proud, Gearing Up’s managing director. From these interviews, I was able to identify the three main stories that I wished to cover in the film. The three women, Gwen, Chene, and Tiffany, each represented a different aspect of substance abuse and recovery, and each had a unique experience with Gearing Up.

“Braking Cycles” : The Main Characters

“Gwen”

My first interview was with a 50-year-old African American client who identified herself as Gwen. Gwen immediately told me that she was a “25-year crack user who has been sober for three years.” I explained to Gwen that I was a film producer and that I was directing a film about Gearing Up. I handed Gwen a release form and I asked her to read the form and sign before we proceeded with the interview. Gwen read the release, and in front of witnesses Kristin and Kaelin, stated that she understood that her participation was voluntary and that she could withdraw from the interview or the project at any time. Gwen commented, “I came here to be in a movie so obviously, I want to talk.” Gwen was funny, quick witted, and I immediately recognized that she was “made for movies.”

I had prepared a list of several questions that I had planned to ask in the interview. However, Gwen quickly demonstrated that she needed no prompting from me in order to tell her story. She was open about her past from her first sentence. She stated that, “I got enough stories to fill up a book and so you just keep writing and at the end of a couple of hours, you’ll have a book.” Gwen’s story began in Atlanta, Georgia, where she was raised in a number of foster homes. Abandoned as a young child, Gwen had experienced extreme emotional and physical abuse throughout her childhood. Eventually she ran away when she

was 16. Gwen then met and had a relationship with an older man for the next several years. This man was a drug user and dealer. During his period Gwen had two children but the relationship deteriorated into an abusive relationship where Gwen was regularly beaten by her boyfriend. At her boyfriend's insistence, she began using drugs and her use escalated into a regular crack habit. At one point, "he put a gun to my head and said 'I'm gonna blow your brains out for some reason he didn't do it that day.'" At this point Gwen decided to take her children away. She went to a bus depot in Atlanta and asked the ticket agent to "give me a ticket anywhere but New York City." The agent gave her three tickets to Philadelphia. Gwen and her children arrived in Philadelphia and soon found their way to an emergency shelter. Already a regular user, Gwen found drugs in Philadelphia "cheaper and more plentiful." Within weeks, Gwen had abandoned her children in the shelter and began a life on the streets that would last the next two decades. Over time Gwen lost custody of her children, was in and out of jails, and worked regularly as prostitute in order to obtain money for drugs.

In 2009, Gwen was placed in drug rehabilitation program. While in the program she met Kristin Gavin and Kaelin Proud and was introduced to the Gearing Up bicycle program. Though reluctant to initially get involved, Gwen quickly became a regular participant in the Gearing Up program. She used the bicycle she acquired through the program and the regular Gearing Up scheduled rides helped her to maintain sobriety. Her bicycle became her primary means of

transportation, as it is today, and her pathway to personal freedom. Today Gwen is healthy and employed in two jobs. She credits the support of Kristin and Kaelin and the volunteers at Gearing Up for her success in recovery.

Upon hearing Gwen's story, I felt that her compelling narrative would help deliver a powerful message about the effectiveness of Gearing Up. Her success after such a long period of addiction demonstrates that no matter what the circumstances, there is always a possibility for change. I spent a total of three meetings with Gwen before I decided to stage an on-camera interview. I explained very clearly how the filming process was going to evolve and we established a schedule for Gwen and a definite list of time commitments. Gwen warned me that she was not good at keeping commitments but she would try hard because of her loyalty to Kristin. Next and most importantly, I explained that as filmmakers, we had no intention of exploiting her or her story for any personal gain. I wanted to be very clear to Gwen that she would be sharing her story in the very specific context of telling her success story and about her involvement with Gearing Up. After our third interview, we agreed on several dates and locations where we would film Gwen's story.

Several days later we met Gwen at her home in Southwest Philadelphia. For the next week, we drove daily around Philadelphia where Gwen relayed her story on camera. We visited former "crack houses" where Gwen gave us a

detailed description of the life of a crack addict on the city streets. Our other film shoots included Gwen on her bicycle speaking about her life today and her successes in her employment, as a homeowner, and as a mother (Gwen eventually regained custody of her children). Gwen story a cornerstone of “Braking Cycles.”

