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FILM AS RITUAL: HEALING FROM
COMPLEX TRAUMA AND TRANSMUTING
PAIN THROUGH FILM

by

LORRAINE SOVERN
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2016

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in the Department of Film
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
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Major Professor: Katherine Shults

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ABSTRACT

Forward Fast, *Always/Never (Together Forever)* and *Shotgun Baby* are three short experimental documentary films as part of the requirements for earning a Master of Fine Arts in Feature Film Production from the University of Central Florida. These films focus on the unique power of cinema and its ability to assist in healing from complex trauma. Three films were produced on an artisanal, micro-budget scale.

This body of work confronts and examines the significant traumas from an abusive childhood upbringing (*Shotgun Baby*), the effects of misogyny in Western media on my developing filmic sensibilities (*Forward Fast*), and the lasting emotional distress from a recurring pattern of fractured friendships (*Always/Never (Together Forever)*). Home movies and personal archives are employed in a ritualistic approach to self-healing and the reframing of these narratives. This work is confrontational and deeply personal, exploring the unique power of cinema to heal complex trauma and connect audiences through a shared experience.

This thesis outlines personal research with my self as the subject. These short films serve as a vehicle for catharsis and self-healing; reclaiming and reframing narratives, ultimately seeking freedom from trauma's grasp. The style of the films are intensely personal, therefore, the following thesis mirrors a certain level of self-disclosure and diaristic framework. The findings from development to completion of three short films are all focused around transmuting pain.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to my talented and dedicated thesis committee: Katherine Shults, Lisa Danker-Kritzer, Betsy Kalin, and Georg Koszulinski. Their kindness, encouragement, and confidence in my abilities allowed me to fully trust my instincts and lean into my most authentic voice as a filmmaker. I am proud to have had the opportunity to receive such thoughtful mentorship from all of them, as well as to learn through the example of their own respective filmmaking practices. During my time in this program, they have guided me with the upmost support, respect, and enthusiasm. Without them, I would not be the filmmaker I am today.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Film as Language for Connection

In my personal approach to filmmaking, I invoke a holistic embodiment of all aspects of being. This also involves all levels of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. This applies to the process from which I create, as well as the content itself. In a lot of ways, the work I'm doing is like a self-excavation. Digging deep into my own past; memories, dreams, experiences, regrets, fears, and most of all- trauma and how it affects our personal development. Throughout my three films, I use non-fiction, diaristic and lyrical filmmaking approaches to examine the early impacts that media, family dynamics, friendships, and culture have on my psychological development. With a radical degree of vulnerability and transparent self-disclosure, each film acts as an emotional deep dive into how my personal history has shaped my world view, my own self view, and most of all, my unfiltered voice as a filmmaker.

This sort of work is not clean. Whether you're working in private, or gestating pain into art to share with others, it's not glamorous to go down this path. In service of healing, it is necessary. I have spent hundreds of hours crying over the loss of friendships, my toxic relationship with my body, the terribly strained relationship with my family, and shaking through the process of exploring these subjects while birthing my films into the world. It has been a long labor, but ultimately one of love. After all, I got what I've been chasing this whole time: catharsis. What's even more compelling is the potency that catharsis carries. The fact that I can take my most formative, painful, and humiliating experiences and put them on a big screen for

the world to see, to subsequently have audience members find me after to share that they're now feeling that same catharsis, too. That's the reason we do this.

Trauma and Storytelling

As an experimental filmmaker, a resonant pillar of my practice is one driven by an intentional exploration of healing through the act of radical self-expression. My relationship with media is born from a desire to connect and feel seen. That goes beyond the catharsis I can experience while externally processing trauma through the creation of a film. It originally stemmed from the potent surrogate experiences made available to me as a spectator simply through the action of representation. There is an immeasurable power to learning that we are not alone in our painful isolation. Human belonging is one of the most basic core needs.

From the messaging we receive during childhood, to the interpersonal relationships that shape who we become; our identities are continually dragged through a barrage of formative and defining factors. Within my thesis body of work comprised of three short films, I explore the power of cinema and its unique ability to transmute difficult emotions, especially trauma, through a process of reclaiming narratives and invoking mass catharsis. Not only is the act of viewing a film a potentially pivotal moment for self-transformation, the making of films in itself can possess an alchemic potency on one's path to emotional healing with deep consideration and reverence toward intentionality and resolution. There is a balance between living in the space of the wound and living in complete avoidance of it. The act of telling our stories is a vital first step in the process of naming our trauma. In service of a future geared toward freedom from the grips of past pain, personal essay films hold a unique power to allow us

to set the record straight once and for all by allowing our stories to exist forever in a time and space outside of the cycling rumination of our minds.

There is an intense power to the act of reclaiming old narratives, reframing and reshaping them. It's too easy to allow others to tell us who we are, but it takes strength and power to take that story into our own hands. Quite especially in my family, it's remained difficult to escape the restrictive labels that have been thrust upon me since birth. Whether that's as simple as my biological gender and every expectation attached to that- especially my appearance, and the repeated accusation of intense emotionality and sensitivity. There is a rigidity to these labels that I feel fundamentally reduce my humanity, freedom of self-expression and overall wellbeing. The restrictive nature of a label does not allow for growth or change. Though, the act of telling my own story through filmmaking can provide a deep sense of justice and catharsis as I reclaim authorship over my own life. This empowerment is vital to finding closure from old wounds. In this regard, my thesis films act as a vehicle for my own empowerment.

All my films share a retrospective gaze toward the past. I examine complex trauma, its origins, the debilitating lasting effects, and the ritualistic nature of recovery. I also want to highlight the grief that comes along with healing and growth. The body of work tonally focuses on the conflict that arises when we become so attached to our own pain that our suffering feels like a fixture of our identity. In order to remain known, we feel tethered to these restrictive labels. I want to shine a light on the contradictory, emotional tug-of-war that comes along with self-transformation. We must shed attachment to our own misery to allow space for health and happiness. Our pain is not our friend, even if it's become our most reliable companion.

Use of archival home video footage in both *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby*, as well as physical archives in *Always/Never (Together Forever)* draws directly from real life experiences

in a way that has me processing trauma and turning it into art in real time. This artistic synchronicity is poetic in its nature as well as a deeply deliberate approach toward my own healing. I want my art to stare life, death, and grief right in the face. Healing is not clean. There is no clear-cut path, or right way of moving forward. I feel a great amount of empowerment in that. As my suffering has fluctuated in the years since these defining experiences, so has my consciousness, attachment, denial, sense of self, and feelings of isolation. I feel called to reveal the chaos of healing in a way that makes others feel less alone.

Healing Through Vulnerability

The main focus across my filmmaking practice is a dedication to honesty and openness, despite all its subsequent “messiness.” I firmly uphold that films are not simply products for entertainment. I have turned to my creative practice as a lifesaving outlet in response to experiencing significant suffering. On my path to healing, I have found that stating the facts and naming the feelings are vital first steps in the process to truly move forward. In my film *Forward Fast*, I lay out my biggest fear for all the world to see; being called fat. What’s even more resonant is that I personally go as far as to accuse myself of being fat in the film. More significant than that act of self-betrayal, is the fact that I am labelling my *child* self with that fate, and from my current adult perspective. This severe behavior directly mirrors a cycle of abuse learned during my upbringing in a home where my mother was constantly commenting on my weight, and just as frequently putting down her own appearance in front of her young daughters.

Throughout recovery, it’s incredibly common to become entangled in receptive cycles. From self-limiting beliefs to unhealthy coping mechanisms, there are many unfortunate habits

that result from experiencing trauma. Whether these are learned behaviors from cycles of inherited trauma that we are enacting or maladaptive coping mechanisms, the impact creates a sort of gravitational pull. This same pull creates a conflict on the path to recovery. As recognized by Marine Sélénée in the chapter “From Fragmentation to Wholeness” from her book *Connected Fates, Separate Destinies: Using Family Constellations Therapy to Recover from Inherited Stories and Trauma*,

From the Family Constellations perspective, trauma is especially insidious to our well-being not only because of its devastating symptoms but also because of the particular way so many of us attempt to manage those symptoms, through a drive to either erase the past or revisit it (or both, often), which prevents us from living fully in the present or from moving forward into a future of our own choosing—one that is active instead of reactive. In a sense, you could say that living with trauma is like being in an entanglement with yourself. The drive to erase or revisit the past—to somehow, *somehow*, correct it or fix it—is in essence, an argument with reality. We know we cannot change the past. Yet we are still, understandably addicted to our need to try (152).

This deeply resonates with my personal experience. I’ve fallen into a pattern of ruminating and fixating on my pain. I became obsessed with why and how I experienced it. From this behavioral approach, it is incredibly common for the victim to overly identify with that framework. I have been wronged, and as a result, I feel wrong. It’s even more difficult when the

other people entangled in these trauma bonds seek to shift blame, vie for absolution, or completely deny accountability. While understanding the cliché, “hurt people hurt people” I can hold space for the truth that most abuse is in fact stemming from those who have experienced abuse in their past. That is why it is vital to disrupt these cycles. To leave things unsaid, sweep emotions under the rug, only perpetuates a framework that often diminishes, if not completely erases, the impact of past experiences. This leads to exacerbated conflict when both parties are traumatized, yet somehow taking on opposite approaches to processing. For example, when others freeze, I fight. They seek to retreat, and I want to lay out every beat of the story and pick it apart. I do this so I can understand. I want to talk through my pain so I can release it, and others close often seek to repress it, avoid it, and hope it goes away. This only inflames my desire to speak truth to power.

This conflicting pattern has become the forefront of my thesis films. *Forward Fast* sheds light on the shadow sensibilities of an entire insidious culture lurking in plain sight. I use my voice to expose filmic convention and uncover the unsavory historical practices which define cinema’s conventional language as we know it. As a little girl wanting to make movies, I was appropriating the language I believed was the call to entry, even if this included completely debasing myself as a result. *Always/Never (Together Forever)* employs a more methodical and obsessive cycling through the past. Like a detective retracing a scene of a crime, the film pours over artifacts from the past with a frantic urgency to understand. The notes, cards, and photographs all representing a sort of invincible love which was anything but. Pledges of forever are written in ink. A red thread connecting each element of the past, searching for answers about how and when it truly all began to fall apart.

Shotgun Baby is ultimately a film focused on my role as a daughter. Though this explores my relationship with both of my parents, the specific relationship between mother and daughter is something that is highly scrutinized within this film. I suggest myself as a sort of extension of my mother. I feel that she viewed me as a second chance to reach her full potential. In the process of her projecting her own insecurities onto me, I became the object of her intense need for control. My mom wanted me to be an actress because she wanted to be an actress. She wanted me to receive a surplus of attention, maybe to counter act the deficit she felt as a result of childhood neglect. But my mother overcorrected that neglect by becoming severely smothering. She had a hand in everything about me, to a debilitating degree. This eventually developed into a full-blown chronic eating disorder, in which I am still in the process of recovering from. Very similar to what author Jennette McCurdy's experiences with her mother detailed in her memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died*. McCurdy also suffered from years of Bulimia due to a level of abusive control enacted by her mother. While reading her memoir, I realized her and I shared a deep wound. We both felt the best way to make our mothers proud was to be as thin as possible, at all costs. For me, like McCurdy, that's always been the struggle. I've felt that what stood between me and my mother's love was a number on a scale.

Other memoirs such as, *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner use impeccable detail recollecting a complicated mother-daughter relationship. I'm inspired by the vulnerability and disclosure on topics that many others deem too private or sacred to discuss in any sort of public realm. It takes a great deal of bravery to admit the complicated feelings that occur within family dynamics and how that impacts our relationships with our parents even far into adulthood. In *Shotgun Baby*, I ask the question, "When does a parent's job end?" I hope to invite a dialogue about the ability for a parent to repair or even acknowledge damage that may have been done far

in the past. Michelle Zauner is processing her feelings toward her mother after she's passed away from cancer. My films instead act as a vehicle for the conversations other directly avoid having with me. I am able to address my side of the story, express my testimony, lay out my wealth of evidence. I have turned to filmmaking as a means of catharsis and closure. When others are resistant to conversations in service of healing, often these ritualistic processes are the next best thing. Ultimately, finding acceptance is our responsibility. We do not need to forgive or forget. But acceptance is a key part of moving towards healing from trauma.

