



Video 3 of 14, Video Journalism Workshop Transcript

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I call it “participatory observation.” You hear me a couple of times in the piece, right? Does that bother anybody that you hear me? I asked these guys questions: “What is wrong with your feet? How do you feel? What are you here in for? You think the chain gang is going to stop you from doing the crimes?”

Does that bother you? It doesn’t bother me but you got to be conscious of this. I mean, with participatory observation, your job when you go out there, anytime you walk into an office, onto the exercise yard of the prison, onto a football field, into a demonstration. The presence of the camera changes the dynamic of what is happening. Your job is to change that dynamic as little as possible. But you have to introduce yourself at some point to get these guys to tell their stories. You’ve got to participate with them to a certain level, a very, very cautious level to have them tell us because I want them to tell their stories. Not me. I do not want to come back and have to write everything: “He told me this thing and he told me that.” I want them to tell their stories, so I have got to ask them. I have got to participate somehow. I have to engage then to some degree. So, I am there to observe first of all and to change the dynamic as little as possible, but I want to get them to be part of the production.

These cameras are phenomenal in the sense that they not only do not shut people down -- and I have watched (this) in places like Central America where these big guys would come up with big cameras ... on these little campesinos ... and the peasants where just kind of like cowering ... in front of all of this technology and Ivan is shaking his head because you know what I am talking about; you’ve worked for these people. These (hand-held, digital) cameras not only in places like Central America, Africa, places that I have worked, Afghanistan and in Iraq, these cameras give subjects a sense that they have some level of control of the creative process. They actually, they actually lure people out. People want to talk with you with these cameras. It is really amazing. They do not shut people down. They do not scare people. Karen go ahead--

Karen: Did you use live mics on anybody but the official person interviews? The officials...



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yes, I put it on Michael as much as I could and I put it on Robby, my two main characters. I will tell you this live mics will get on to this later there extraordinary tools and they help you not only decent sounds from people who are far away but they help you anticipate because you can hear people talking when they are around the corner, when you can't see them. They are, they are wonderful tools.

Chad: I didn't understand the question. What was it? That there was a mic?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Wireless mics. [Speaker pointing to the wireless mic]

Karen: While he was working on the camera.

Chad: Oh! Got you.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We are wearing here.

Chad: And only twice you had mics on people?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I have tried to make all of my main characters and when I don't know who the characters yet, I put on the mic, you know this meeting like here with these people and shoot a little far away. I put a mic on the center of the table because it is even from a distance you know and even people are a couple of feet away, I can still pick up usable sound. So these mics are really, really critically important. And Rhett, you have a question.

Rhett: I was going to say that your voice doesn't bother me at all because you know, it was asked kind of like an open-ended question but what has bothered me was some pieces that I have seen. That is why I think that they are leading the person and they feel like they are being spoon-fed or the guys are almost like a provocateur.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): The second point that I want to raise at this juncture is this whole idea of conversation. Our main task here is to deliver information, isn't it? I mean, we want to inform people, we want to be part of, we want to converse with people, we want to talk with people, we want to contribute to this international dialogue that we call journalism, okay?

ONLINE
**Video Journalism
Workshop**

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



Communication, whatever. But, the best way to do this is not by loading up like a big dump truck, a bunch of information like and backing up to somebody's front yard and ... dumping the stuff on their front yard because nobody can absorb information that quickly and that easily. So, the best scripts, the best pieces, the best videos are actually conversations with your audience. They are not just information you put together and deliver it to them because people can't absorb information (all at the same time). People can absorb information when it is packaged in stories. We will talk about dramatic arks later and how we wrap information around the spine of these stories here. You know around these dramatic arks. There are characters, you know. We talked about Chain Gang and how it relates to Robby Satterfield and Michael Martinier. We do not just give you facts and data about Chain Gang.

Next Segment (The Visual Language)

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And we really are talking a separate language. It's a language distinct and different from the spoken language. It is a language different from written language. It has a different alphabet. It has a different level of impact and this section of the manual is all about defining that language, because we are going to be using, you know, we are going to be discussing this language (and we need to be) on the same page. So, we have talked about with how this language looks like on the screen but one of the most important things that you can learn during this workshop is how to deconstruct visual stories. How to take them apart when you are seeing them, which will give you a sense of what you have to shoot, what you have to document, what you have to video, why you are out there. So, that when you get back ... to post-production phase you can reconstruct what you have deconstructed in the field and what you have shot in the field. So, we start with deconstructing and then we end-up with reconstructing. Okay? But to do that we have to understand, we've got to have an understanding of this visual language, which is laid out in the manual. So, let us talk about what we have thought, we have discussed, we have seen and what this product, this methodology looks like in its finished stage. What is it? You know, how will you take that apart and look at that one component at a time. So, let us do exactly that okay?