“Chene”

I met Chene through Kristin Gavin when Kristin insisted, “Chene is one of our best success stories.” Chene arrived at the Gearing Up office looking like a model from a fashion magazine. This 30-something artist seemed to me to be the last person I would meet in a recovery program. Chene grew up on Philadelphia’s Main Line and attended private schools where she was successful academically and athletically. Again, I explained my role with Gearing Up and though Chene was very shy and quiet, she was resolute in wanting to share her story with me. Like Gwen, Chene spoke freely and without reservation about her alcohol abuse and rehabilitation. I listened intently as she told me her story of a young girl with a routinely normal upbringing growing into an adult who daily went on drinking binges and eventually resulting in her incarceration.

Chene’s story and her involvement with Gearing Up was very much different from Gwen’s story. Unlike Gwen, Chene grew up with the privilege that can be regularly be found in upper class white suburbia. I was immediately drawn to Chene’s simple, quiet sincerity. She told her story in a very matter of fact tone

and like Gwen, she wanted to serve Gearing Up by talking publicly about her story. Chene became an alcoholic over a period of time. Her addiction developed as a result of “regular excessive partying with friends.” She confessed that “I never thought I was an alcoholic but I knew something wasn’t right when I began to black out.” Chene held jobs throughout her addiction. She explained to me that, “I could always show up, get through the day, but I would drink at night to knock myself out, whether with others or eventually just by myself.” Chene talked about familial alcoholism in her own home that was never recognized or acknowledged. Over time she began to realize that she had no control over her drinking. A car accident and jail sentence convinced her that she had a problem with alcohol. Finally, a judge ordered Chene to participate in a rehabilitation program. Uncooperative and bored with the program, Chene heard of Kristin Gavin’s “bike rides.” Chene approached Kristin and asked if she could “go on a bike ride.” Soon afterwards, Chene became a regular Gearing Up rider. Quickly, Chene developed a very close “sisterly” relationship with Kristin. “Without Kristin and Gearing Up, I don’t think I would be alive today,” was Chene’s first testimony. After listening to Chene’s story and her easygoing manner, I knew that I wanted to include her story. I felt that because of her background, she presented a different aspect of addiction. Chene signed a release form immediately telling me, “I’ll do anything possible to help Gearing Up. IF sharing my story will get just one woman in recovery, I’ll gladly do it.”

We shot Chene's interview in the backyard of her home and it was one of the most intimate, powerful experiences that I've ever had as a film director. I've met few people as honest and as self-aware as Chene. During several sessions, Chene took us through a detailed account of her battle with alcohol and the tremendous struggles she faces each day as she tries to stay sober. Chene credits Kristin and Gearing Up with saving her life. Chene is very careful to explain that she lives her life moment to moment. She told me that, "I have to fight the urge to drink, minute by minute but that bike and that program really helps. I don't know why, it's just a bike ride, but it helps." Chene's story became an important part of the film for the simple reason that Chene defies the stereotype, or at least the stereotype that I held, of a woman in recovery.

"Tiffany"

I interviewed Tiffany at Kristin's request. Kristin was extremely proud and boastful about Tiffany's growth and accomplishments within the Gearing Up program. My initial conversation with Tiffany was awkward and difficult. She seemed unsure of herself and most definitely, unsure of me. Her answers to any question I posed were brief and lacked any details. My first reaction after meeting Tiffany was that she most likely would not be a good candidate for our film. Tiffany is a 20-year-old client who spent the last eight years as a drug addict in the very tough Kensington section of Philadelphia. She became involved with

drugs after stealing some prescription pills from her mother. Her drug use grew into a full-blown addiction “basically taking any drug I could find as long as I could get high.” Throughout her teenage years, Tiffany lived on the streets as a drug addict. She was incarcerated several times but she was never able to commit to a recovery program. According to Tiffany, “I thought the life I was living was normal and that everyone else was living the same way.” It was not until her last visit to jail when she learned that she was pregnant, that she considered “getting clean.”

Tiffany entered a rehabilitation program at Interim House in Germantown, Pa. At Interim House, Tiffany met Kristin Gavin. For the first time in her life, she was introduced to exercise and it was during her recovery that she was able to find and thrive within a healthy lifestyle.

