



## Video 6 of 14, Video Journalism Workshop Transcript

### [FIRST SEGMENT]

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** We got an awful amount of ground to cover today before we send you back out in to the field. I wanted to get a sense from you of what you are taking away or what you took away from yesterday's class. So let us just go from, you know around and I would like to know what stuck with you yesterday? What is the single most important thing you took away from yesterday's session? Ann?

**Ann:** Oh boy, I would say two things. One, I am kind of at the end of it, on the initial area or side that thinking about the story arc and you know overriding a theme of what you are doing and how that can change over time and if that is okay?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Ann:** And then...

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** We are going to talk about it, a lot more about it. Today, I am going to show you a film and we will discuss how the story arcs change, how you recognize the story arcs, you know, how you literally pre-visualized but once you see these things and recognized them, you learn how to cultivate them. Okay, that is a lot of what you are going to be doing today.

**Ann:** And I think the other thing in the technical side is getting up and down, you know and bending on your knees and getting down on the floor.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** Getting up once and you know I think it would also have the difference when you remember to do that.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** It is exhausting, isn't it?

**Ann:** Yeah, yeah.



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** It is really. It is an intellectual challenge and it is physical challenge and a lot of people do not figure this out. Okay? Good. Anne? Karen?

**Karen:** I think when I took videos there was the need to really to have this compelling image, really looking for all these areas, six sequence shots like you said, taking the close-up, the extreme close-up and then how can you look at that from the different angle. Could you do a medium shot on the set?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Right. One thing, I want to make sure that everybody understands. You know, that this Six-Shot System when it works is fantastic. You know, I did a piece, if we have a time I will show today of a cigar factory in Cuba, in Havana last year. And you know, you got a stationary situation there, you got a couple of hundred people doing the same thing over and over and over again, a repetitive action and it lands itself extremely well to that system, and that is what the Six-Shot System really, really works.

We saw Chain Gang yesterday, and we saw the guys in the courtyard. We talked about it briefly yesterday and I had the luxury of the time to be able to go with three or four of those people and do the Six-Shot System with them. But a lot of times, it just does not work and you got to recognize, you know, "Okay, the six shot system is not going to work here," but if you are conditioned to look for those six different perspectives, it will help you even when it does make the whole system does not work. So, you will get those different shots as opposed to everything from up here, you know wide angle shot which is not very compelling at all, right? Sometimes, the Six-Shot System works wonderfully and sometimes you just have to follow the action and forget about that system. Right?

Rhett, one thing, or what is the most important thing that you have learned yesterday, please?

**Rhett:** Maybe, what is not to do. I think I need a lot less talking to people or talking to the camera. I am going to look for some more compelling shots today. Let me see. I think I could have used some assistance yesterday. So like...



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You are going to use what? Sorry?

**Rhett:** An assistant. You know, because I am collecting audios separately from the video that I am shooting and it is kind of juggling to watch.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Yeah, okay. Okay. Kalpana?

**Kalpana:** Yes, I think, what I saw was the power of imagery? I mean, yesterday, we had such incredibly powerful images that we saw but also I mean—I think the whole thing of what is the story when you are dealing with so many different visuals, such a lot of visual stimuli all over the store. There is so much going on visually and otherwise that was hard to—I mean, you have to really sit down and think what the story really is, and to find images and things that are kind of go together to tell a compelling story out of it all. It almost seems like it could go in any different direction but this thing of trying to sub-contain it, so that is one cohesive story.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Yeah,

**Kalpana:** That, that can be a challenge.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** As we talked yesterday, you know one of the things that you guys have to learn to do is to really walk in to a place and deconstruct what you are seeing there and understand, articulate what you are seeing. What are the visually defining characteristics? Who are my characters here? What is the story I want to tell? Seek out any dramatic arcs. Once you recognize them, cultivate them. You are going to have a beginning, middle and an end and then you could put these things together and make a story. I am going to show you a film today before I send you back out of bunch of dramatic arcs and this is the thing I want you guys to be looking for today when you go out there, Okay? Chad?