There are many leaders out there offering guidance toward acceptance and modeling vulnerability. Thanks are due to podcasts such as, *We Can Do Hard Things*, *I Weigh*, and *Back from The Borderline* all of which have offered an immense amount of accessibility on my journey of understanding the complexity of my trauma. Hearing others' experiences has helped me engage with my own healing from a place of patience and understanding; knowing there is not distinct timeline or one uniform way to recover. This is the same sentiment I aspire for my films to communicate. As a filmmaker, I am using my voice to expose deep pain. I hope to create a safe environment for others to engage with theirs. Some clarifying resources include the books, *The Drama of The Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self* by Alice Miller, *Mother's, Daughters & Body Image: Learning to Love Ourselves as We Are* by Hillary L. McBride, and *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting, or Self-Involved Parents* by Lindsay C. Gibson. These resources have helped build a context for my own process in which I am deeply grateful to have these experts as guides on my journey. It's evident that many people of varying backgrounds from scholars, to mental health counselors, physicians, and beyond are pondering the same questions that my films also prod. Along with the vast movement of artists of all kinds, it is truly a universal practice to look back

at our stories of origin, the unpack the messages we've inherited from the past in order to unlearn a lifelong limiting belief system.

Film as Ritual

I consider myself part of an emerging movement of filmmakers pondering these same questions have turned to their art to process these complex emotions. Documentarians such as Amanda Mustard whose film *Great Photo, Lovely Life* shines a light on a deep, dark history of abuse through generations within her family history. Amanda uses the structure and methodology of documentary filmmaking to disrupt this family pattern. The film is about naming; naming the pain, naming the abusers, naming what happened- all in service of the greater good. There is a distinctly confrontational nature to this film. It is meant to challenge and transform the family system that has upheld this abuse for decades. This step toward truth can help her family finally heal by bridging the divide and alienation that can occur when victims are silenced.

Back in undergrad, I was fortunate enough to work as a co-editor with UCF alumnus, Nils Taranger as he completed his MFA thesis film. *A Blue Flower* is a personal documentary which centers on Nils' journey to heal his trauma through filmmaking. His distinct bravery through vulnerability and allowing the camera to capture his most personal emotional truths was deeply inspiring to me. The film is raw, ritualistic, and intensely resonant to anyone experiencing familial fracture and struggles with their own sense of security in their body. Obviously, these are subjects with relevant connection to my personal story. It's only fitting that I would go on to follow in Nils' footsteps.

Another inspiring filmmaker who uses her films to heal from the pain of the past is Cecilia Aldarondo, whose experimental documentary *You Were My First Boyfriend* employs the therapeutic strategy of reframing narratives in service of altering the impact and significance of the associated triggers. She is at the front and center of the film, looking back at experiences from her youth and literally reenacting them as a form of immersive recontextualization. From lost love, to the lasting impacts of alienation, the film guides its subject into an immersive conversation with her inner child. This is the precise nature of self-examination my films express.

The Camera Sees

These conventions of self-reflective, personal filmmaking have been long standing and well established throughout film history. Jean Rouch, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Jonas Mekas, and many others have pioneered this approach which hinges upon a more introspective, yet observational bleeding of worlds. Personal essay, diary, and ethnographic approaches are a confessional mode of expression which tie the filmmaker's inner world to the world directly around them. Ethnographic filmmaking directly characterizes the style of documentary which hinges on a highly observation and anthropological framework. Film Studies scholar Michael Renov speaks to the topic of Domestic Ethnography in his book *The Subject of Documentary*. There is a formal experimentation and meditative quality to this modality of filmmaking. Domestic Ethnography is distinct as it focuses on the filmmaker's personal environment, framing the filmmaker and their immediate family as the subjects. The representation of the self is as key as the representation of others. It's as if the study of one's origins are the truest path to self-discovery. There is a rich

tapestry of artists who have turned to this style of personal documentary to unpack the woes of their pasts, more specifically, their childhoods. This approach to personal documentary is heavily utilized in both *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby*.

Renov is among many scholars who contemplate this style of filmmaking and its efficacy. Catherine Russel's book *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* also looks at the distinct shifts that have occurred in the development of video technology. The abundance of access and integration of the camera's gaze into our homes has led to a wealth of highly subjective approaches to capturing one's personal history. Even specifically looking at cultural shifts into the popularized consumption of reality television and its synchronistic alignment with the development of consumer grade home video equipment. As my generation was coming of age, we were becoming amateur documentarians and consuming more forms of "non-fiction" than ever. The boundaries were thinning, and accessibility was expanding. This may be one reason why in her book, Russell characterizes this gaze as "undisciplined." She critiques the ethnographic gaze and bring attention to its tendency to slide into a frenzied state. This was something I heavily leaned into while making *Always/Never (Together Forever)*. There is an overt frenzied gaze, one characterized by a cycling rumination. Marrying the inner and outer experience of dealing with intense emotional distress. I strived to craft an aesthetic both formally in my design, as well as editorially that reflects the mental toll of betrayal and exile.

Reflecting back on the subject of gaze, there is a potent and unignorable power the camera possesses to replicate human line of sight. This happens both consciously and unconsciously. Film itself has on overt language and convention steeped within its prominent gaze, reflecting a homogenized perspective perpetually platformed above all else. *Forward Fast* is a film that shows and tells about this gaze. Because my young mind was inundated with media

ripe with leer, my burgeoning voice mirrored that to a disturbing degree. Feminist Film Theorist Laura Mulvey characterized the male gaze as one that inherently objectifies women.

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness* (809).

Forward Fast presents archival home video footage in a way that reads as cold, hard evidence of these theories. Even the playful films born from the minds of young girls possessed this blatantly objectifying leer, this includes towards our own bodies. My desire to become a filmmaker meant that I was replicating the cinematic language of those who came before, until a vital shift in my awareness occurred. It was the introduction to works like Laura Mulvey's that shook me into clarity. I had been deeply aware of the ways in which media made me hate myself as a woman; to feel stripped of autonomy, a voice, and very often clothing. Yet somehow, I had deluded myself to believe that the world of filmmaking was free from limiting prejudices because it was an artform of open expression. I was still sheltered from the reality of disparity. Even living with the impacts, it truly took the melding of minds in film school for me to feel safe to process the results. Discussing Mulvey's work sparked a shift not just in my awareness, but my vocalization toward justice and reclaiming power. Sentiments that now live within every film I make.

Film as Therapy

Calling upon the ritualistic nature of film, the process of healing from trauma works in synchrony. Intense, rigid planning goes into the construction of a film, from concept to completion. There is a distinct structure to understand before one can truly play around and explore within that convention, but once you align the inner world with the outer expression, the opportunities are truly limitless. Especially within therapeutic practices such as psychoanalysis, EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), parts work, and depth therapy there is a specific importance to the narrative framework, the archetypal self, as well as the practice of visualization and the associated emotional response. Revisiting narratives and reliving the past is a primary pillar for transforming the potency these memories have on our physical bodies. Experiencing trauma affects our bodies immune response and has a direct impact on the advancement of many physical symptoms and conditions beyond mental health. Trauma is stored in the body, and especially when experienced during childhood, can go on to impact the way one's brain develops. I found interesting insights in Christine Anne Lawson's book *Understanding the Borderline Mother: Helping Her Children Transcend the Intense, Unpredictable, and Volatile Relationship*.

Borderlines often forget painful experiences that their children remember vividly. Studies show that chronically intense emotions damage a part of the brain responsible for memory (Christianson 1992). Chronic emotional stress exposes the brain to an excess of glucocorticoids, hormones that normally help the brain cope with stress. The hippocampus, which normally controls memory functioning,

contains a high number of glucocorticoid receptors and is therefore susceptible to damage (Schacter 1996). Because borderline mothers experienced overwhelming emotional distress as children, areas in their brain responsible for memory and emotional regulation may be damaged. Studies using magnetic resonance imaging to examine the brains of females who were abused as children found that the left hippocampus was actually smaller than those subjects from a control group (11).

In a clinical setting, reworking and demystifying the links to trauma can help lessen the severity of triggers. One can begin to address their own patterns of pain seeking behavior and work to free themselves from the vicious cycles of harm that occur as a result. The client works with their counselor to outline the key events that have resulted in trauma, they piece together the parts of oneself that may be perpetually in fight, flight, freeze, or fawn response. Looking at the story, the people, the places, the time, to figure out the when, how, where, and why of it all is deeply connected to the process of telling *your* story.

As a filmmaker, rather than simply relying on memories, I have a deep well of actual footage to pull from. Beyond simply using my voice as my sole perspective, I am able to explore nuanced perspectives of authorship and shift point of view within the films. For example, almost all of the footage utilized in *Shotgun Baby*, was filmed and framed by my parents themselves. We see the world through my mother's lens, my father's lens, and eventually my own. I am not exposing anything further than what they themselves deemed relevant to record during my childhood. What's even more amazing about that reality is the prevalence of truly incriminating behavior. This is also the case for *Forward Fast*. Relying heavily on archival sources creates a bridge to the past that is non-negotiable, even when I am the one being exposed.

In my research through filmmaking, I have tapped into a deep sense of catharsis, clarity, and release from the chokehold of my past. The act of solidifying my story and respecting my voice enough to platform it front and center has led to a true sense of relief. When growing up in an emotionally abusive home, the act of gaslighting was a common practice. My experiences were often told to be imagined, exaggerated, dramatized. Therefore, the radical nature of naming my experiences through personal essay filmmaking has led to a relevant sense of control over my own life's story. Distortion is a common result of growing up among manipulative parents. The methodical and linear nature of laying out a personal narrative serves as a clarifying agent on the journey of recovery. A large part of my research has consisted of looking into the abusive tendencies of my childhood family dynamic. Not only through the archival deep dive into over 50 hours of home video footage, but also through my personal work in multiple modalities of therapeutic clinical practice. That venue of self-work also comes with a lot of homework. In my therapist assigned readings, I found that the Queen Mother Borderline Archetype from *Understanding the Borderline Mother: Helping Her Children Transcend the Intense, Unpredictable, and Volatile Relationship* is characterized by the need to be mirrored by her children. This resonated deeply.

Attention is sustenance to the Queen Mother. She is preoccupied with her self-image and the image of her children. In order to win her admiration and love, her children must reflect her interests, her values, tastes, and preferences. The Queen expects her children to dress the part, to reflect *her* importance (108).

Very often, I feel like the reason I got into filmmaking was so that my mother would notice me in a positive light. So much of my childhood is characterized by dehumanizing criticisms of my appearance, usually my weight. I speak about the impact of this throughout my thesis films *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby*. My mother smothered me with her unsolicited opinion. So much so, that her own conscience became my subconscious. I've felt for much of my life that I have to bypass my mother's beliefs in my brain to get to my own suppressed ones.

Through use of archival home video, I am sharing an indisputable image. This all ties back to one unifying notion; by telling my story I am taking my power back. Nobody can argue that what's unfolding didn't happen. My decision to use archival footage to pair my with voice over narration has an evidential quality. My films are a testimony. In order to let go, forgive, move on, and heal, I need to express my story once and for all. These films act as a surrogate therapeutic conversation to claim my own narrative in a space that cannot be actively disputed. Nobody can interrupt my film to tell me how I'm feeling is wrong.

Forward Fast, *Always/Never (Together Forever)*, and *Shotgun Baby* embody a melancholic and contemplative spirit. There is a poeticism in which the film hinges. In my mind, sadness and beauty are incredibly linked, and there is a deep grief that comes along with healing, as shedding past versions of ourselves calls for a certain commemoration. We mourn versions of ourselves who never existed, we hang onto pain bodies which only held us back. Attachment is a tricky thing. This is something all three films prop into the forefront of conscious thought. The complicated and contradictory experiences of life create a beautifully tragic amalgamation. *Forward Fast* criticizes an unsupervised youth, whereas *Shotgun Baby* highlights the contradictory polarity of an abusively smothering critical mother.