According to Kristin, Tiffany’s story was unique to the program because Tiffany represented a client with low self-esteem, little education, and an “undisciplined personality.” Tiffany’s initial reaction to bike riding was negative. After trying it once, she decided that she did not like it nor did she want to pursue it further. Kristin continued to reach out to Tiffany realizing that Tiffany’s lack of confidence was holding her back in her recovery and in life. Kristin made a concerted effort to encourage Tiffany and help her build the confidence necessary to exercise and eventually reach sobriety. Tiffany completed the “Build A Bike”

program in twelve weeks and received her own bike which symbolized to her, a new beginning. From that point forward, Tiffany began studying for her GED and eventually enrolled in cosmetology school, a lifelong ambition of hers.

Tiffany's story was difficult to hear yet the arch of her recovery was impressive. She descended into addiction at a very young age and she represented a demographic that was important for the film's reach. I felt that her story could speak to a younger audience and that it was important to have her voice heard in the film. We met Tiffany for several bike rides in Philadelphia and followed her throughout the city for several days. She quickly grew confident in front of the camera. During her first interview, she stuttered and stammered and was very nervous. By Day 2, she was calm and told her amazing story with ease and confidence. She expressed pride in her journey from life on the streets to obtaining her high school diploma. Like the other interviewees, Tiffany gave the lion's share of credit for her recovery to Kristin and Gearing Up. It was clear that Gearing Up provided Tiffany with life skills and the psychological tools that would propel her on a new road.

After two weeks of pre-interviewing a dozen Gearing Up clients, I decided that Gwen, Chene, and Tiffany would be the main focus of the Gearing Up client stories for "Braking Cycles."

Production

We began full production on the film on May 10, 2012. I was very fortunate to have my business partner, Matthew Marencik, assist me with filming. Matt is a great resource and helped me with second camera and with editing the project. Our first order of business was to film an interview with Kristin Gavin, the founder and Executive Director of Gearing Up. We met Kristin in Wissahickon Park, which is a location where the Gearing Up clients ride frequently. During the interview, Kristin gave an oral history of the Gearing Up and how the organization grew out of a project at Temple University. Kristin shared with us the highs and lows of her experiences running a non-profit organization. Most importantly, Kristin's interview gave us a structure with which to work. From our conversation, Kristin framed the issues of working with the population of women in recovery. She stressed the challenges she faced starting the organization as well as the pressures of maintaining a non-profit business. Kristin told some funny and some sad stories about client successes and failures and gave a unique perspective about dealing with women in transition for alcohol and drug abuse. From Kristin, I was able to begin to formulate themes and messages that we would try and communicate with our film.

Concurrently while we conducted interviews, we attended regular Gearing Up bike riding events with the clients. Since I am a low budget filmmaker, I had

to improvise in order to obtain usable bike riding footage. I was fortunate to have a friend who lent me his pick up truck and I was able to rig a system that could deliver usable footage as we trailed along with the riders. Before and after the rides, the clients and volunteers meet and discuss goals for the ride. Each rider is asked to leave something troubling behind on the ride and to set a personal goal for the ride. I found this particular useful in stressing the connection between Gearing Up and sport psychology skills. It was evident that Kristin's background in sport psychology had been woven into the fabric of the Gearing Up program. Goal setting, arousal control, and imagery were skills that the volunteers discussed, explained, and tried to implement with the clients. This caught my attention early on which led to the important addition of Dr. Michael Sachs to the film. Since I was trying simultaneously to film a documentary that could also serve the sport psychology field, it was necessary to join the bridge between the two. I was happy to see the regular implementation of the sport psychology skill set with the riders. Subsequently we interviewed Dr. Sachs on the Temple University campus about the Gearing Up program and the use of these skills.

Usually, when working on films, there are unexpected surprises that occur the can either hurt or help your film. In my case, I had several fortunate events take place that worked to strengthen the message of the film. One such event happened on a very hot and humid June morning. While following the riders, we stopped for a moment to rest. A woman approached me and volunteered to be

interviewed for the piece. She introduced herself as Brenda and she told me that she began volunteering with Gearing Up after her own experience with bike riding and her own alcohol recovery. Brenda, a recovering alcoholic, began riding a bicycle during her own recovery and she became so impressed with Kristin's program, that she has volunteered for the past several years. Later that morning, we returned to a location in Mount Airy and set up cameras to film Brenda. Brenda's interview was wonderful. She was honest and candid about her own personal struggles with alcohol abuse. I have had a similar experience before. When filming, many times these "gem" subjects appear when I'm not looking. They often make a film richer and deeper. This was certainly the case with Brenda.