Next segment: (Types of shots)

ONLINE
**Video Journalism
Workshop**

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): If you have questions stop me. So, I am going to move pretty quickly from here until the twelve-ish. So, you guys can get out into the field. An extra close up—our language has 26 letters in this alphabet. This one—the visual language has about half of that number of components if you will. And the first one is an extra close up. Tell me what an extra close up looks like according to the manual. What does an extra close up looks like?

Male Participant: Showing an eyeball or ...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): An extra close-up, I call it, t looks like this, okay? It looks like that. That is what extra close-up is. And again, we are talking about the ABC's of this language. It is important that we all know what we are discussing when we talk about these ABC's because you guys will going to be using these ABC's to build your own stories. So, that is what a close-up is, an extra close-up rather, it is basically, you know, a tight shot on the eyes.

A close-up is a very different animal. In a close-up, well you tell me what it looks like. Chad, will you come here please? May we borrow you? And you can select anybody you want to. You tell me what a close-up looks like as oppose to an extra close-up. You are welcome to focus it on me if you like.

Chad: Okay. I do not even know how to use this.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay.

[Laughter]

Chad: I really don't.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Well you're starting up good.

Chad: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That thing where your fingers are—where your two fingers are, that's the zoom.



Chad: I will look in here? Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah and you can zoom uh-hmm, okay.

Chad: Got it

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That is it. So, tell me what a close up is or show me.

Chad: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay. Let us look at, let us look at Chad for a second when you guys are out on the field, if you see someone holding a camera like this, how does it look? [*Holding the camera in front-shoulder level*] Looks pretty good?

When you look at it—especially, when it is like this. Is that okay? Can you see that behind the screen? Is that okay? See what I am doing. I can hold this pretty steady for couple of minutes because I am kind of use to it but if it goes on for a while, what happens?

Female Participant: It jiggles.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I am moving around the place.

Male Participant: Yeah

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So again ... make space for some of the things I am trying to teach you today. So, you don't have to unlearn bad things six months from now and then, somehow learn the good things. So ... everybody has seen boxers, you know, in the ring and how they stand and so forth, you know, one toe is pointed toward the opponent, the other toe is pointed outward like that. Knees are kind of bent, you know what I mean. Here is a key now, right, if you point your hip toward your subject and you turn kind of like this, alright, and you rest your elbow on your hip and this rest on your left hand here, you will be able to hold this thing, still for long periods of time without the camera moving. See that? I am not holding the camera. I am not exerting any pressure. All the weight of this camera is going, I am transferring it through the palm of my hand and I have to hold this camera appropriately and I have to hold it properly because if I hold it properly then I've got this hand and these fingers that I

5

ONLINE
**Video Journalism
Workshop**

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



can use to control the focus ring that I could use to control the focal length of the lens and I could use to hid all these buttons here.

If I am holding the camera like this, you know, I can't do that, right? So, the key is ... to point your one toe toward your subject, keep your hip pointed to that subject, let this rest on the palm of your hand and let your left elbow sit on your hip. Therefore, you are not carrying any weight here and you can stand here all day long and do pretty tight shots. The longer your zoom out there, the harder it is to hold this thing still. When I am opened up like this, like a wide shot, it is fairly easy to hold it still, right? It is as if you are standing very, very close to your canvass and painting on that canvass very close. If you have to tie your brush on the end of (a stick) a long pole, to paint that canvass is really hard to keep it still. Does it make sense? Okay ... You know, especially if you're shooting a long interview with somebody or maybe a sporting event this far away, you know, learn how to hold this thing the proper way, okay? So, you know what an extra close-up is, the close-up is you can take off the top of someone's hair, to whom I can do with Chad. I can take off the top of his hair but I do not want to take off his chin for a couple of reasons. What is the first reason? Do not want to take off his chin, why?

Female participant: If he talks then you're losing that--are you losing part of that?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): If you lose his chin then you know people are really annoying, if you cannot see people's mouth when they are talking. But also, if you want to put text below to identify, you know you have to have space to do that, otherwise I will put lettering on top of his mouth. That is really annoying. So, we went from extra close-up to close-up. What does a medium shot look like? Ann? Kalpana? To hear what it looks like?

Kalpana: Stays here a little bit longer, maybe the chest, chest to waist.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Here is what it looks like. Here is what a medium shot looks like. Just remember, head to waist, okay? You want to see the person's belt. I want to see the person's belt. That is what a medium shot looks like ... It is not a person like the anchor on television. And again, you can take off the top of his or her hair but you got to have that belt. Okay? That is the medium shot. All right?