We are often appearing in the home video archive to be a very happy and loving family, but seeds of toxicity bleed in. This manifests at least partially off-screen as my parents argue back and forth over the so-called sweet images of my childhood. *Shotgun Baby* has a jarring elements because of this. There are moments of discomfort which must play out for the audience to understand what it felt like to be within that space as a child. Each member of the family acts as a symbol within the family unit, but in practice, the whole thing feels like a war. There are major struggles for power. Everyone must fight to be seen and heard. There's no honor, or system in place to prevent crimes against humanity. My childhood was a free for all. It's honestly a miracle I've survived. These films include the whole messy truth. It is complicated, but honest, and I have respect for my audience to know they have the strength and emotional intelligence to engage with challenging work.

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Across my thesis body of work, three short films focus on dissecting the past and analyzing how it shapes us today. This formally manifests through use of archival materials and analogue approaches, as well as a heavy reliance on tangible, personal belongings, all of which forge a direct line to the past. My films *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby* rely entirely on the use of archival home video footage from all different stages of my childhood, whereas my film *Always/Never (Together Forever)* highlights and showcases a collage of strictly physical memorabilia, acting as a deeply sentimental, yet morbid collection of “evidence” of friendships lost.

Utilizing an artisanal, micro budget scope, *Forward Fast* was completed entirely by a one-person crew of myself, and proceeded to have an extensive exhibition through a film festival run of over 20 festivals nationwide, taking home over four awards in the process. *Always/Never (Together Forever)* is a collagist diary film completed with a crew of eight people over the course of two years, with the final film *Shotgun Baby* completed by a skeleton crew of three.

Film #1, *Forward Fast* is a personal documentary which holds a critical lens up to society, and specifically ponders the way that media impacts our worldview starting in childhood. This short film comprised of archival home video footage explores the emotional sustainability (or lack thereof) if we continue to uphold the misogynistic status quo in artistic convention, and within culture at large. Through rampantly introspective and questioning voice over, the film pulls at the societal strings which ultimately bind our artistic expression. Looking through a barrage of objectifying footage, leering over the bodies of young girls, *Forward Fast* unpacks a deeply disturbing convention of cinema which props up women’s bodies solely as

receptors of sexual desire. To cite the previously mentioned *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting, or Self-Involved Parents*” by Lindsay C. Gibson:

Lacking adequate parental support or connection, many emotionally deprived children are eager to leave childhood behind. They perceive that the best solution is to grow up quickly and become self-sufficient. These children become competent beyond their years but lonely at their core. They often jump into adulthood prematurely, getting jobs as soon as they can, becoming sexually active, marrying early, or joining the service. It’s as if they’re saying, *Since I’m already taking care of myself, I might as well go ahead and get the benefits of growing up fast*. They look forward to adulthood, believing it offers freedom and a chance to belong (11).

Film #2, *Always/Never (Together Forever)* is a personal essay film which comments on relationships where fraudulence, manipulation, and disloyalty reign supreme and true equality between friends seems impossible to sustain. This film employs the most experimental conventions within my body of work. Shot on a mixture of 16mm film and digital, the diaristic filmic patchwork weaves together a fractured past littered with raw abandonment and intense exile. This film simulates the ruminating headspace of grief and betrayal. There is a brutal complexity of the loss of friendship, especially those codependent in nature. When individuals become enmeshed in each other’s lives, it becomes increasingly difficult to untangles those

attachments. *Always/Never (Together Forever)* exemplifies sentiments such as Marion Woodman's Tension of the Opposites and other clinical concepts like splitting. There is a distinct polarity and contradiction at play when suddenly losing a best friend. Multiple truths coexist. You can love someone and hate them. In fact, you probably only hate them because you love them. These emotions are multifaceted. *Always/Never (Together Forever)* holds an existential magnifying glass to the emotional landscape of such visceral experiences.

Lastly, film #3, *Shotgun Baby* studies the ways in which family-imposed narratives force us into roles that we spend our lives either rebelling against or conforming to. Told entirely through archival home video footage, with accompanying voice over narration, the film details the main conflict within the core family unit. Poetic resonance is expressed visually through intercutting images of the past. Moments of black screen either offer a pause, a meditative breath, a moment to process and feel. Other times, the lack of image is transposed with audio. This is also paired with the use of spoken word in the form of voice over, in addition to intertitles containing text. Along with the voice of myself as the filmmaker and narrator, the voice of my parents are often heard in isolation. Lines of significance are presented over a black screen to allow a reverence for the impact of what's being said. Because this film is ambitiously aiming to encompass and present representations of monumental and formative relationships, there must be plenty of space in the edit to allow moments of importance to land. Visual scenarios are used to help amplify my voice as the narrator. Sometimes the images are used in direct contrast, to highlight the veneer people present outwardly, especially when applied to the image of a family.

Film Specifications

Film #1 *Forward Fast* (3min)

Completed in Spring 2022

Synopsis - While embarking upon on a process of archival and preservation, a filmmaker dives into a stark exploration of self as she discovers the seeds of patriarchy and misogyny already planted and steeping the imagery of her childhood films.

Public Screenings:

Fall 2022 UCF Film Showcase

Brouhaha Film & Video Showcase

Experiments in Cinema v18.4

Sun Pass Film Festival

Florida Film Festival

Sunscreen Film Festival

Cinema Femme Short-Film Festival

LA Underground Film Forum

Atlanta Underground Film Festival

Tallahassee Film Festival

Tallgrass Film Festival

Denver Underground Film Festival

Key West Film Festival

Central Florida CineFest

Film Diary NYC

George Lindsey UNA Film Festival

Oxford Film Festival

Atlanta Micro Short Film Festival

New York International Women Festival

Gravitational Lensing

Awards:

Winner – Best Documentary, LA Underground Film Forum

Winner – Best Micro Short Film, Atlanta Underground Film Festival

Winner – Best Short Film, Tallahassee Film Festival

Winner – Best Experimental Micro Short, Atlanta Micro Short Film Festival

Honorable Mention – Best Documentary, Denver Underground Film Festival

3rd Place – Best Found Footage Short, Denver Underground Film Festival

Nominated – Best Student Filmmaker Short Film, Key West Film Festival

Nominated – Best Student Documentary Short Film, George Lindsey UNA Film Festival

Film #2 *Always/Never (Together Forever)* (4min)

Completed in Spring 2024

Synopsis - A collagist film poem exploring a history of devastating friendship break-ups.

Public Screenings:

UCF Film Experimental Exhibition “Extrospection”

Film #3 *Shotgun Baby* (10min)

Completed in Summer 2024

Synopsis - An experimental documentary, composed entirely of archival home video footage.

This film explores family narratives and the archetypal roles which establish how we show up as adults in the world. A deep dive into an examination of complex trauma in family systems.

CHAPTER 3: THEMATIC EXPLORATION

Film and Connectivity

Across these three films, there is an archeological and analytical perspective that juxtaposes a seemingly desperate and frantic need to understand the “how” and “why?” of it all, specifically in terms of what influences our identity, and consequent sense of belonging, or more importantly, the lack thereof. Alienation and exile counter our most basic human need of belonging. The communal aspect of film, in its exhibition, functions as a surrogate for human connection in environments where face-to-face like-mindedness is limited. For many, films and other media often take on a more significant relevance in today’s culture. They can go as far as to form a refuge in an otherwise isolating world. Films become a link to humanity. In that same vein, when we look at the lens of a camera as a replication and extension of the human iris, we can also start to see the projection of a film on screen as an extension of inner psyche. Films are uniquely and formally apt at replicating the deepest parts of our consciousness.

From the intense degrees of introspection it requires to make a personal essay film, to the ultimate stamina and dedication it makes to externalize an internal idea from conception to completion; creating a film feels like a spiritual act. There is a divine process at play. Carl Jung coined the concepts of synchrony and the collective unconscious, both of which deeply resonate with and impact my personal process as a filmmaker. In a way, many filmmakers are tapping into this by reverse engineering a form of mass communication. When a filmmaker translates their inner vision into a definitive and finite work of cinema that others can engage with, it’s as if a conversation is being had outside of linear time. Jung defines collective unconscious:

The collective unconscious is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition. While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, therefore, have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. Whereas personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of *archetypes*. The concept of the archetype, which is an indispensable correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious, indicates the existence of the definite forms of the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere (152).

When a filmmaker has a vision, whether it's highly personal or not, they receive a sort of message that arguably anybody could tap into if they slow down enough. The same way that trauma can be inherited through generations, there is a sense of story within all of us that is bigger than the individual we embody in this present moment. These mystical high concepts can inspire dismissal, but there's clearly something at play between our relationships with storytelling, our relationships with our selves, and expression as a whole.

Links to the Past

There is a rich tapestry of research and writing on the subject of childhood trauma. I think the classic book about trauma that everyone often cites is “The Body Keeps The Score” by Bessel Van Der Kolk. But I want to make a deliberate effort to research a more inclusive, as well as femme driven, array of perspectives on this sort of vital healing. On that note, I want to offer an alternative resource on the subject and mention a book about trauma and its relationship to the body that I hope others will start to reference more on the subject: *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem. This book represents a perspective that holds culture and history as relevant factors in these cycles of inherited suffering. There is a distinct focus on intergenerational violence and exploitation. All of these factors play a role in our psychological development. History is important and it should not be silenced.

Before diving in, I feel the need to make note of a cycle of misogyny that can happen when discussing childhood trauma. Often the mother receives the brunt of the blame while fathers are absolved by the designation of secondary caregiver. I want to remain nuanced and aware of this tendency, but also without erasing the real damage done to me directly through my mother’s choices and actions. Part of this nuance requires processing that this exact misogyny has led me to blame her for my father’s abusive behavior as well. There is honesty to that. There is a major lack of accountability from my father, which is part of a historical context I know transcends my family’s story. Women have been blamed and forced to answer for male behavior since the beginning of time. My mother was not spared from that legacy.

Many filmmakers before me have turned to archival strategies to examine their relationships with their parents. The following list are films which thematically touch on the subjects of childhood trauma, parent-child relationships, families histories, mental illness, and/or the act of using one's art to process and heal from past trauma:

The Ties That Bind (1985) by Su Friedrich - An experimental documentary about the filmmaker's mother, who was born and lived in southern Germany from 1920-1950.

Sink or Swim (1990) by Su Friedrich - In a series of 26 short autobiographical vignettes, Su Friedrich methodically analyzes and reflects on her childhood and the emotional scars left by her detached and self-involved father.

Thank You and Goodnight (1991) by Jan Oxenberg - A feature documentary on family issues of elders, aging, and death.

Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter (1994) by Deborah Hoffman - A tender exploration of the tenacity of love and the meaning of memory, Hoffmann chronicles her growing understanding of her elderly mother's struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

Great Photo, Lovely Life (2023) by Amanda Mustard - Photojournalist Amanda Mustard turns her investigative lens on the sexual abuse committed by her grandfather, unearthing a high-stakes personal journey in pursuit of the truth and reconciliation for Amanda's family.

The Feeling of Being Close to You: How to Forgive Your Mother (2023) by Ash Goh Hua - In an effort to better understand their relationship, the director and her mother discuss their estrangement over the phone.

You Were My First Boyfriend (2023) by Cecilia Aldarondo - A feature-length documentary in which filmmaker Cecilia Aldarondo revisits her 1990s adolescence, a generation after she thought she'd left it all behind.

Recuerdos de Sangre / Blood Memories (2017) by Georg Koszulinski - A personal essay film reflecting on the filmmaker's family leaving Cuba in the 1960's.

The Feminine Disruptor

All art holds a significant ability to engage with the senses, as well as our mind, body, and spirit. The practice of film marries all other art forms into one. In many ways, there is an implicitly ritualistic nature to the process of creating films. Whether it's fictional narrative, experimental, or documentary, the act of unifying the creative vision from concept to reality requires and is informed by a deep sensitivity, intuition, vulnerability, as well as decisiveness, firm boundaries, clarity and logistical reasoning. The act of creating a film calls upon the entirety of the artist's being; the masculine, the feminine and everything in between. When speaking on the masculine and feminine, I want to quickly introduce the intention that Jungian Analyst Marion Woodman outlines in *Addiction to Perfection The Still Unravished Bride*,

Masculinity and femininity have nothing to do with being locked into a male or female body. If we are biologically female the ego is feminine and we carry within us our own inner masculinity, what Jung calls the animus. If we are biologically male, the ego is masculine and the man carries within himself his own inner femininity, the anima. Masculinity and femininity are not matters of gender, though historically in our Western culture their long identification with gender still makes it difficult for us to view them in this “liberated” way. It is this liberated view of masculinity and femininity with which I shall be dealing throughout this book. It is a matter of psychic rather than biological differentiation (14).