Kristin gave me a list of several other people that she felt were important to the film. These included other volunteers and workers at the Interim House. These interviews proved to be worthwhile and I was able to use the Director of Interim House, Kathy Wellborn, as my expert witness. Documentaries need expert testimony in order to help deliver a message. Kathy's interview about addiction and her perspective about Gearing Up helped add credibility to the Gearing Up cause. Likewise, Erica Tibbetts, a Temple graduate student, provided additional witness to the importance of exercise in treating mental health problems. Later on, I interviewed Pat Cunnane, a bicycle company owner and sponsor of Gearing Up. Pat's interview from a businessman's viewpoint spoke to

other potential donors. It was important to have a current donor to Gearing Up speak about his satisfactory involvement with the organization. Pat articulated the benefits to his company of his sponsoring Kristin's work. The last formal interview I conducted was with the First Lady of Philadelphia, Lisa Nutter. From a sheer marketing angle, I was very happy that Ms. Nutter agreed to be interviewed. The Mayor's wife is a lifelong cyclist who often rides with the Gearing Up clients. She was a great interviewee and she became an important witness as well.

We completed all of the interviews for the film by the end of June, 2012. I reviewed the 50 hours of footage that we had shot. Matt and I, though pleased with the interviews and with the main stories that I wanted to tell, still felt there was something missing. I had a feeling while watching the interviews that I needed something more to tie things together. All of the subjects gave powerful interviews but I wasn't completely satisfied. I realized that I never had the main subjects interact with one another. I invited the women to join me on one last bike ride around Center City Philadelphia. We met at Chances, which is another rehabilitation site where Gearing Up clients obtain treatment. The women rode throughout downtown Philadelphia and up and down the East and West River Drives. At several locations, I had the women stop and I conducted group interviews. It was a chance for the women to share their stories with one another. From these interviews, I was able to obtain footage which captured a very special

part of Gearing Up and that is the support that the clients give one another on the bike rides. These very important interactions made it into the final cut and I believe they are some of the most poignant moments of the final cut.

Filming ended on August 8, almost two full months after we started the project. Next I scripted a storyboard based on the footage we had shot. Then we edited the footage for the next 6 weeks into the first rough cut. I was able to reach out to a musician friend of mine by the name of Gil Bradley. Gil is a full-time custodian at Villanova who for years, told me about his musical talents. I asked Gil if he wanted to give a try at composing music for a film. Gil took on this challenge with enthusiasm and tremendous energy and within 4 weeks, he had composed a gritty soundtrack to accompany the film. This was another fortuitous moment in the production. Gil was able to bring a great urban rhythm to the soundtrack and it is a crucial part of the film.

Post-Production

The completed film was well received by the subjects of the film, the membership of Gearing Up, and friends and family of the organization. We have screened the film 10 times since completion. The film has been viewed by audiences at Villanova University, Temple University, and several regional bike clubs. To date Kristin has been using the film for fundraising and grant writing. From that point on, as producer, I am responsible for leading the organization to the

fulfillment of the goals listed below. To accomplish these tasks, I organized a distribution planning sheet and an 18 month timeline to accomplish this plan. We have begun this process and we are well on our way to achieve the goals that we initially set. Our current distribution plan involves the following:

- 1) We will apply and submit the film to several local film festivals in Philadelphia and the Tri-State area. This will allow us to create initial knowledge and excitement around the film.
- 2) We will screen the film in several large public venues and charge admission to the events. This revenue will cover Gearing Up's start-up distribution expenses.
- 3) We will write and develop our press kit and distribute that press kit to all local television and newspaper outlets. We will also have our screening events covered on local sports channels and in newspapers.
- 4) We will enlist several local writers to write feature articles for Philadelphia magazines and specialized newspapers.
- 5) We will coordinate several screening events with the Philadelphia cycling community.
- 6) We will coordinate several screening events at local rehabilitation centers and hospitals.
- 7) We will submit the film to several target cable networks including Comcast, HBO, TLC, Discovery, The Health Channel, and the Documentary Channel.