ONLINE
Video Journalism
Workshop

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



What does a wide shot look like? And by the way, when you are out on the field, I encourage you guys, when you are in the field shooting, do not use this screen, okay? For a number of reasons: Number one, it is difficult to tell, you know, what the lighting on these things looks like, it is difficult to tell if the camera is focusing on your subject, if it is focused on Bruce or is focusing on the background because these cameras are really smart but sometimes it is so smart they outsmart themselves. What these cameras do is that they focus on light and they focus on the space that you devote to the frame. So, right now, the camera thinks, actually it does a pretty good job but the camera can get fooled into thinking that the stuff in the background is important because it is so bright and I am allotting a lot of space to it. So, it is going to focus on and it's going to expose for the stuff in the background and the people in the front are going to be what? They are going to be shadows. Right? I don't want that. You have hard time seeing it, especially when this has to compete with the light outside, you won't notice that the background – your subject is out of focus. You do not know else what the camera is doing. You get a much clearer sense of what is in focus and what is not if I immediately when I look through this now, you know, style or manner of shadows and this camera is looking at focusing on, exposing for, you know, the stuffs on the background. So, I know I have to do something. I got to change something here, maybe, just about like that to compensate for that. Like that. Like that. Okay?

Male Participant: What are you changing to make it...?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I am just changing the composition. I am taking out...

Male Participant: You are not changing anything on the camera?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No, nothing. I am just moving from here. I am telling the camera, no. I am saying, look. You know, I want this guy here and that woman back there, I want you to focus on and expose for them. Not the guy with a camera, okay? I am not going to change anything here but if I move over here, and I include more light there, the camera thinks, Oh! It must be the stuff in the background that he thinks is important. So, it focuses on and it exposes for that. But no, I do want that stuff, so I have to sacrifice something. I have to move, I have to figure out how I tell the camera, this is what I want

Male participant: Are most of them center-weighted?



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I believe it's more center-weighted.

Male Participant: [inaudible 0:15:02.7]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. So be careful. Try not, you know, there is another reason why you do not use these screens or why I use it as little as possible, why? Think. Think about it. Why would I use this thing as little as possible?

Chad: Because it confuses you, do not show you the light accurately, right?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That is the first reason, but what else? What else?

Karen: There's going to be instability to the camera.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Well, what happens is, there are three ways, in fact when I hold this up like this, which I see a lot of perfectly young people doing it. I am erecting this is a wall as a barrier between me and my subjects. The whole idea is not to construct wall between me and my subjects. The whole idea is to connect with my subjects. This is what I want.

Chad: It pulls you out of that boxer's stand too, the boxer's stand...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah, exactly. I want this. This is called connection. This is connection. This is called a barrier. But there is another really, really practical reason and that is, this thing here, if the camera has to light this thing up, what does it do?

Ann: Battery power.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Battery power (is) being sucked up by this. So, if you have limited batteries, you know, if you will spend extended times in the field, you got to close this thing and you got to just, you have to shoot with this. I can maintain a conversation with you. I can look at you and if I learn how to do this, I can talk with you while maintaining eye contact with you while I am shooting you and you are looking at me not the camera. I want you to look at me. I do not want to be distracted by this camera, right? Because if you are looking at me, you are looking at the audience I

8



am trying to communicate with. Okay? So, we have got extra close up. We have close up. We have medium shot. What does a wide shot look like according to the manual? What is a wide shot? Sorry?

Male Participant: From head to foot.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It is head to foot. What does an extra wide shot look like? I do not have an extra wide lens that will screw on to this. But you can imagine ... everything that I can get into the room here. An extra wide shot and wide shots are used for something specific. They have a special name that we use in a certain way. What do we call them?

Male Participant: Scene setter.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry?

Male participant: It is like a scene setter.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It is a scene setter we call master shots.

Ann: Establishing?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We call them establishing shots, don't we? Why? Because whenever we go around, after we deconstruct this place visually, after we document everything that is happening, after we deal with and we follow the characters, after I find out who is the Michael Martinier and who is the Robby Satterfield on this thing, after I find out who my characters are, I do sequence and we are going to talk about that next. I do master shots from this corner, from that corner, from that corner to that corner, so that I see where all of these pieces make up the scene fall into. Does it make sense? Okay.

What's next? We have got extra close-ups, we have close-ups, medium shots, wide shots, extra wide shots. What is next in the manual? What does it say?