**Chad:** I would say, the biggest thing I learned was that less is more when it comes to shooting and that it is way better to have a few really good shots and you know, 30 minutes of then and then three hours of just of bunch of like panning around with the camera.



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Chad:** When you go back and look at it on your computer, it is just much more usable and much more manageable. The 20-second shot thing, very helpful line it up like a still...

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Right.

**Chad:** ...camera and then shoot.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** These seem to have resonated of a lot with you. You know, the idea of framing your shots...

**Chad:** Right.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Deciding what you what you want to shot. Okay, "I want to do this"

**Chad:** Right.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Then hit the record button. You know I have been doing stuff for years and years now, I still count in my head. One, two, three, every shot that I make, I count.

**Chad:** And then out as oppose to be leaving and going "Hey! Here you go, walk here."

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Leaving on the pause button and then you go and then you reframe. You recompose the picture and then you hit record button again, one, two, and three. I do this all the time and I have been doing this forever.

**Chad:** Right. I thought that time, "Okay, here we go. We are making a documentary, just walk." It is not usable?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** No, you are making still pictures. If you look of some of the most, the compelling pictures you have ever seen in the movies you have seen or documentaries and then you turn the sound off. If you analyze the stuff and you look and say, "Okay, here is a still shot. There is stuff moving in it. Here is another still shot, there is stuff moving in it".

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**Chad:** Exactly.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** They are not going to run like this with a camera. There are still shots that move inside of them and then they put this together and they edit them so that they move—you know if it is freeze, you know. Think about Psycho—remember the shower scene in the Psycho?

**Chad:** Yeah.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** If you go back and look at that, the camera almost never moves.

**Chad:** Uh-hmm.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** They are all still shots. And you never ever see the knife touching the victim, you never see that? All of these are implicit. All right, if you have not seen the Psycho, just come out and it is actually fun. You should go see it.

**Chad:** But my thing is a few of those good ones is way better than hours of that of a crap.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You do not need to crap.

**Chad:** You do not need it.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You do not need five hours to make a three-minute piece.

**Ivan:** Yeah, I think the same thing that was highlighted you know to memorize the six-shot system because particularly me, you know I do not have it in my mind, when I go there that I need a wide angle, I need an extreme close-up. I need a close-up and all the stuff, because that gives the dynamic you know in the timeline. It's for you to see it then, you know.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay. The assistance yesterday, I want to know if you guys have anything that you point out, the used notes yesterday that we should talk about briefly. Rhett?





**Bruce Jones:** Mine, would be fix whatever the problem is. So if you are shooting, and there is something wrong, then fix it instead going, “Oh, I don’t know or I am feeling better, just something is wrong.” Yes, sometimes it is embarrassing and you kind of screw it up and go. You notice me with Bill yesterday, sometimes he will go, “you need to move in a little bit” because you always think in the final footage. What I am going to find in what I have? I need that to work for my client’s use to pay for it. This has to work. So, if there is wrong, just because I am embarrassed, it is going to be really bad when it is done. Just take up your courage and just if the mice is wrong, you know it has hit some jewelry or you know the light is in the back, I know we have that happened yesterday with the light and pole you know. Kalpana have couple good lesson when he came out to cut the lamp, you know the pole is right there. So you could have to go to that exercise and is going to “Okay, no more pole shots.” Just take, feel free to, you know there is wire or whatever it is, just fix it so that you could get the best shot that you can.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** It is a very good point. I think that you know what these people give you time, they allow you to into their lives because they ultimately want these projects to be successful. These guys do not give you 20 or 30 minutes per interview because they have 20-30 minutes to burn nothing. They generally do not. So, your obligation is for them to make this project to be successful and the only way they can be successful is to wrap your arms around the thing and take control and say, “Okay, we are going to do this right”. If so—if you find like in the middle of an interview the things something looks wrong, something is not working, you stop, fix it and move along. Okay? So that this is successful.