- 8) We will seek national advocacy partnerships with large organizations such as the Partnership for a Drug Free America, distributing the film through established organizational networks.
- 9) We will identify and locate regional and national conferences and submit the film for presentation consideration.
- 10) We will solicit corporations for film sponsorship.
- 11) We will develop educational programming from the film and seek foundation grants to fully develop and distribute the program.
- 12) We will distribute the film through DVD sales and internet distribution through services such as I-Tunes.
- 13) Concurrently we will compose a learning/teaching guide for the film to be used in educational settings.
- 14) We will locate possible funders for assistance with all of the above.
- 15) We will identify all outlets to be used and maximize the effectiveness of each medium. Through our partnership with Turchette Advertising in New York City we will coordinate the use of all promotional tools, (television, print media, advertising, digital communication, consumer driven social media) to promote the film.
- 16) We will re-purpose footage (trailers, unused footage/archival) to get the GU message out to smaller, targeted audiences.

- 17) We will identify and solicit the involvement of all possible social issue partners, stakeholders, and other like minded audiences.
- 18) We will use our network of government officials, celebrities, researchers, and foundations to promote the health and recovery of women in transition from substance abuse.
- 19) We will penetrate and distribute into logical venues such as social justice film distributors, women's health and wellness websites, and sport psychology professionals.
- 20) We will develop a clear branding message for the film and a "call to action" piece. This promotional piece will instruct the audience on the ways they may get involved.
- 21) We will chart our progress through a rubric that includes audience, numbers, fundraising, national exposure, sponsors, school visits, prevention and recruitment data.

Post-Film Interviews

Once the film was screened several times and the Gearing Up clients and the film's subjects had an opportunity to digest the experience, I contacted each person and asked them to complete a brief questionnaire about their experience with "Braking Cycles." In the questionnaire I asked questions concerning their overall experience with the filmmaking experience and how they felt about the

ways they were portrayed in the film. Below are some summary quotes from the key subjects who appeared in the film.

Gwen: “I loved the film and I loved being in it. I think Steve and Matt did a really good job telling my story. I wanted to tell my story to help other women who are like me. And I’m sure this is gonna help do that. I think I was pretty good in the film and I was really glad I could help Gearing Up. Kristin and Kaelin mean so much to me that it was important for me to do this. They mean the world to me and I think that all women that are going through what I went through should have the same opportunity...Steve and Matt were really nice to me and they just let me lead them around and tell my story. I never felt pressure and we had a lot of fun. I think they showed my true self and I was glad I had the chance.”

Chene: “I think this film is amazing. I think it was important for me in my recovery to be involved in this project. I think it’s going to do a lot of good for Gearing Up and if it can bring biking to more women then that will make me happy...The one thing that happens when I watch the film with an audience is that it makes me even more aware of my responsibility to myself, and to an audience, to keep sober. It’s almost like the film bonds me with the people in the audience...Steve did exactly what he said he was going to do. He was honest and up front and the film turned out exactly how he said it would. I was very relaxed

telling them my story because they listened and never judged me. I believe they were committed to make the best film possible for Gearing Up.”

Tiffany: “I really liked the movie and I hope it helps others like me. I got a lot of confidence from Gearing Up. I don’t think I could have done this if it wasn’t for Kristin. I was a little nervous at first but it just became normal to tell my story. I think it’s truthful and that women who watch it will see that there is hope and that you can change when you’re around the right people. I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished and the film shows how far I’ve come.”

Kristin: “From initial conception to execution, the process was INCREDIBLE! I was very concerned at first about the impact it would/could have on our participants but it was wonderful. Steve and Matt were compassionate, empathetic, and respectful of our clients from start to finish...The film turned out better than I expected and it accurately portrays the work we do. Having the insights and reflections of a neutral third party like Steve really helped open the viewpoint and authenticity of our ladies...To date the film has helped up raise over \$2500.00 in direct proceeds and has opened huge doors to more individual grants, gifts, and program growth. After presenting it to the FIR (Forensic Intensive Recovery) a few weeks ago, the phone has been ringing off the hook...The subjects of the film were treated with respect and they were cared for by the filmmakers...They were portrayed absolutely beautifully and their true colors really shined on!...Out of this project a sense of community really developed as well as providing us with a tool to share our mission in action, which is very difficult for non-

cyclists to see. And it is a tool to share with others in recovery. There is hope!...Steve, I could go on for hours about this process and how good it has been for our organization. One thing that was very important to us was that being part of the process was very liberating for our clients. There was a sense of ownership over their recovery and involvement with Gearing Up that is very unique from others. Thank you, thank you!”