While acknowledging that this book was published in 1982, and conversations on gender and identity have been constantly evolving since then, I want to mirror Woodman’s differentiation. There is an all-encompassing self within us all that embodies and experiences the world through a much wider spectrum of emotionally capability than Western culture often allows us to externally express. For example, people assigned male at birth are often shamed not to cry, while people assigned female at birth are often discouraged from displaying anger. Ultimately, each individual has access to any emotion, whether it’s been deemed culturally unfit for them to demonstrate. It is the result of conditioning and societal influence that we’ve convinced ourselves of such limitations.

The three short films that comprise my thesis body of work hinge upon a strategy of asking deeply prodding questions which challenge the constructs within our culture, as well as

the way we internalize these perspectives. All three of my films explore a powerful utilization of voice in a way that transgresses from the typically acceptable convention of feminine behavior. I reject the expectation that I should remain small and quiet. I refuse to be shamed for leading with complicated emotions. I believe there is considerable value to being vulnerable and remaining open enough to grow and change through life.

Within these films, I explore my own voice as an agitator; someone who disrupts the peace and challenges the status quo. This is a key characteristic of my artistic voice, as well as my personal belief structure. Growing up with parents who were emotionally neglectful and incredibly dismissive, this only solidified my tendency to speak up regarding issues that were very often ignored.

A Jewish Perspective

In my process of filmmaking, I am paying deep reverence toward an inherently intuitive approach. I am personally attracted to the act of following divine impulse. My practices exist within a framework of collective consciousness, divine feminine, intuition, and their relationship in play with my Jewish identity. The common trope of Jewish people, endowed with an all-knowing power has consistently shown up across media. The inherent curiosity and tendency toward questioning, previously mentioned to characterize my own personal framework, are such an integral part of the Jewish experience. The act of rumination, incessant searching for deeper meaning and hidden messages, as well as conclusions that remain free from the limiting

restrictions of Christianity; it's as if the generally open structure of Judaism affords more room for magical thinking, mysticism, and spiritual exploration (Zemmelman 106).

The religion itself is so historically steeped with superstitions, supernatural investigation, and alternative ways of conceptualizing death. *The Hebrew Priestess* by Rabbi Jill Hammer explores this phenomenon; there is something deeply interesting about the prevalent cultural belief that Jewish people have access to a sixth sense of precognition or an inherent ability to access understanding of otherworldly concepts. Rabbi Jill Hammer, much like Carl Jung, also endows a great amount of significance to the power of messages of spiritual significance becoming expressed through dreams.

While my films are not implicitly about being Jewish, my work is still experienced and expressed through Jewish a lens. Much like the prominence of the male gaze in cinema, I am invoking a female gaze, and that gaze will deviate from the typical convention of Christian norms. Recall how *The Sopranos* utilizes Italian heritage as a delivery system to tell a story about mental health, familial structures, and power dynamics. I tell universal stories of grief, trauma, and healing from the unique perspective of a Jewish woman in contemporary society. A society so often characterized by the false assumption that Christianity is the uncontested norm. There is so much to explore amongst these themes, and the opportunity to play within that exploration attracts me to no end.

Much like Tony Soprano, I am also constantly grappling with the ways in which a domineering mother impacted my self-development. Similarly to Italian culture, this powerful Jewish woman archetype is also incredibly vital to shaping and operating the Matriarchal family structure. There is a mythical power that Jewish mothers hold over their children, so much so, that it has become a common trope. In my childhood home, my mother energetically towered

over us like an all-powerful god. The formative impact of my relationship with my mother is something I may always be in active process with. My films have allowed me to freely voice my perspective in a way that was not always welcomed interpersonally. The same way that questioning god can be labeled blasphemous, it was typically not advised to question my mother. And as much as I may be betraying my mother by voicing my critiques, it only feels in service to the long-standing convention of speaking up against injustice. I strive to use my voice as a Jewish woman to do exactly that.

CHAPTER 4: AESTHETIC LITERACY REVIEW

Early Influences

It can be difficult to anticipate exactly what you're getting yourself into by entering into graduate school. Beyond the insight I've gained through my coursework, I have learned even more about myself in this process of pursuing a terminal degree in a creative field. When I started in this program, it was clear that narrative features were the preferred modality for our thesis projects. I had previously spent most of my academic career entertaining this preference and honing my skills as a screenwriter of "fiction." This felt like the right place to sink my teeth in, hunker down to embark on my first feature film production.

One thing I was entirely certain of was the subject of my dissertation. I wanted to examine complex trauma, its origins, and the debilitating lasting effects. I was specifically drawn to the ritualistic nature of recovering from said trauma. I was attracted to the inherent similarity between rewiring our body's trauma responses and the process of telling stories through film. Reclaiming and reshaping narratives is a key facet of recovering from complex trauma. There is a distinct crossover between that therapeutic reframe of self, and crafting a compelling filmic narrative where a protagonist can transcend their arc toward climax, and inevitable resolution.

While forging ahead with the plan to write a narrative feature in the first year of this program, I was trained to write focus on writing characters that appealed to mass audiences' empathy. We should inspire moviegoers to endlessly root for a hopefully positive conclusion. Ultimately a fabricated moment stripped of authenticity in service of palatability. A classically structured and patriarchal conundrum that has steeped the film world for ages. There are many myths that are ultimately unsupported about what exactly audiences do and don't want. If we've

learned anything from the decay and subsequent reshaping of contemporary film exhibition, this formulaic framework is not quite as foolproof as some studio executives would like you to believe.

As a writer, I always wanted to subvert this formula. My life was not a neatly wrapped gift I woke every day in an endless flow of karmic gratitude for. I was suffering deeply in my experience as a human in today's society. Yet, I was being told to focus on building compassion between audiences and my characters. This gave me pause. If we really look at the trajectory of film history, weren't audiences less empathetic than ever? Can we not say that the chronically narrow perspective of cinematic popularity has only numbed, desensitized and conditioned audiences to feel more shut off from their emotions and somehow more entitled at the same time? This compassion I was being urged to dole out for well-rounded main characters who successfully completed their arcs, somehow wasn't making its way to myself, someone who refused to conform to the lie of the happy ending. And there was something else going on here; I had an unconscious belief that if I could symbolically translate my story perfectly through the lens of a fictional narrative film, wrap it up and put a nice bow on it, not only would I finally find compassion from viewers abound and the world at large, but from myself, toward myself in the process.

I was chasing catharsis, but through a filter. I was falling back on the old, "inspired by true events" cliché. Much like Jack Whitman in Wes Anderson's *The Darjeeling Limited*, I was pouring my deepest most painful experiences out onto the page but hiding behind the line, "The characters are all fictional." This was how I stayed safe. Safe from judgment, from shame, maybe even legal repercussions? I was always more concerned about ruining someone's reputation than defending my own honor. So, I wrote the feature film, framed as fiction. Yet

somehow there was a significant potency lost in translation. I felt like a fraud. It was dehumanizing to sit in feedback sessions and table reads and hear my characters dissected with such distance. I could still vividly see the real faces of these “characters” burned into my memories, the lasting effects of their abuse still inhabiting my body.

I was terrified by the prospect of actually shooting this feature I was writing. I didn’t feel ready to watch these events unfold again. I didn’t feel safe. Not only had I exposed my deepest traumas on the page, but having it critiqued weekly, dissected for palatability and commercial appeal was gutting. I wasn’t chasing that sort of success. Every time someone would bring up distribution or anything of the sort, it felt far from the point. I wasn’t seeking a ticket to fame, I wanted to forgive. Not just the so-called antagonists of my film, but even more so, myself.

Meanwhile, in the background, I had found my way into the Experimental Production course to qualify an internal elective credit. I had to justify its relation to my thesis. I expressed an urgent desire to make more films immediately. If I was going to be shooting a feature, I needed to produce at least one short that was solely mine. Our class started screening all sorts of avant-garde cinema. There was something quite striking to me about the modality of the personal essay film. Diaristic, poetic films such as: Bill Brown’s *Roswell*, *Kicking the Clouds* by Sky Hopinka, Alexandra Cuesta’s *Notes: Imprints (On Love): Part II*, *Carmela*. I found the simplistic rawness of these films to draw me in with intensity. It was as if all of my core values were finally shifting into the forefront- vulnerability, openness, not shying away from difficult emotions. This was all present.

A lightbulb went off. This is the form that would inform my voice. The whole time, up until this point, I had been told that poeticism in film was as a flaw. I was taught that scripts should read as blueprints. My use of figurative language and focus on emotionality was seen as

frivolous and often scolded by my screenwriting professors. Finally, I had found a space where the lyrical nature of film was valued. I felt more at home in this world of film than ever before. The nature of experimental film allows for discovery. It defies the rigidity of typical narrative convention where everything must be meticulously planned and rehearsed beforehand. Experimental film was inviting me to do exactly that, experiment and play again. I remembered why I wanted to make films to begin with.

I started making movies when I was eight years old. I grew up in a family that revered film as the end all be all of entertainment. In a way, it was our shared language. We bonded endlessly over TV and movies- watching, rewatching and incessantly quoting. I used to play around on the family camcorder (footage from which my film *Shotgun Baby* is entirely comprised.) But things really changed for me when I finally saved up enough allowance to buy my first video camera (the same exact one featured in working condition in my film *Forward Fast*.) I would direct my friends, my sister, anyone who dared to step into my frame. This was how I regained a sense of control in what otherwise felt like an environment perpetually on the edge of eruption.

As an incredibly sensitive kid, and the youngest in my family, quite a lot of things scared me. Not just my dad's explosive anger, or the threatening nature of my mother's severe "tough love." A lot of the images I was seeing in movies and on TV scarred me to a state of sleeplessness. I truly developed insomnia in elementary school after seeing the movie *Jaws*. Thoughts and visceral imagery cycled my mind on those sleepless nights. I was riddled with fear and anxiety. I would close my eyes and see the burnt in images of monsters and gore from the movies. My parents even had to put a piece of tape over our VHS Copy of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the alien scared me so much. Something about Steven Spielberg's films really

stuck in my craw. That chokehold of fear had me in its clutches on a daily basis. I feared seeing something I could never remove from my brain, I was scared of my dad's yelling, I was scared my parent's love for me couldn't outweigh their hatred of each other. The cycling thoughts continued. I became hyper-fixated with understanding everything that went into making a movie. I was especially interesting in Spielberg's story as a filmmaker and how he achieved the impact his films were having on me. I even played him in a fifth-grade school play where we were asked to dress as our career role models. Obviously, he was it. He had something priceless figured out. He captured the scariness of life, but he controlled it. This is the power of the director.

I started making movies because I needed a place to put it all. What I discovered later was a shared motivation with Spielberg himself. I turned to filmmaking to demystify my fears, to strip down the facade of it all. When I saw *The Fabelman's*, I was taken aback by the similarities I shared with my idol's origin story. Not only the all too familiar familial drama, but most of all, the way Spielberg began by using film as a tool to reverse engineer his fears, just like me. When he saw his first movie in theaters, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, he too, was so impacted by the images of pain and violence, he lost sleep. Just how I turned to making DIY horror movies on my video camera, little Spielberg began to recreate and record the images on his family camera in an attempt to strip them of their power, gain a sense of understanding, and most of all demystify the overwhelming fears. The process of filming helped us both understand how a fake image could appear so believable. It took vision, dedication, and imagination to fabricate this detailed a duplication of reality.

This practice speaks to the power of film. Images affect young minds with intensity. This became viscerally evident when I ventured back through the archive of my personal childhood movies. It started from the pure desire to preserve these pivotal films from my origins as a

filmmaker. For decades, boxes of Hi-8 tapes sat in a box under my bed, nagging to be revisited. So I pulled them out, dusted them off, popped them in my immaculately preserved original camera, and started watching. There were the previously mentioned wannabe horror films, usually live-scored by a CD of Classic Horror Movie Soundtracks playing on a boom box just out of frame. There were also reality TV spoofs, fake award shows- complete with improvised commercial breaks filmed and edited in sequence. Most of all, throughout this footage authored and recorded by my childhood self, there was an un-ignorable, gratuitous *leer*.