Female Participant: Tracking shot?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): What is tracking shot?



Kalpana: You follow the person?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): If you were, if Chad was shooting a documentary. Let us use the analogy of this workshop. Okay? If you know, one of you decided and you can do that if you want, if one of you decided that you are going to do a documentary about this workshop, you will probably identify me as one of the characters you wanted to feature in the documentary, right, because the whole dynamic here is about the relationship between me and you, between the students and the professor. So, you probably, and I am kind of high energy, kind of, well pretty hyper, [0:18:40.7] guy and I move around a lot, right? So, if I am doing that and Chad is shooting this piece, if you are doing the segment or rather, sequence about me, you probably want to do a tracking shot when I walk back and forth and certainly follow my feet when I am walking back and forth like it. And occasionally, let me walk out of frame but you want to track me back and forth. Tracking shot is different from pan shot. What is a pan shot? Go ahead.

Kalpana: You pan the camera across the scene, it is not necessarily following somebody but it is in the context.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): A couple of pans, you know. Pan typically refers to you are not moving and you just pan across. I think I mentioned before when I, you know, I did a couple of pieces in the Sahara Desert and how I put the camera on tripod and I would just move across the Sahara and it was a really nice slow pan. What I want people to appreciate, you know, what does Sahara Desert looks like, okay. And I would just do like that. That's a pan. There is another thing. It is not quite a pan. It is something that moves diagonally and it moves kind of, you know move maybe, like this and it will go that way. Is that pan as well? It is a blend of a pan—a kind of a pan. What do we call this? It could be diagonal, maybe a straight vertical. It could be like this.

Chad: Oh, that is a tilt.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Could be a tilt, huh? So, we got a pan and we have a tilt. Just remember that these movements like this and I do not want you to do this stuff today, but pans and tilts, you know what these are? These are like stitches like in the shirt here and they connect one piece of visual information to another piece of visual information and in this case we are



talking about cloth, right? But in our language, we are talking about pieces of visual information. So, by the end of this workshop, you guys should be able to almost paint with these cameras. That is how wonderful they are because they are mobile you can move with them, you can use your own body language to talk to these people, to communicate with people through these cameras. What is after pans and tilts?

Male Participant: Zooms.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry?

Female Participant: A zoom.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): There are two kinds of zooms. And this is the first kind that Sony gave us in this case and it goes like this, zoom out and zoom in and there is the second pan or second zoom and what is that?

Male Participant: [Inaudible 0:21:09.1]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry?

Male Participant: Reversed.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Well, the second zoom is like this, zoom in and zoom out. One is with this thing here, our fingers and the other one is with our feet. I do not want you to do this today. What I want you guys to do, because I want you to make still pictures. I want you to compose your picture first and then I want you to press this button, which is the record button. I do not want you to compose while you are recording because this is an incredible waste of time and incredible waste of tape or card space or whatever you are using. This is a waste, okay? Stop recording, figure out what you want to shoot. I want to shoot this. I got that. And then, I want to shoot these, so I compose and hit the record button and then I will stop.

Chad: Are these like eight-second little clips? I mean, how long is that?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Good question. You are jumping ahead but that is great. It is fine. Minimum of 20 seconds. You shoot these things in a minimum of 20 seconds. Why minimum of 20 seconds, why?



Male Participant: For editing?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry.

Female Participant: For editing?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Well, watch what happens here. If I am going to shoot Chad right here—Chad, go ahead Chad, write for a while. One thousand one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten and at some point, he is going to stop writing, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and he will start to write again, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty. And he stopped writing in about second number what, was it like 16 seconds in? You guys saw, we saw Chain Gang and you said, somebody here had a comment that the thing really moves, right? And I am not moving the camera around a lot. I am moving around a little bit but it moves wide because I shoot everything in a minimum of 20 seconds long each clip. It has a minimum of 20 seconds and somewhere in that clip, inevitably something is going to happen that I can use as a cutting point. In this case, Chad stops writing at second 16, and if I am doing a sequence on him, I will probably take from second 14, 15 and the 16 when he pulls his hand away and then at 17 his hand is gone. So, I am going to use those four seconds of that 20 -second clip and I am going to use that as soon as he pulls his hands away. That is the signal, or a visual signal that I could go to another clip.

So, I am not moving the camera but things move inside my clip. Things move inside my video snapshots and that what gives motion to this things.