Discussion

The film “Braking Cycles” and the accompanying dissertation accomplished the director/author’s pre-set goals. First, the film demonstrated that an effective tool could be created that shows the impact of exercise and sport psychology skills in an applied community setting. The resultant video product is also a useful teaching aid in the classroom. Producing the film as partial fulfillment of the dissertation requirement created a win-win situation for everyone concerned. The Gearing Up organization gained a wonderful tool in which they can use for a variety of purposes. The Temple University Kinesiology program expanded the possibilities for graduate students to perform non-traditional research. Lastly, the women of Gearing Up were celebrated for their commitment to their own health.

There is another element of this dissertation that cannot be overlooked and that is how does this project connect with academic research in sport psychology?

Are there theoretical implications from previous research conducted in the area of exercise and mental health? Bandura's Self-determination theory has received much attention in the area of physical activity research (Wilson, Mack, & Gratton, 2008). After observing the three subjects from the film successfully use exercise in a therapeutic modality to cope with sobriety, they now stand as living testament to the elements of Bandura's theory. The area of psychological research that deals with adherence to self-care activities is particular relevant to the film "Braking Cycles." Motivation to exercise, active exercise behavior, and sustained commitment toward exercise goals are important components in Bandura's model and in Kristin Gavin's model as well. A key element of social-cognitive theory is the concept of self efficacy, which can be defined as one's belief in their ability to attain a goal (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1986, 1997), self-efficacy helps in motivation in several ways. People with high self-efficacy have more success in articulating goals and aspirations (Campion & Lord, 1982). People with high self-efficacy give increased effort in exercise tasks and normally persevere longer in difficult moments (Bandura, 1997). People who view themselves as efficacious expect that they can be successful at a given activity (Bandura, 1997).

Through this project the author was able to witness Gearing Up's effectiveness in improving the self-efficacy of their clients. Specifically, there are markers of self-efficacy that were observed and disclosed by the clients during

interviews. During the very first interviews with the Gearing Up clients, each stated that their initial reaction to bicycling was negative. Due to inexperience and lack of confidence, the women never considered it a realistic possibility that exercise could be incorporated into their lives. Kristin Gavin's approach and success in supporting recovery through exercise demonstrates improvement in several areas that contribute to improved self-efficacy. First, the women were slowly introduced to a process that allowed them in a supportive environment to improve the tangible skill of bicycling. The women learn together and gain confidence in a group setting. The mastery of bicycling is progressive, ultimately resulting in measured success through miles and bike building. Bandura's theory claims that one's perceived competence is a necessary component to self-efficacy (Deci, 1992; Williams, Freedman, & Deci, 1998). Improvement in competence leads to higher outcomes in exercise adherence which in this case, leads to women staying with a task for longer periods, enhancing the recovery effort. Another important element of self-determination theory to consider is that of autonomy versus external control. Deci & Ryan (1985) stated that people who function autonomously tend to initiate their own values and goals. Their intrinsic motivation follows from their own desire for self-improvement. Senecal, Nouwen & White (2000) state that, "autonomous, self-regulated individuals experience greater life satisfaction and, in the long term, show greater persistence and adherence," (p. 453). The Gearing Up clients in the film each spoke to an

improvement in their self-esteem and their belief in their own abilities. Each woman spoke of their own perceived lack of exercise skills prior to their introduction to a bicycle exercise program. Admittedly, the women's first involvement with the program came as a result of external pressures from the legal or health system and their desire to obtain their own bike. After their completion of the program each woman bragged of their new found abilities to set goals and commit to a healthy lifestyle. All of the women that we met through the entire film project credited bicycling and group exercise for helping them reach and maintain sobriety.

The changes that occurred in the Gearing Up clients, as a result of their involvement in the 12-week program, cannot be overstated. The three women, who became the main spokeswomen for the organization, have since articulated that Gearing Up and their involvement in the film will continue to benefit them in their continued sobriety. Chene commented recently that by having her story told in such a public way puts a pressure on her to continue her recovery. She said, "Whenever I watch the film, I feel a responsibility to the viewers, my family, and myself to keep moving on the path that I have begun with Gearing Up." Chene added that she is thankful for a kind of "positive pressure." Likewise, Tiffany explained to me that the film was "one of the few things in my life that I can always be proud of." Gwen said, "I knew that I was an inspiration to other women

like myself, now it's official." The testimonies that I have received from the women make the experience even more satisfying.