As a deeply perceptive and highly motivated young girl in the early 2000s, I was committed to capturing an authentic production quality in my work. There was something very distinct about that certain cinematic language that I was unconsciously replicating as a child with a yet-to-develop critical eye. I was still in the regurgitation phase, like Spielberg. I was telling my own version of the stories I knew. These were stories with a familiar barrage of confrontationally sexual imagery, steeped in misogyny, and ultimately upholding a convention of cinema that feels overwhelmingly corrupt. My first thesis film *Forward Fast* was born from this epiphany. From the desire to preserve and archive, came the need to speak out. As humiliated and ashamed as I was watching these deeply sexist films that *I* made, I knew this was all the more reason why I needed to use my voice to expose the issue. There was no possible way that this was my fault. I was a child, and children ultimately mirror. Looking back at this footage as an adult, I saw a kid who was accidentally upholding the most toxic parts of our industry as a simple call to entry. Before I could veer off and tell my own stories my way, I needed to lock down the conventions, the movements and the gaze of cinematic language. This was how it worked. I was nine and playing by the rules.

As someone who has spent much of my life entrenched in film communities, academic and otherwise, there was a deep lack of transparency around these issues of moral and ethical complexity. I had been yearning to have an honest and frank discussion about the long-standing historical practices of exploitation of women in film. This is upheld not only onscreen through the deeply damaging and objectifying imagery satiating mainstream media, but also the plague of criminal behavior that has occurred behind the scenes where men use their power and rank within the film industry to coerce, threaten, abuse, violate, exploit, harm and eventually blacklist women from thriving in the industry. Challenging books such as Maureen Ryan's *Burn It Down: Power, Complicity, and a Call for Change in Hollywood*, and Ronan Farrow's *Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators* dive into great investigative detail to outline these shadow practices that have been looming beneath the surface in filmmaking practices for decades.

For the longest time, I couldn't articulate why I felt such a deep sense of self-loathing after watching things. These glorified, glamorized, and commodified images of women's bodies, the fetishization of sexual abuse, overall dismissal of femme voices, and flat-out gratuitous violence against women are truly staples of our conventional filmic language. Not to mention the way we speak about women, their bodies, and what is their worth on and off screen. I would watch a TV show, leave a film class or a movie theater and feel a desire to shrink, disappear, say less, and become less. Meanwhile, it felt like men felt safe flocking to this industry because they found a place where they can flaunt their worst desires and most monstrous urges with impunity as well as a blatant sense of grandiose irony. Think of Woody Allen, Louis C.K., Harvey Weinstein. People whose "open secrets" and reputations proceeded them so viscerally that they

even felt comfortable flaunting their darkest desires in their work or in their public personas at large.

Then I had to address the present: I was still trying to pay the ticket to entry by speaking the language I so deeply wanted to change and didn't know how. I sat at my last table read for my feature, and I knew in my gut that I couldn't shoot this movie. I had turned my pain into a graphic display like good ole showbiz taught me to. But I had a choice now. I was no longer a kid who didn't know any better. I didn't want to put actors through the stress of filming these scenes of my past abuse. I didn't want to put audiences through that, they've seen enough. And most importantly, I didn't want to put myself through that again.

There was another validating moment that sparked a definitive shift in modality for me within my film studies. An alumnus of this program, filmmaker Dro Watson guest lectured one of my first-year grad classes. She spoke about her experience shifting from a narrative feature into an experimental body of work, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19, and the accompanying restrictions that would have significantly shifted the scope of her production. I had previously seen her film *Car Ride (Baker Act Version)* in the Sunspots: New Visions of the Avant-Garde showcase at the 2021 Florida Film Festival. I was blown away by the sheer honesty and vulnerability of her work. She was able to capture that potent catharsis I was chasing, and all within just a couple minutes of screen time. I was beyond moved. Having spent years programming for the Florida Film Festival, and various other film festivals and showcases at its hosting institution, Enzian Theater, I knew there was something invaluable about this approach. A film under five minutes, that packs an impactful punch and leaves audiences with the beginning of a conversation; not only is that programming gold, but also a rare talent! I realized I had already done that with *Forward Fast* and I wanted to see its potential through. So, I decided

to save my feature, *The Hanged Priestess*, for a rainy day. Or better yet, put it in a box under my bed to become another relic of my origin story. Help me remember where I came from, and learn how to be better, not only to myself but to all the women we see on the screen, behind, and beyond.

The Magical Power of Cinema

Film is an all-encompassing medium that most closely replicates the sentient qualities of being alive. Not much else can capture the intricacies of consciousness to the extent that film does. It is an art form that marries all other art forms; photographically, aurally, and existentially. Film is a tool that can excavate ideas and emotions that go beyond consciousness and transcend into the unconscious and subconscious realms. When an unspoken perspective grows loud and powerful within an artist's mind, that is indication of undeniable life. In affirmation of respect for those stories within us, waiting to see the light, I believe we, the creators, are obligated to breath artistic life and draw them out. Film is a miraculously effective tool for building empathy through examining stories untold. It is my goal to create art that captures the complexity of being alive. Film has the power to animate internal experiences and endow them with universal accessibility.

My stylistic approach overall hinges deeply on the inherent presence and visual representation of multifaceted consciousness. Dreams, memories, fantasies, projections, and assumptions will all shape the way the image is expressed across my body of work. Distinctly experimental styles are highly effective at expressing internal realms, specifically in relation to emotional processes of grief and trauma. Deviations from realism are highlighted by the distinct

difference in which alternate consciousness is filmed. I use experimental techniques to express the mutable nature of internal experience. As I seek understanding and refuge from the pain of consciousness, I invite everyone who engages with my films to reflect on their lives with similar reverence for the journey toward self-understanding and forgiveness. It may be a cliché for a reason; the journey is as valuable as the destination. Whether it's inward or outward clarity you seek, the process of knowing cannot begin without questioning.

If we've learned anything from the collective trauma of this lifetime, it's that stories are vital medicine. Not a tool for escapism, but a magnifying glass for the unspoken truths inside us all. I aim to hold a camera up to the darkness held so firmly inside of us, and expose it to the light of day, so we can all see clearly that we are not and have never been alone.

Potency of the Past

My theory of production hinges on taking personal inventory of the resources at my disposal. Because I started filmmaking as a child, I have acquired a variety of equipment over the years. My reverence for recycling both experiences and materials has deeply impacted my style as a filmmaker today. I'm not solely using outdated technology to capture new footage; I'm recontextualizing footage that has already been recorded years if not decades prior. These analogue approaches have led to some uniquely eclectic practices in terms of digitally acquiring my footage. Distinctly the process of ingesting and editing aged footage which requires access to outdated systems to do so.

For example, the first film in my thesis body of work, *Forward Fast*, is comprised entirely from hi-8 video footage recorded in the early 2000s. The original plan was to do a

manual digital transfer for all this footage to work with clean in post. But alas, after experiencing technically difficulties with the attempted transfer, I frustratingly and impulsively decided to go ahead and play the tapes back on the original Sharp VL-E630 8mm Video Camcorder. Out of this impulsive decision, a much more impactful framing device took shape, ultimately emphasized by the fact that these images were playing on the same device from which they were originally recorded. The approach informed the content in a way that empowered the overall voice and structure of the film. Enhanced by the content of *Forward Fast* which holds a critical lens up the inherent leer so prominently featured in the cultural norms of cinematic language; seeing this unfold on a screen within a screen truly highlights the spectatorship inherent to the viewing experience.

I employed similar processes for my next films, both of which follow in the footsteps of *Forward Fast* and stylistically rely on the use of archival footage, physical memorabilia, analogue technology, and an overall artisanal approach. My second thesis film *Always/Never (Together Forever)* utilizes a combination of 16mm, mini-dv, and digital footage. The 16mm footage was captured on a Bolex, and the digital footage was filmed on a Black Magic 6K camera. The 16mm footage was developed/processed by ColorLab and then digitally scanned in 4k. I then created an H.264 proxy and did the same for the Black Magic 4k footage, as well. After picture locking in post, proxies are replaced with the original high-quality footage which is pulled from a distinctly organized folder system to ensure easily searchable file names and complete a conforming edit. From there, color correction can be applied and rendered for the final export. My export settings for all three films are pretty standard across the board: H.264 .mov, Apple Pro Res 422 export setting, stereo audio, 1080p resolution.

CHAPTER 5: FINANCIAL LITERACY REVIEW

As a multimodal artisanal filmmaker, utilizing a truly no-budget approach, I have expanded my creative comfort zone in a way that I will carry with me for the rest of my professional career. So far, I have been able to produce my films without formally raising significant funds. Instead, I have employed a community based, holistic approach to fundraising and producing my films from pre-production to exhibition.

Afforded by my own resourcefulness as well as the collective kindness of strangers, the films within my thesis body of work have been completed with essentially no out of pocket budget to date. The 16mm film used to shoot *Always/Never (Together Forever)* was included with the production fees of enrollment in the experimental filmmaking course. These fees are included in the tuition which was waived by the university as a part of my graduate assistantship. The film processing fees were waived as I collaborated with a mentor in the community who had been awarded funding to cover their film scans and transfers. There have been many, many instances of these in-kind contributions that have made the creation and success of my work possible.

I also employed an unconventional crowdfunding strategy to cover the majority of my film festival submission fees for *Forward Fast*. Because my production and postproduction phases for *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby* truly cost me \$0 to carry out, this was the first area of financial investment for the film. Rather than holding a traditional or formal crowdsourcing campaign to raise funds, I simply used my personal social media to post that I was accepting donations to help cover my submission fees. Between friends and family, I was able to raise \$910 total. Self-funding the rest of the fees with my personal savings, I've been able to

affordably share my work with a wide variety of regional and international festivals in my sprawling approach for programming time. To be fair, I do have a somewhat substantial number of followers on Instagram (about 3,800) where I specifically raised these funds, and a prominent percentage of these followers are either members of the filmmaking community or vehement supporters thereof.

Another fateful benefit of traveling to film festivals and building a network in the independent filmmaking community is the abundance of people who have helped build my success. I have met many filmmakers and programmers in my travels who went above and beyond to advocate for my work. They provided fee waivers, recommended specific festivals such as George Lindsay Film Festival and Oxford Film Festival which covered either most or all of the filmmaker's travel costs. This intel and support allowed me to travel and exhibit *Forward Fast* on a far more wide-reaching scope. Especially considering, when it came to the financial impact of my thesis body of work, the most significant costs were truly only accrued after production of *Forward Fast* through my festival submissions and subsequent travel fees.

I was also very fortunate to have the opportunity to apply to be reimbursed by the University as part of the Graduate Travel Presentation Fellowship which I was awarded five times during my graduate studies. This financial support through the school allowed me to carry out an extensive festival run while in this program. I travelled to Albuquerque, Chicago, Los Angeles, Florence, Oxford, New York, and other cities across the US in my exhibition of *Forward Fast*. The film has screened at a total of 20 film festivals to date. The success of this project is a result of a community who showed me gracious support. This experience has helped restore a sense of faith in humanity for me. Especially considering that this took place while working on my second thesis film *Always/Never (Together Forever)* which outlines a history of

fractured friendships riddled with betrayal and devastation. I was starting to see that there are people out there who truly wanted to see me thrive, and this was significantly healing.

Social Media Presence

My social media presence is something I've been honing for a long time. As a part of my responsibilities as my place of employment, Enzian Theater, I am accountable for and highly involved in a variety of our community focused film programs. These roles required me to consider my public facing persona, both face-to-face and especially on social media. I am host and lead programmer of Central Florida Film Slam, a local short film showcase that bolsters the voice of independent filmmakers, offering them an opportunity to expand their public outreach from an equitable and accessible entry point. My goals as a curator are to advocate for the importance of collaboration and community.

I aim to preserve Enzian's mission statement, "Enzian exists to entertain, inspire, educate and connect the community through film." I have taken this mission to heart and hold myself to a high standard when it comes to my role in shaping the film community here in Central Florida. Since the theater is a non-profit entity, very few funds are allocated to marketing. Quite a bit of the promotional responsibility falls on my shoulders. For years I have been building community on the ground locally, as well as online that will help build awareness and, most importantly, attendance for these community focused film programs. The results have been amazingly fruitful. A strategy I have employed is to focus my outreach on people in arts communities. A large majority of my following are people within the film community. This is not limited to the

Central Florida region. I also made a point to extend connections in places like Atlanta, Chicago, Austin, New York, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, and many more.