**Brad:** Two things, yeah. So, Evan and I for example, yesterday we learned together some technical issues. Now when you say, do not let technical issues get in the way of process that Bill is trying to teach. I know, we have all suffered in technical issues and think no one has had clean sheet. This part of the process and it is a part of learning curve and those are elements that you can master. What is important is that to learn about it, to focus on the story, finding the character, narrative arc, character development and I think there is wide range of characters as well. Van and I were in the field had a very compelling main character and focused on him. Others are I think were struggling with finding the characters.



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Yes.

**Brad:** You know, filling the gaps where you need to fill it in. If you have a lot of really good material but you have not found the central character. You know, you got to find that character. I think Chad you know you had a woman yesterday that talked through pretty much the entire time.

**Chad:** Choosing a recessive central character. (LAUGHS)

**Brad:** Right, but there is no amount of stuff there? There is a lot of stuff there. There is a lot of really good material in what she said but you now know what other pieces you need to fill in, to sort of expand that out and cover. So, just find, you know, focus on what pieces are missing, what you did well and everybody I think did a lot of really good work yesterday.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Yeah.

**Brad:** It is not an easy process. It is a very steep learning curve. So, stick with it. Stay positive. Do not get frustrated. Push through it. Find the character and story and character, trump everything always.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay. Kalpana?

**Kalpana:** I just have another thing to add to about this whole focusing on the technical aspects because I know that I was focusing for instance on filming one bet and I was counting in my head to 20 where there was there really interesting action that happened. There was this woman cutting whole, you know platter of bread who walked pass me and I was focus on this 20-second count that I totally missed this incredible piece of action. I thought this whole thing of trying to shoot with your eyes in different directions almost one through the eye piece and the other at the action is a tremendous like you know, the challenge but a great skill to learn.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You know how to resolve this tension between trying get those six shots and follow the action. You know how to do that?

**Kalpana:** No.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You know how to resolve it?



**Kalpana:** No.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** It is practice. You just go out from the field and you work. That is all. And, and soon would become second nature and you find yourself rooting from shot number three going...there is one more with the bread.

You know what I mean? And those six shots do not have to be any order. You know they can be—but once that system is embedded here then you know it becomes second nature to you when you go out and it just happens. You know? And that is like learning a new language. You know, when I started learning Spanish many years ago, I really knew I understood language and spoke the language and I was fluent the language when I started to dream in Spanish. I started to dream in Spanish and I got it. This stuff will come to you like 4:30 in the morning some time and you will say “I got it.” Yes?

**Bruce Jones:** The thing that I do to kind of remind all that is I have a little cheat chit that is in my camera bag with the Six-Shot System or you know check the battery, check the microphone, check the thing, check the thing and I read it before I go every shoot. I just you know, I just do not remember that well. So I just kind of, “Okay, got it!” “Am I still set?” and you refresh your memory with this. So I just pull it out. You know, what would my setting is going to be on my light. That makes a big difference. Kind of helps you be consistent with it.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** That is a perfect segue way for this Bruce. Thank you very much. This is my shooting tips, Okay? “Wait! Don’t shoot!”

*On screen: Bill Gentile’s “Wait! Don’t shoot!” Tips*

It is like you know, these pilots every time a pilot gets to a plane before he or she takes off, it is like “Okay, let us go to this checklist”. They might have had a thousand flights, but you know what? They still go through to the checklist. So this is your checklist. On the back of this thing is a white card. There is your white balance. You can put this in your backpack and you are ready to go.

So you just follow this stuff, you know and it is okay. On your way to do the interview, on your way to do the shoot, you know turn off the radio,

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forget about your date the previous night or whatever. You know, go to this stuff in your head or when you get there, go to this stuff and you will be more prepared to shoot than you work otherwise. Okay?