The film, and the subsequent usage in classrooms and public venues, creates a tremendous learning resource for sport psychologists. In the Literature Review section, it is clear that documentarians attempt to make films that inform viewers about an important real-life topic or issue that requires the attention of a larger community. Several of the films that were mentioned in this section were pieces that provided important educational information to audiences and students that might have been ignored in mainstream media. Much of documentary history is an attempt by filmmakers to educate and persuade the audience to examine a specific viewpoint. Filming a documentary is serious business and requires great preparation, particularly if the creator(s) is to achieve their goals.

In comparing "Braking Cycles" to other successful, persuasive documentaries, there are several things that good films share in terms of best practices. First, the topics in worthwhile films are important and universally agreed upon as worthy of an audience's attention. In "Braking Cycles" the film tries to shed light on the very challenging issue of substance abuse recovery. The intimate portrait of the three women in the film holds the audience's attention. It appeals to both the emotional sensibilities of the viewer but it also focuses on the application of theoretical sport psychology skills to real world problems. Another

important element of a good documentary is the purpose of the film. “Braking Cycles” challenges the audience to examine stereotypes of drug and alcohol abusers. It personalizes a larger societal problem and offers concrete solutions. It showcases the work of Kristin Gavin and Gearing Up with the positive message that one person’s drive and passion can make a difference in the lives of others. The characters in the film are compelling and each tells of a different experience with drugs and alcohol. Each person represents a different race or ethnicity, yet they share a common bond of battling addiction one day at a time. A good film is useful and has a shelf life where it can be used to stimulate change. “Braking Cycles” will continue to be effective in the future for several reasons.

Another characteristic of good documentary filmmaking is to begin a project with an end in mind. In other words know your content before shooting, consider your target audience, and set measurable goals in which you can gauge the effectiveness of a project. With “Braking Cycles,” everything from pre-production to distribution was planned from our first meeting. The goals for the film involved the content of the film itself, and the post-production life of the film. -First, it has and will continue to help Gearing Up convince sponsors and donors that the organization’s mission is important and effective. It will help the women of Gearing Up to visualize the possibilities of goal setting and commitment. The film can also be used to motivate current alcohol and drug abusers to consider the sobering alternative of exercise. And, the film brings a

living, breathing testament to the Department of Kinesiology and the importance of the field of sport psychology. It provides an excellent public relations tool for the field, in general. The work of Kristin Gavin and *Gearing Up* is a direct result of her involvement with Sport Psychology and particularly the Temple program. The author/producer feels strongly that a viable model has been created for other graduate students. The argument put forth in this dissertation that film production and film usage in Sport Psychology has a ready example in “*Braking Cycles*.”

The involvement between the film’s producer and the subjects represented a intimate form of qualitative research. The process of selecting and interviewing the key subjects was handled with great sensitivity. Legal contracts were drawn up and the parameters of the project were explained clearly to all parties involved. The subjects were able to view the rough cut of the film and the final cut and pose any objections to content or portrayals. After finishing the film, the producers continue to promote the film and the *Gearing Up* work to the greater community. The producers are happy to report to this date, the film has been well received by regional audiences and has been well covered by local media. The next phase of this project will be expanding viewership nationally.

The pre-production process, the actual production, and the release of the film solidified the author’s view that producing film in the service of a relevant social issue is a powerful method and it has a relevant place in academic circles.

Though there will always be skeptics, this dissertation give concrete evidence to the place of creativity in the service of Sport Psychology.

Suggestions for Further Study

As a filmmaker and a sport psychology student, I have witnessed first hand the power of visual media to stimulate passion and action in audience member. Each film I have produced and directed has had a significant public life after release. Examining social and psychological issues through film is satisfying and I believe, contributes to the addition of knowledge. Changes in technology and in the delivery of course content have created new opportunities for filmmakers in educational settings. There are opportunities for students, professors, and practitioners to take advantage of the creative power and influence of media on their discipline.