This expansion and the network of people who have supported my visions in the community as well as my filmic endeavors has grown significantly as a result of my successful festival run with *Forward Fast*.

Covering Bases and Extra Expenses

Maintaining a realistic mindset, I understand that there are expenses which add up. For *Shotgun Baby*, for example, I invested in additional external hard drives to store and back up all the archival home video footage that I digitally transferred. Fortunately, I was awarded funds from the College of Sciences Dean's Production Award that covered the cost of two 4TB external hard drives.

Throughout my time in the graduate program, I have also been working full time between my Graduate Teaching position with the University and my many roles with Enzian Theater. I previously worked full time for many years before beginning my MFA, so I was also able to save money in advance for this exhausting investment in my future. Those personal funds were what afforded me to attend this program my whole first year, when I was not receiving tuition assistance from the university.

I have no doubt in the boundless potential of my own hard work. I've seen how far I can go when I focus all of my efforts on my goals. This journey as a filmmaker means the absolute world to me, as I hope I've made visibly observable within the work itself. With humble hopes to create a sense of sustainability in my future film career, I believe the self-made nature of my

work affords me a certain level of credibility and clear dedication. That passion and dedication have continually received recognition and enthusiastic appreciation, in addition to leading to opportunities that have thrust my career in film forward with great reward. I have confidence that continuing to expand connections will yield fruitful results in terms of a variety of opportunities to find people who want to support my vision as a filmmaker and beyond.

CHAPTER 6: PRODUCTION LITERACY REVIEW

The art of independent filmmaking requires a combination of organizational savvy as well as creative aptitude. When it comes to the task of no-budget or micro-budget filmmaking, those skills go hand in hand. As artisanal filmmakers, we are not only utilizing imaginal techniques to create our films from scratch, the process in which we create is inherently reliant on our adaptability and aptitude for creative problem solving. The ability to streamline the artistic process in an economical manner will become a key strategy regarding achieving artistic goals. From pre-production, to production, through post-production, clarity and efficiency will work as defining factors toward the success of our thesis films. It is my goal to remain open and flexible throughout each phase of the process.

No-budget film production requires not only compromise, but fortitude and forward thinking. As creatives, it's clear that our artistic talents lend well to visual storytelling, but I also think it's worth mentioning that these right-brained approaches also lend themselves to intuitive critical thinking as well as creative problem solving in the process. While ensuring our projects remain grounded in feasibility, a healthy dose of imaginative vision is likely what attracted us to becoming artists to begin with. Within the structure of an academic program such as ours, we can keep those visions in check and employ creative techniques that inform our process as well as our content. As much as we are encouraged to nurture the creative impulses alive within us, we are equally tasked with the role of the architect of those visions. It is as if we must become comfortable dancing between two different parental strategies. If we look at our films as our babies, they require nurturing as well as discipline to flourish and grow to maturity.

Innovation and multifaceted approaches can help guide us forward. It is of high importance that we maintain realistic clarity. Mindfulness from the beginning stages, such as planning in a manner which caters to our available resources will allow us to consider the vast opportunities already within reach. As opposed to thinking in a scarcity mindset, it's about leaning into the stories that are within our disposal to tell. This is a message often driven home by indie filmmaking duo, The Duplass Brothers. As I studied their approach to creating their micro-budget debut narrative feature film, *The Puffy Chair*, I came across interviews where Mark and Jay stressed the importance of filmmakers taking inventory of their personal resources in terms of skills as well as taking account of physical resources within reach.

Consolidation of Skills

While considering what is available within our direct environment, including talent, locations, and equipment, it's also smart to begin self-reflecting upon our own multifaceted potential as creators. During production of *The Puffy Chair*, The Duplass Brothers stretched their talents on and off screen. In that same vein, filmmakers of this micro-budget scale need to be willing to take on new roles and consolidate labor across the board. As a multimodal filmmaker, it's not out of the question to assume that we will be taking on a variety of roles throughout this process as we direct, produce, fund, edit, and market our own films. For my film *Forward Fast*, I was the only name in the credits because I made it entirely by myself. I pushed myself out of my comfort zone. I adapted and rolled with obstacles and hurdles as they arose. And, most of all, I impressed myself in the process. After an experience like that, you enter into the next film with a

sense of aptitude and self-assurance that will guide you even further on your journey of expanding skills.

This incredibly scaled down approach to independent filmmaking challenges us to bargain with our own perceived limitations, which are often only limited by that perception in itself. Believing in an idea enough to champion it as a film requires intense passion and dedication. As producers, our concern is not limited to finances, we are faced with the task of making aesthetic, stylistic, and practical decisions every step of the way. My theory of production hinges on taking personal inventory of the tools at my disposal as well as the skills I am qualified to execute. This extends to the physical construction of my films in my practice of utilizing the wealth of archival footage and physical memorabilia from my past in my films.

Use of Raw Materials

An impactful decision which shifted my approach to production was the choice to make films using archival footage. *Forward Fast* and *Shotgun Baby* almost felt like skipping the production phase entirely. Instead, I'm acting as a sort of archeologist to uncover stories within existing footage. This has afforded me so much more time and energy to focus on the lyricism and effectiveness of my edits.

Shifting into the physical archival realm, *Always/Never (Together Forever)* uses real life belongings that translate to cinematic props. I constructed a collage out of decades worth of notes, cards, gifts, photos, drawings, and other memorabilia to create an immersive evidence board of friendships lost. My vision to literally lay it all out was a tactile and hands on way to

utilize entirely found materials. I spent \$20 on the cork board, and everything else came from the bank of my past.

Processes

We hear so many horror stories of film sets functioning very much like a dictatorship, with the director viewing themselves as number one. Though I only had one formal shoot day on the soundstage with my crew for *Always/Never (Together Forever)*, I made sure I took the time to reflect on my on-set philosophy. Filmmaking is a collaborative process. Even extending myself to take on multiple key roles, I've remained committed to valuing the talents of my collaborators. Because I have been focused and dedicated to my craft for many years, I am lucky enough to know many talented individuals in the film world. I have been blown away by how many of them approached me, asking to be involved with my film production in some way.

The generosity and integrity displayed by these filmmakers helps me feel more confident in my ability to bring together a competent and spiritually cohesive crew. That spirituality is not endowed with any specific denomination. Instead, I enjoy working with people who think of their contributions as part of the bigger picture. Spirituality, in this sense, is about unity, appreciation, and presence. I am cultivating an experience both with my films, as well as through them.

Editing from the Unconscious

My overall editing workflow is highly intuitive. Very often, I feel tapped into a sort of creative divination. I know it sounds mystical and otherworldly to talk about within an academic process of creating art, but there is something deeply true about the idea of creative flow. So

much of my work has formed through series of reverence for my own impulses, leaning into coincidence, accidental happenstance, and embracing adaptations to overcome obstacles. In my goal of remaining flexible and open to new phases of ideas at every stage of the process, I allow myself to be surprised by my own creations. I consider that to have the utmost potential for bigger impact outside of myself in a way that transcends traditional artistic gratification.

Reframing creative output to look at yourself as a channel for bigger ideas that are part of a Jungian collective unconscious really takes the pressure of judgment out of the equation. If my films are rooted in honest emotion, that's what matters most, and the work will inevitably speak for itself.

I recognize cycles and patterns of myself ruminating on the concepts of synchronicity, anima, and animus when thinking about the language of filmmaking. I find it synchronistic that anima, the feminine aspects of the soul, directly inform language we use to speak of the moving image (Jung 148). Animation, by definition, refers to the state of being alive, as well as the compilation of successive images to create the illusion of movement. Whether composed of live-action or illustrated images, the art of film replicates the visual process of seeing. With reverence for Jungian concepts of the soul, there is something remarkable about the way that films give representation to our inner worlds. Not only are we assigning visuals that replicate the act of external witnessing, in addition, film animates the essence of our inner experiences in a way that many other art forms can only breach the surface. Inner narratives are given time and space to breathe through the representation of cinematic landscapes that span from fantastic to hyper realistic, much like our inner psyches do. Experiences previously tethered to the bounds of internal contemplation are now given life through the art of moving image.

Art that is willing to expose is what I'm most interested in consuming as well as creating. It is as if films provide a perfect, unobstructed channel to present the shadow self to the world. In the section entitled, "Phenomenology of Self" in *The Pocket Jung*, C.G. Jung wrote about anima and animus in relation to our inner worlds:

The projection-making factor is the anima, or rather the unconscious are represented by the anima. Whenever she appears, in dreams, visions, and fantasies, she takes on personified form, thus demonstrating that the factor she embodies possesses all the outstanding characteristics of a divine being. She is not an invention of the conscious, but a spontaneous product of the unconscious. Nor is she a substitute figure for the mother. On the contrary, there is every likelihood that the numinous qualities which make the mother-imago so dangerously powerful derive from the collective archetype of anima, which is incarnated anew in every male child (151).

On paper, filmmaking is a practice that has historically been dominated by male energy. Yet, when we examine the impulse of the imagination and the unconscious structures of ideas with reverence to Jung's concepts, we begin to see the layers of intuitive impulse involved with creativity as a feminine urge, regardless of the gender of those presenting it. Jung is remarking on the divinely feminine characteristics of ideation. Projection occurs through the shadow self, where our truest, most hidden, raw beliefs reside. Giving voice and assigning value to these traditionally unspoken psychological characteristics is a radically feminine act, as well as the connective quality in which anima promotes (Jung 152).

Contrarily, for context, the animus often gives rise to misunderstanding and disconnection. To successfully nurture a film from the idea phase to the completion, one must afford plenty of time and welcoming energy for true understanding to gestate and grow. It may seem basic to equate the act of filmmaking to the process of childbirth. But I believe many filmmakers would agree that we are giving life to something that's been long growing inside of us. Gestation begins with an idea that can be characterized as an incessant spark, maybe even better characterized as an itch. That itch evolves into a cohesive, repetitive thought that nags at the artist until it can no longer be contained. At that point, it is the responsibility of the artist to nurture the idea to fruition. The divine feminine within all of us evokes the powerful process of nurturing and creating (Kaylo 175). People of all genders have access to engage with this life affirming power.

When an unspoken perspective grows loud and powerful within an artist's mind, that is indication of undeniable life. In affirmation and respect for those stories within us waiting to see the light, I believe we as creators are obligated to breath artistic life and draw them out. Not only am I fascinated by the physiological phenomenon of creating meaningful art from the deepest darkest reaches of our internal worlds, I intend to continue my personal growth and self-exploration through this practice in film. It is incredibly significant to have artists who are willing to give voice to otherwise unspoken and unrepresented emotional truths. Film can become a tool to educate and bridge divides. By shedding light on otherwise shadow perspectives, connection is inevitably forged.

Whether it's documentary, narrative, or experimental in nature, film is a miraculously effective tool for building empathy through examining stories untold. It is my goal to create art that captures the complexity of being alive. Distinctly experimental styles are highly effective at

expressing internal realms, specifically in relation to emotional processes of grief and trauma. In my work, I use experimental techniques to express the mutable nature of internal experience. For instance, *Always/Never (Together Forever)* utilizes a frenetic editing technique which mirrors the intense emotional distress that happens because of long term, unresolved interpersonal conflict. Images are recycled and peered over, searching for any little detail of revelation that could lead to deeper understanding.

Finishing and Organization

Always/Never (Together Forever) and *Shotgun Baby*, were entirely developed through non-linear editing practices. *Always/Never (Together Forever)* has chapters that remain distinct tonally and aesthetically. Continuing in the legacy of *Forward Fast*, *Always/Never (Together Forever)* employed the same framing technique of showing the mini-dv footage playing back on its original device (a Sony DCR-HC52 MiniDV Handycam Camcorder) creating a screen within the screen effect. As I edited, I kept footage separately organized by analogue vs. digital. Each element only appears in separate, distinct chapters, due to the fact that the 16mm footage is a different aspect ratio than the digital footage (1.37:1 and 16:9, respectively.) In terms of sound, there is zero synced sound in the whole piece. Chapters 1 and 3 rely solely on non-diegetic soundtrack as the primary sound, whereas the middle chapter is entirely voice over narration. I developed these chapters in Experimental Production I and II over the last few years of the grad program. Continuing a non-linear editing process where chapters are developed individually. My sound is a highly collaborative process. I am lucky enough to have a talented musician who helps me develop my audio as well as help with my final mix/master.