## [SECOND SEGMENT] PROPOSALS

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Pull out your, if you have your manual, your field manual nearby, please? Could you go to page number 25. There is a proposal there about halfway down the pages called “Images of a revolution”. It is a proposal that I handed to an executive producer and now on PBS, a number of years ago—ten years ago, because I pitch the story to him.

**Chad:** What page?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Twenty-five. Bottom page twenty-five, it’s much longer than most proposals should be but I wanted to discuss that they have a sense of all the components in what I wanted to do. Pick two minutes and read that thing please and we will talk about this paper progression from proposal, controlling idea, title unto script, treatment and so forth. This is the beginning of this paper trail and this conceptual trail that you guys are in right now.

*On Screen: Please Refer To Page 35.*

## (THIRD SEGMENT)

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** You guys, you know—and I will keep asking you guys the same question. What does this thing look like?

**Karen:** All the way are present. Here I am seeing in full of something from what you do before.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Right.

**Karen:** And then showing, moving fast forward and showing, we’re happy we started, we the same stand in the same place.



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** The background of this piece is the following: In 19, I think it was '88, something like that. A Canadian documentary crew made a documentary called the “The World is Watching,” the western media and how the western media covered the war in Nicaragua. Okay? The film was very, very successful. It is used in journalism schools all around the country. And in 2002, they approached me again. I was in the film also. I was the part of the original documentary. In 2002, they approached me because they are making a sequel to the original “The World Is Watching” film. And the sequel is called “The World Stopped Watching”. So you know, I said “Sure, I go down,” and you know we can, you know my storyline would be perhaps will take my book. So, I pitch this story to now on PBS, so that you know, we went down there and they did this piece about me, looking for some of the people who are in my original book of photographs that I published in 1987. You know, we could follow that storyline and through the prism of a handful of characters; we discussed, we present the “Nicaragua of today,” what has happened since the time 20 years previous that I made those pictures of, may I see the book? Can you hand the book there please?

**Male Participant:** I am kind of curious, what are your shots besides the interviews between the two, the beginning and the end shot. I guess that you know the eyes of the woman at the funeral and the eye of the woman today.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay, great.

Well, the whole dramatic arc is about me, you know we set some of the. what we did is we scanned some of these pictures from this book and we actually published them in newspapers in Nicaragua and we said “If you know these guys, call up our producer and send us the telephone number and tell us where they are?” And the phones are on the ring off the hook, right?

So, my dramatic arc, my storyline, I am just one of the handful of journalist who they follow in both the original film and the sequel to the original film. My storyline is “Okay, how I went back to Nicaragua after, 20 years after I made some of the pictures in this book and how sought out these people. How I found some of these people and what happened to their lives and how the, their stories embody what has happened to the country.

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Again, we talked yesterday about the best way to tell story is through the prism of one person. In this case, a handful of people through which people can extrapolate and viewers extrapolate a broader story. So that was the whole idea behind this piece, but you know, talk to me at little bit more how thing reads. How this proposal reads. Ann? What comes to mind when you read this thing? Is it different from other stuff that you read?

**Ann:** Well, it has a point of view.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Anne:** And I think that, you know many Americans would immediately find it engaging because it is, you are reminding us that, that the consequences are our responsibility.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Anne:** So, we have an immediate connection with this other country that people have forgotten about.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Chad:** Yeah.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Is it all visual is not it?

**Chad:** Visual language, yeah.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** I am telling the people, I work in this, this is our medium, you know. So, I have to pick, tell people this is what you are going to see and this is what you are going to hear. John Siceloff, the executive producer now on PBS who I sent this to; I know Nicaragua years ago wants to know when I pitch a story idea, he wants to know what this thing looks like here. You know the theme is kind of secondary. Right?