After the completion and release of “Braking Cycles,” there has been a flurry of activity surrounding the film. Student and community audiences have been inspired by the work of Gearing Up with women in recovery. The impact of watching sport psychology skills in action has prompted many people to take notice of the strong connections between exercise and mental health. I am certain that the path that the path traveled with this film from conception to execution can easily be duplicated by other ambitious people in the field. The film succeeded and continues to be valuable on several fronts. “Braking Cycles” provided a great

public relations tool for the Gearing Up organization. It has brought publicity and development opportunities to the organization that were non-existent before production. Additionally, it has been used in rehabilitation facilities to demonstrate the program to potential riders and to motivate women to exercise as a therapeutic modality. In the classroom, it has been used to inspire sport psychology students and students of other fields, to find creative ways to use exercise in the service of solving social problems.

The feedback on the project was entirely positive. Even though, evidence from the project points to tangible, real life behavioral change from structure exercise, it would be beneficial to see if the methods used in this project might be duplicated with another population with a different social problem. I believe that there are similar projects waiting to be discovered by a creative and visionary student. I recommend that the Kinesiology department encourage similar ideas that expand opportunities for creative research, as Dr. Sachs has allowed in this case. There are several Philadelphia non-profits who could benefit from the same results generated by the “Braking Cycles” film. The First Tee program at the Walnut Lane Golf Course, bring opportunities to underserved youth. Director Dave Smith has contacted me about possible future collaboration on a film. Other organizations like the Arthur Ashe Legacy Youth Tennis and Education program, the Beat the Streets program, and the Urban Blazers offer the filmmaker or sport psychology researcher wonderful opportunities to study the power of sport and

exercise for good. Most important, I believe it possible that sport psychology professionals can continue to demonstrate, as Kristin Gavin has, how exercise improves mental health.

Finally, I would be happy to volunteer my time and knowledge to help students develop the necessary skill set to execute similar projects. I believe that a small initiative similar to what I have been allowed to do with this dissertation would be a wonderful first step in continuing to bring new opportunity and knowledge to the field of Sport Psychology.

Conclusions

This dissertation project began with several objectives that centered on combining documentary film production with sport psychology. I wanted to create a visual product that inspired and communicated to students and practitioners about the relevance of bringing sport psychology principles to bear in solving a social problem. Also, I wanted to help to help those in the field to find creative ways to publicize the great works that happen within the discipline. It has been my hope that others in the field that see this work will see the potential of documentary film as both a teaching and public relations tool. I am please to report that I feel positive about meeting my initial goals for the dissertation.

The finished film “Braking Cycles,” has acted as a change agent on several levels. Personally, producing this film and working with the women of Gearing Up has been a life changing experience for me. I was fortunate to be trusted to tell the delicate stories of three women in transition from substance abuse to sobriety and the role of bicycle exercise in that process. The film gives a close-up profile of Kristin Gavin, a Temple Sport Psychology alumnus. Kristin’s story and her work ethic demonstrates for current Temple students, and for others stepping into the field, the power of passionate creativity. Kristin used a class assignment at Temple to generate an organization that transforms the lives of the women served by Gearing Up. The women of Gearing Up taught me the importance of second chances and that hope springs often from the simplest of human connections. Kristin offered these women a chance to bike for recreation but her gift to them was to help them believe in themselves and find the motivation for self-improvement. The lessons offered in the film can be useful in the classroom in helping students understand that social change can happen because of the purposeful actions of caring individuals. The film and the Gearing Up story has also mobilized the local bicycle community to see the benefits of volunteering in the service to others. Gearing Up will use the film to raise funds and awareness and I am gratified that this project may be the catalyst for that movement. I am optimistic that the film can help the rehabilitation community

with the message that exercise is a proven modality in improving physical and mental health.

In the future, I would like to expand on this experience by creating, and helping others to create, similar projects in the future. In Philadelphia, there are over 30 non-profit organizations that use sports and exercise to motivate and assist underserved communities. Each organization with their individual mission can benefit from the publicity and developmental impact of a documentary film. Organizations such as the Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis program, Back on My Feet, and Special Equestrian merit such a film to publicize their great work. I envision documentary film making and film usage becoming a natural part of the educational process in the formation of new practitioners. Students who produce films can benefit from being a resource to the non-profit world and students in the classroom can draw the inspiration to see new possibilities within the profession of Sport Psychology.

Finally, I once again thank Dr. Michael Sachs for his patience and dedication in helping me see this project to its conclusion. Dr. Sachs has a tremendous passion and dedication to his field, his institution, and his students. I feel very blessed to have worked under his tutelage.

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