The final film, *Shotgun Baby*, is comprised of digital transfers of home video footage originally recorded on VHS Tape via an early 1990s camcorder (not entirely sure of the model.) All of the synced audio comes directly from the source tapes which had previously been transferred to a series of DVDs from which I ripped all my footage. To digitize the home video for ingesting, I started by creating MKVs. The workflow process starts with a program called MakeMKV which transcodes the video files from the archive of DVDs (18 total discs to be exact.) These digitized DVD files become an MPEG-2 video standard codec, which is then formatted to mp4 through Handbrake media encoder. The last step is to scale the footage to 1080p and then render. My footage is then stored on a dual hard drive system for safety/back up. Because I'm working primarily in short form, I currently have two 2TB drives, and am expanding my storage with a couple more 4TB drive for contingency, backups, and additional storage.

All archival footage is organized, labeled and ingested by the date of original recording. For editing workflow, I organized video by date, subject, and stand out audio samples that will be isolated. That pulled audio will be used separately in distinct moments of impact over black screen. All voice over is organized and labelled in a separate audio bin. The bulk of the footage is organized by the thematic structure of the film itself, for example, moments that highlight my relationship with my mother, my father, and their relationship to each other. I have also labelled and organized b-roll and other ambient moments that are intercut throughout the work as a whole. I currently have a five-minute rough cut that I developed in Documentary Production I. I also have my additional b-roll and footage selects ready to integrate in the next phase of the edit.

In terms of color correction and color management, my main focus was transforming my log Black Magic 6K footage to achieve my desired look. For my other footage, it was more

about tweaking the color already represented to enhance its impact and vibrancy by deepening the richness. For the RAW footage, there was a lot more space to explore. I played around with different contrasts and saturations to achieve a similarly impactful color theory. I took the advice learned in Micro Post-Production and explored some of the presets available in DaVinci resolve as a jumping off point when establishing my color correction strategy. My export settings for all three films are standard across the board: H.264 .mov, Apple Pro Res 422 export setting, stereo audio, 1080p resolution.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Entering this program and learning the scope of my talents, completely shifting my approach to complement my vision; I believe I have remained grounded in my distinct artistic voice throughout. As I continue to build my filmic body of work, I will always remain open to adapting and integrating creative problem solving in service of my filmmaking goals. Most importantly, my dedication and enthusiasm to tell my story through film is unshakeable in a way that I believe will easily inspire others.

When I think back to my filmmaking origins, I recall my little, eight-year-old hands, struggling to keep the family camcorder stable on my shoulders. Every project I pursued was charged with a sense of immediacy and play. I felt called to lean into my natural leadership abilities, and rally friends and family together to tell elaborate stories through a cinematic modality. I want to pay homage to that little girl. I want to continue to embark upon this filmmaking process with a curious and exploratory spirit. I may be moving forward with a more stable energy than when I first filmed as a child. All while maintaining that youthful enthusiasm which is a matter of utmost importance to me.

APPENDIX A: FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT

In many ways I was raised by film, and not dissimilar to those relationships with parents, the feelings I'm left with are complicated. Films have deeply impacted how we see the world and ourselves. As a filmmaker, I make it my personal responsibility to create art that sparks challenging conversations which move us forward towards collective healing.

My aim is to have created an experimental body of work that bolsters film as a vital tool for recovering from complex trauma. By employing radical honesty and vulnerability, I hope to create a safe space for self-disclosure and inspire others to share their stories. I believe that film is the ideal vehicle for achieving mass catharsis and widespread connection; acting as an antidote to the alienation and isolation that often results from experiencing trauma. I want my films to create a bridge for open communication and commiseration on the path to growth and resolution, both communally and individually.

I want to give voice and credibility to these alternative ways of seeing the world. One which values emotional complexity, staring deep into oneself as well as the emotional cores of others. Altogether, my films lead audience through a process in grief. Grieving the loss of time, the loss of friendships, and the end of defining relationships in general, including the one we have with ourselves. But most uniquely, I want to highlight the grief that comes along with healing and growth. My premise for *Shotgun Baby* focuses on the conflict that arises when we become so attached to our own pain that our suffering feels like a fixture of our identity. I want to address the emotional tug-of-war that comes along with self-transformation. We must shed the attachment to our own misery to allow space for health and happiness. Our pain is not our friend, even if it's become our most reliable companion.

Using archival home video footage, I am drawing directly from my real-life experiences in a way that has me processing my trauma in real time. This artistic synchronicity is poetic in its

nature as well as a deeply deliberate approach toward my own healing. I want my art to stare life, death, and grief right in the face. Healing is not clean. There is no clear-cut path, or right way of moving forward. I feel a great amount of empowerment in that. As my suffering has fluctuated in the years since these defining experiences, so has my consciousness, attachment, denial, sense of self, and feelings of isolation. I feel called to reveal the chaos of healing in a way that makes others feel less alone.

I do not intend to sugar coat or hold back in any way. I am tired of feeling like I'm "too dark" and "too much." My voice, as morbid or cynical as it may seem to others, is representative of my unique experiences. I can only hope to express myself so succinctly that audiences will walk away feeling closer to understanding themselves and the shadow experiences that lurk around us all as we tread forward toward our own inevitable deaths.

APPENDIX B: CREDIT LIST

Forward Fast

Lorraine Sovern – Writer, Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer, Sound Recordist, Voice Over Narration

Becca Coberly – Audio Mixed and Mastered

Always/Never (Together Forever)

Lorraine Sovern – Writer, Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer, Voice Over Narration

Sebastian Marcano Pérez – Cinematographer

Ethan Conrad – Cinematographer

Jack Auger – Sound Recordist

Carlos Irazabel – Camera, Lighting, and Electrical Department

Becca Coberly – Music Supervisor

Shotgun Baby

Lorraine Sovern – Writer, Director, Editor, Producer, Voice Over Narration

Carlos Mas Jr. – Sound Recordist

Becca Coberly – Audio Mixed and Mastered

APPENDIX C: CONTRACTS AND RELEASE FORMS

List of Talent Release Form Signatories

Rachel Marshall, signed 10/01/2022

Madelyn Sovern, signed 11/21/2022

Eric Sovern, signed 11/03/2023

Helene Sovern, signed 11/03/2023

Sample Release Form

PERSONAL APPEARANCE RELEASE form template

Program Title: Forward Fast (2022) (the "Program")

Participant's Name: Rachel Marshall

Producer/Production Entity: Lorraine Sovern ("Producer")

Production Location: Orlando, FL

I hereby authorize Producer to record and edit into the Program and related materials my name, likeness, image, voice and participation in and performance on film, tape or otherwise for use in the above Program or parts thereof (the "Recordings"). I agree that the Program may be edited and otherwise altered at the sole discretion of the Producer and used in whole or in part for any and all broadcasting, non-broadcasting, audio/visual, and/or exhibition purposes in any manner or media, in perpetuity, throughout the world.

Producer may use and authorize others to use all or parts of the Recordings. Producer, its successors and assigns shall own all right, title and interest, including copyright, in and to the Program, including the Recordings, to be used and disposed of without limitation as Producer shall in its sole discretion determine.

Signature of Person Appearing: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Figure 1: Sample Release Form

List of Crew Deal Memo Signatories

Becca Coberly, signed 11/22/2022

Sebastian Marcano Pérez, signed 12/16/2022

Ethan Conrad, signed 3/22/2023

Jack Auger, signed 3/21/2023

Carlos Irazabel, signed 4/17/2024

Carlos Mas Jr., signed 6/06/2024

Sample Crew Form

CREW DEAL MEMO

NAME: _____

NAME (As Desired on Credits): _____

POSITION: Sound Recordist

START DATE: __06/13/2024__

This Crew Deal Memo certifies that _____ (Printed Name) will be fulfilling the position of Sound Recordist in the UCF MFA Film, *Shotgun Baby*, under the direction of Lorraine Sovern

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

CELL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Due to the nature of the micro-budget production methodologies of this project, and any unforeseen circumstances, dates and details are subject to change. Rescheduling and/or cancellations may occur.

All results and proceeds of CREW MEMBER'S services hereunder shall constitute a work-made-for-hire, and Filmmaker shall be considered the author thereof for all purposes and the owner throughout the world and in perpetuity in any media or embodiment, now known or hereafter of all the rights therein. FILMMAKER shall have the right to use and license the use of the CREW MEMBER'S name, photograph, likeness, voice and/or biography in connection with the Film and the advertising, publicizing, exhibition and/or other exploitation thereof. CREW MEMBER releases FILMMAKER and FILMMAKER'S ASSIGNEES, LICENSEES and SUCCESSORS from any claim that may arise regarding the use of CREW MEMBER'S name, photograph, likeness, voice and/or biography, including any claims of defamation, invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or any similar matter.

AGREED TO and ACCEPTED

CREW MEMBER'S NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Figure 2: Sample Crew Form

APPENDIX D: BUDGET & FUNDS

BUDGET TOPSHEET					
Production Co.	Herman Shepard Productions		Producers	Lorraine Sovern	
Project Title	<i>Forward Fast, Always/Never (Together Forever), Shotgun Baby</i>		Union/Non		
Budget Date	Spring & Summer 2023		Prepared by		
Shoot Days	1/31/2023 - Summer 2023		Locations	Central Florida	
ABOVE THE LINE					
10-00	Development Costs	1			\$0
11-00	Story & Rights	1			\$0
12-00	Producer Unit	1			\$0
13-00	Director & Staff	1			\$0
14-00	Cast	1			\$0
15-00	Travel & Living	1	Festival travel		\$3,000
Total Above the Line					\$3,000
PRODUCTION EXPENSES					
20-00	Production Staff	2			\$0
21-00	Extra Talent	2			\$0
22-00	Set Design	2			\$20
23-00	Set Construction	2			\$0
24-00	Set Pre-rig & Strike	2			\$0
25-00	Set Operations	2			\$0
26-00	Set Dressing	2			\$0
27-00	Property	2			\$0
28-00	Wardrobe	2			\$0
29-00	Electric	2			\$0
30-00	Camera	2			\$0
31-00	Production Sound	2			\$0
32-00	Make-up & Hair	2			\$0
33-00	Transportation	2			\$0
34-00	Locations	2			\$0
35-00	Picture Vehicles & Animals	2			\$0
36-00	Special Effects	2			\$0
37-00	Visual Effects - Post	2			\$0
38-00	Film & Lab	2			\$65
39-00	BTL Travel	2			\$0
Total Production					\$85
POST-PRODUCTION EXPENSES					
45-00	Film Editing	3	Hard drives		\$250

Figure 3: Budget page 1

46-00	Music	3		\$0
47-00	Visual Effects	3		\$0
48-00	Post Production Sound	3		\$0
49-00	Post Production Film & Lab	3		\$100
Total Post Production				\$350
OTHER EXPENSES				
55-00	Publicity	4		\$0
56-00	Legal & Accounting	4		\$0
57-00	General Expense	4	Festival submission fees	\$1,114
58-00	Insurance	4		\$0
Total Other				\$1,114
Bond Fee 3%				\$136
Contingency 10%				\$455
GRAND TOTAL				\$5,140
			Create stripboards, shooting schedules, call sheets and more on studiobinder.com	
			© 2016 - StudioBinder	

Figure 4: Budget page 2

Funds Raised

Date	Covered by UCF Fees/Awards/Donations/In-Kind Contributions	Amount
2022	100ft Kodak Vision3 500T	\$65.00
2023	16mm Film Processing Fee	\$100.00
2023	Festival Submission Fees Raised Online	\$900.00
2023	Graduate Travel Fellowship for Film Festival Exhibition	\$2,000.00
2024	COS Dean's Production Fund	\$250.00
	Total	\$3,315.00

Figure 5: Funds Raised

APPENDIX E: FILM TRANSCRIPTS

Forward Fast Transcript

[00: 00: 05]

Rachel: Make a wish!