We will talk about this a thousands times and when I am going to ask you thousand times, what do we see here? You know, on one level we see whatever it is we are shooting. We see this. I got this but what I want you guys to see is not only what we see on this screen. I want you to see what is happening behind the screen. Because behind the screen, there is an architect's drawing, and in our case, it is not an architect, but a video journalist drawing or cameramen's drawing or video journalist's drawing. There is a design back here. It is like an architect's drawing that has dramatic arcs and has cutting points and has all the rest of it. And your task in part during this workshop is to learn and see behind the screen at the structure. It is like the difference between seeing a building there, a

ONLINE
**Video Journalism
Workshop**

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



10-story building going, “Okay, one, two, three, four, five. I can see 10 stories high.” You understand that, but if you could peel off the bricks on the front of the building and see what is behind those bricks. “Oh, now I can see the steel beams, now I can see where the electric system runs. I can see the plumbing of the building.” That is what I want you to be able to see. Not just to identify. “It is a 10-story building because I can count the windows from the outside.” I want you to see behind the screen and learn to build these things from behind, because that is the way you are going reconstruct your own stuff when we get back in the post-production phase. Okay?

What is next on the list of shots please?

Kalpana: Point of view.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): What is a point of view?

Kalpana: What you are looking at, the subject or view.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay. Chad, may I borrow you again please? And we lost the connection here because this cable. Okay, there you go.

So, if Chad is doing again a documentary about this workshop, if he is doing a documentary about this workshop, he’s probably already shot a lot of stuff with me standing in front up here. He knows that I am walking in a lot of these things and more of that in the next four days, right? So, he shoots me, you know, we just got out of the car and he was with me in the outside and then he says, “Bill, hold on a second. I am going to run inside and count to five on the outside. We could do this and count to five, and then come through the door, okay.” And so, I count to five and then count through the door and Chad is shooting me. You are right there.

Chad: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): He shoots me and I am come in and I will say, “Hey class, we are back from lunch now.” Okay? And so, he got me. He just documented me coming back into the room from the outside. Now, if you’re smart, what you’ll do is later you go back and move to what I see and what my point of view is. Let me know if this thing disappears again.

13

ONLINE
Video Journalism
Workshop

with Emmy Award Winner
University Professor
Bill Gentile



What my point of view is when I started off here, you'll just walk, repeat what I did when I open the door here and I close the door and the I come in and I see, "Oh hi guys! I am back from lunch and so we can start again. So, it is my point of view when I am coming in from outside. He is following me. I am his subject and, but he shoots what I am seeing as I come in. So, he can cut between me coming from the outside into the house and what I see when I actually get into the house—as my point of view, okay. So, what is next on the list? Point of view? What else?

Female Participant: Over the shoulder?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Over the shoulder. What does that look like? Let me show you real quick. Over the shoulder means this [*shooting Chad from behind and over the shoulder*]. This is what over the shoulder is. I know it is Chad. I can see what he is doing. I already shot twenty seconds of him writing something, okay. And I am going to do this because it is an interesting shot. Again, you guys saw Chain Gang? And we saw that one of the things that kept Chain Gang moving were the compelling images of that made Chain Gang, that's what made the thing run. Now, if he is really smart, what he is going to do, I am going to ask Bruce to this for us if he will just let the camera sit for a while. Not only that we wanted to see what Chad is writing but we wanted to connect. Let us assume that we were going to make Chad the one of the characters in the film, in this documentary about this workshop. Does everybody follow me? So, I am one of the characters of the film. I have to be because the workshop is primarily about my relationship with you. Stay there Bruce, please. We chose Chad to be on of our characters in the film. We are going to do a sequence and we will show you how to do that right now. We are going to do a sequence on Chad. You are going to sit Chad.

Chad: Okay

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You are going to be writing. So, Bruce is going to do an over the shoulder shot of Chad while he is writing. Just like we did and also, because Bruce needs to marry characters in the film together, he is only going to do over the shoulder shot of Chad writing. But if he is really smart, if you really get to understand the language, he will probably connect Chad with me, with the instructor. Because again, that is what a part of the dynamic is about. So, he will do an over the shoulder shot of Chad. We will see Chad's shoulder and we will see me at the same time.



You probably want to come down. That is it. Come down like—you might have to choose the other—this other side actually, Bruce. Can you make that happen?

Bruce Jones: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Kind of like that, uh-hmm. Can you bring the camera down so ... That is it! You wanted to do that and get more of his shoulder in. There, kind of like there. That is what you want, that is what he wants. So, he has got two of his characters in the film now. We already knew it was Chad writing and he got, you know, the central character of the film married this thing together connected with another character in the film, okay. That is what, you know, the over the shoulder looks like. Thanks, Bruce. Anything else? What is next on the list?

Female Participant: That's it.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's it? ... Okay.

[End]