[00: 00: 06]

Mom: Blow! Blow! Blow! Blow!

[00: 00: 07]

Lorraine: Wait, I'm making a wish.

[00: 00: 08]

Mom: Okay. Shhh! She's making a wish.

[00: 00: 11]

Lorraine: Here I am blowing out my birthday candles, making a wish to be skinny. That was something I wished for on every single birthday cake for probably my whole childhood.

[00: 00: 21]

Everyone: Yay!

[00: 00: 23]

Rachel: I know what you wished.

[00: 00: 26]

Lorraine: Films were how I wanted to play.

[00: 00: 28]

Rachel: This movie was by Rachel Marshall, Maddie Sovern, and Lorraine Sovern...

[00: 00: 33]

Lorraine: As in me!

[00: 00: 35] – [00:02:34]

Lorraine: I was obsessed with being older than I was. Almost as much as I was obsessed with being thinner than I was. It's been really hard to look back at this footage. It's been really hard that I'm still judging myself so harshly. I was just a little kid. And I wanted to be beautiful and I wanted to be sexy, and I wish I had just wanted to be a kid. I wish I had allowed myself to focus more on the stories I was trying to tell and not my body. Of course I wanted to be able to say I was gonna look back at this footage and give my childhood self the love I wish I had given myself at the time. And I am absolutely struggling. I'm looking at this, I'm seeing my double chin, I'm seeing my body and I'm thinking, "Oh fuck, you're fat. Why did you have to be fat?" It's scary to see children who wanted to be sexy so badly. It scares me. The camera is practically drooling over these children's bodies in the ways that we were replicating the male gaze, in the ways that we were viewing the camera personified as a man. The camera looks women up and

down, fixates on their asses, fixates on their mouths. We wanted to make movies and this felt like part of it. This felt required. And as we might know a little better now, the language of film is corrupt. And I wish I could go back and actually appreciate my childhood and appreciate these friendships and that this might have actually been the happiest and freest I've ever been. The love of these friendships was probably the most pure love I would ever experience. It gets really hard not blaming all of the adults in my life when this was going on. Because it seems so clear now looking back at this, like holy shit, there's a problem. There's some ideas that are taking hold and we need to shake them fucking loose.

Always/Never (Together Forever) Transcript

[00:01:09] – [00:01:50]

Lorraine: Lorraine, I've been thinking a lot. We've had a bit of trouble lately and I've been really stressed. The phone call we had when [BEEP] was here has been on my mind and I've come to a conclusion: we do need a break. I do not want to go against my parents' wishes or betray their trust. I can't help but feel that we have very different expectations from this friendship. I feel like I am simply not the friend you need right now, and that I will just be a consistent disappointment. I just can't handle the intensity of this. I understand what you were saying and what you wanted. I can't give that to you. I really need to step away from this. I'd like to stay on good terms. I would also appreciate if you refrained from having other people talk to me about this. Thank you. Sincerely,
[BEEP.]

Shotgun Baby Transcript

[00:00:06] -- [00:00:41]

Lorraine: Here's my family on vacation before I was born. My sister, my dad, my grandma, my mom filming. A few months before this, my mom was really unhappy. She wanted to divorce my father. When she told him that, he threatened to kill himself. He wrote a note, took his gun, and he left. So she decided to stay. A few months later I was born.

[00:00:42]

Maddie: Momma?

[00:00:43]

Dad: Wanna see momma?

[00:00:48]

Lorraine: She's pregnant with me here.

[00:00:53]

Mom: Uh-oh. Tide's coming up!

[00:00:59]

Lorraine: It's hard to be the youngest one in your family. You have to shout the loudest to be heard.

[00:01:10]

Maddie: Go! Look, Lorraine. That's really fast. You're gonna walk! You're gonna walk!
You're gonna walk! Lorraine, you're gonna walk!

[00:01:24]

Mom: C'mon, walk with your sister.

[00:01:25]

Maddie: Stop with you. Walk with me, Lorraine.

[00:01:30]

Mom: Stand up, Lorraine.

[00:01:31]

Maddie: Lorraine, stand up! Stand up!

[00:01:32]

Mom: Alright, Madelyn. Don't... if you were not so, quite so... horribly... uhhh. Ma-
Lorraine, come here, stand up sweetheart. Ah, shit I wish I had some...

[00:01:42]

Lorraine: It's hard not to become bossy when you have a controlling mother.

[00:01:46]

Mom: I want you to do a little song and dance for me.

[00:01:49]

Lorraine: I'll show you what I wrote!

[00:01:50]

Mom: Show me the...No!

[00:01:53]

Lorraine: Fine.

[00:01:54]

Mom: Fine. C'mon. Before the battery runs out.

[00:02:00]

Mom: That's performing? Lorraine, you know what? Someday you're gonna look back on this and you're gonna say, "why didn't I do my little dance?"

[00:02:11]

Mom: Smile! Look pretty!

[00:02:15]

Maddie: Play duck duck in there?

[00:02:16]

Mom: I want you to be quiet, Madelyn.

[00:02:23]

Mom: She's gotta give everybody directions.

[00:02:28]

Lorraine: It's really confusing, the combination of smothering and neglect. To be constantly paid attention to but never really seen.

[00:02:46]

Maddie: Woah!

[00:02:47]

Mom: And...

[00:02:47]

Maddie: She just smashed into me.

[00:02:49]

Mom: Who?

[00:02:50]

Maddie: Lorraine with her bike. Don't crash right into...

[00:02:53]

Mom: Madelyn, stop!

[00:02:55]

Maddie: Mommy?

[00:02:56]

Mom: Mm-hmm?

[00:02:57]

Maddie: What are you doing?

[00:03:00]

Mom: (Laughing) I'm seeing what Lorraine can get herself into.

[00:03:04]

Maddie: Da, da, da, da, da, da...

[00:03:06]

Mom: Mad, you're standing right in front of the camera, honey.

[00:03:09]

Maddie: Me?

[00:03:10]

Mom: Mm-hmm.

[00:03:13]

Lorraine: I felt like my mother's project. I felt like all her attention went into shaping who I was supposed to be. And part of that was shaping who she never was.

[00:03:28]

Mom: Only the best for you.

[00:03:33]

Mom: (Laughing) Okay, that's enough.

[00:03:36]

Lorraine: You handed down your mother's gifts.

[00:03:40]

Dad: There's Nana ducking out. This is us at the lake, everybody who doesn't want to be photographed, duck out while the getting is good.

[00:03:48]

Mom: Oh, am I allowed to tape you? I only had your foot. And there's some historic footage of The Nan.

[00:03:56]

Nan: (Laughing) Looking historical.

[00:03:58]

Mom: Looking historical. We're gonna close in on her real tight. There we go.

[00:04:01]

Nan: Oh, no!

[00:04:03]

Mom: (Laughing) I pushed my luck.

[00:04:06]

Lorraine: I'm doing magic on myself to forgive you.

[00:04:12]

Lorraine: I feel like I grew up so fast.

[00:04:18]

Mom: You grew up overnight, didn't you?

[00:04:23]

Lorraine: In a lot of ways, it feels like some people have children so they can have someone to talk to.

[00:04:30]

Dad: Hello, how are you?

[00:04:34]

Mom: It's really, really sad isn't it? It's really sad.

[00:04:48]

Lorraine: Having a child is a second chance at potential.

[00:04:54]

Dad: There's Helene and the baby.

[00:05:03]

Lorraine: I don't understand why my mom wants me to get married and have children. In a lot of ways, I think her marriage is the worst thing that ever happened to her.

[00:05:12]

Lorraine: (crying)

[00:05:15]

Nan: That's because Madelyn gave me a cookie that I didn't take and she wanted a cookie...

[00:05:19]

Mom: Oh, did you want a cookie? Oh, you wanted a cookie. You can have a cookie.

[00:05:32]

Dad: Well, if you knew her, you would know what she wanted.

[00:05:35]

Mom: I didn't know what was going on until I heard she just wanted a Hanukkah cookie.

Tape the children, not me.

[00:05:45]

Dad: I'm taping this child. Get a good shot of the back of their heads because...

[00:05:56]

Maddie: (Laughing) What's the problem?

[00:06:02]

Lorraine: Where do you think a parent's job ends? There's so much I don't know about my father. He hid from my mom, and so he hid from us.

[00:06:18]

Dad: There you go! Hello!

[00:06:27]

Dad: Here comes mommy with the tape.

[00:06:31]

Lorraine: And there's so much I don't want to know. There was this pressure to be a daddy's girl. And I tried.

[00:06:42]

Mom: It's Father's Day.

[00:06:42]

Lorraine: This is what I made for you.

[00:06:44]

Dad: Aww! Look at this.

[00:06:46]

Lorraine: I'm gonna read the card.

[00:06:46]

Lorraine: There comes a point where it's too late to connect with someone. Where your only association with somebody is how they make you feel. And my dad always scared me.

[00:07:05]

Lorraine: But my mom's strength is pushing people's buttons. And inflame the wound.

[00:07:13]

Mom: Just a minute, girls, honey! Yes, this is me being pleasant.

[00:07:17]

Dad: I've been instructed...

[00:07:19]

Mom: Oh, can't you say something nice, just this once? Just once in your whole life.

[00:07:25]

Dad: Tell me what to say, cause I don't know what to say that's nice.

[00:07:29]

Mom: Usually when you present somebody with flowers, you don't say...

[00:07:30]

Dad: Here you go sweetheart.

[00:07:32]

Mom: Yeah, that's good. Here you go sweetheart. That'll do. That'll do, pig.

[00:07:37]

Mom: Okay and cut. And cut.

[00:07:42]

Lorraine: Your meanness is your only art. Maybe, someday it'll be enough.

[00:07:53]

Lorraine: And when you're born looking just like your mother, there's this intense pressure to mirror her.

[00:08:00]

Mom: Yes, there they are, there they are, the two Sovern girls.

[00:08:04]

Dad: Good job.

[00:08:07]

Maddie: Wow.

[00:08:08]

Dad: How come it doesn't quite look like Mommy's?

[00:08:11]

Mom: No, it's close.

[00:08:12]

Dad: It's close though, I think it looks better actually.

[00:08:15]

Mom: Say Nana

[00:08:16]

Lorraine: Nana.

[00:08:17]

Mom: Say Daddy.

[00:08:19]

Lorraine: Da...(Laughing)

[00:08:22]

Mom: Say Mommy... Mommy.

[00:08:29]

Lorraine: You told me I'm attached to my suffering.

[00:08:32]

Mom: Lorraine has deservedly become known in our family as, "The Menace."

[00:08:39]

Lorraine: My mom would always say that I was faking things. Faking my pain
Faking injuries faking my feelings. It was all an exaggeration. But she never understood,
I would never fake anything I would hurt myself on purpose and hope she would notice.

[00:09:03]

Mom: (Laughing) That was dainty.

[00:09:07]

Lorraine: This was my first memory. I had chicken pox. And my parents where looking at me going, "Oh my g-."

[00:09:17]

Dad: God. Stand up. I see Mama. I see Mama's arm in the way.

[00:09:24]

Mom: Are they on your back? Let's see.

[00:09:29]

Dad: Oh, for god's sake, Lorraine. Oh, boy.

[00:09:34]

Mom: This is really pocky, isn't it?

[00:09:37]

Dad: This is the worst case of chicken pox I've ever seen in my life.

[00:09:41]

Lorraine: I was evoking a reaction. And that's my first memory.

[00:10:08]

Lorraine: Well, I'm making a movie. The name of the movie...nobody knows.

**APPENDIX F: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOT HUMAN
RESEARCH DESIGNATION**



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

June 17, 2024

Dear Lorraine Sovern:

On 6/17/2024, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Not Research
Title of Study:	Film as Ritual: Personal Healing and Transmuting Pain Through Filmmaking (Films: Forward Fast, Always/Never (Together Forever), Shotgun Baby)
Investigator:	Lorraine Sovern
IRB ID:	STUDY00006881
Funding:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Documentary Film Treatment, Category: Other; • HRP-250, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should changes outside of administrative ones (study personnel, timelines, etc.) be made. If non-administrative changes are made (design, information collected, instrumentation, funding, etc.) and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination by **clicking Create Modification / CR** within the study.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Renea Carver
UCF IRB

Figure 6: Institutional Review Board Designation

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