The subject matter is almost secondary. He wants to know how it is going to look like. So in my proposal, I have to tell him what this thing is going to look like; that is my controlling idea. It has to be built around this, this you

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know, the visuals of my idea. So, I have to tell him, this is what is going to look like. This is what it sounds like. So, that treatment is going to run through my proposal. It is going to run through my definition of controlling idea and it is going to run through the script that I write, it can run through the treatment that I right. It is going to finally embody yourself from the final product. Let us see this piece now, so it is like seven minutes long and it will give you a sense of, you know, how a proposal is matched with the finish product. How, I have an idea of who the characters are going to be But you know what? We go to the field and things are not the same you think they are going to be. I did a lot of research, I knew some of these people years ago but we went to the field something happened.

**Chad:** Is this a proposal or a treatment?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** This is my proposal. I proposed, I sent this to John Siceloff who is an executive editor and now on PBS at that time and he said, "Okay, this sounds interesting. Let us talk about money?"

**Chad:** And that treatment comes later?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** And the treat comes later. Your proposal, your statement of intent, your script, which is a shot by shot and a clip by clip description. It is the roadmap to your final piece. You should be able to hand your script to an editor and that editor who sits in front of the Avid machine or whatever machine he is using, whatever program should be able, it is a paint by numbers description, all the number 6's are blue, all the number 4s are yellow, all the 10's are green, whatever and he or she fills in all those spaces and all of a sudden you got a picture. That is what script is.

The treatment, unlike the statement of intent, this treatment is a very, very visual description of what you actually have as a result of work in the field. It is not like we want do. This is what I want to do, this is what I intend to do, but I went to the field guess what? The reality was not quite what I thought it is going to be, but I have a clear idea of what I wanted to do. So, you know it was easier for me to pivot and go to another direction because I knew, I knew the landscape already. If you do not know the landscape, if you do not do your research and you go out into the field then you are lost.



**Chad:** Yeah.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** There is no roadmap. There is no plan. You are kind of like you know a man without a blindfold on bumping around on the woods. Right?

If you have a plan and if you pre-visualized what you can do, if you understand what the visual capabilities in the story, the story-telling possibilities are, you can change your course in the field without losing a tremendous amount of time. Okay? So, let us see what this thing looks like and again, you know it is all about character. It is all about the relationship of between these documents here, your proposal, your story idea and how it turns out in the field. There are a lot of teaching points in this thing. It is about seven minutes long.

### **Case Study: Echoes of War (Video Presentation)**

**Anchor:** They are potential threat to our national security. Take a look at this film.

**Narrator:** Carlos Gomez lives a life without enemies now. He drives his own bus. He has a wife and three children. But when we first met merely 20 years ago, Carlos was a soldier. He had lots of enemies and one day they nearly killed us both.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** What am I giving you there? You put yourself in the story. I put myself in the story but there is, really no information there, is there? I am not giving you data. I am not giving you statistics. I am not telling you about the history of Nicaragua. I am not really talking about the country war but I did something more important than all that stuff. I did not pack up from your front yard with a dump truck of information going woo boo. Did I? But I think the intent certainly was to engage you to hook you in within the first—what is this—within seven seconds of this piece of. I



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am sorry it is actually more like 20 some seconds. But I hope you are engaged. You may stick around you know, “One day when they nearly killed us both.” What is this guy is talking about? I got you thinking. I hope. Now back into the story. Now I give you information.

**(Cont.) Case Study: Echoes of War  
(Video Presentation)**

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Carlos and I met in 1985 in the dark days of Nicaragua’s country war. He was a medic in the Sandinista Army. I was a photographer for news weeks. We were on a routine patrol of Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast, me with the camera, Carlos with an AK47 assault rifle. This is the Simon Bolivar battalion, the toughest, the best of the Sandinista army. I felt safe with them merely invincible, until that morning when the jungle exploded and men begun to bleed. We have walked right in to a contra ambush.

**Carlos:** We never thought they would surprise us there. We were careless. We never imagined they would surprise us. All the bandages they have on, I put them there.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** The wounded were evacuated on stretchers made of poles and their own hammocks. I followed them back to base at the nearby town of Mulukuku. There, local peasants led me to a little plastic hut and a scene that is hard for me to look at even today—a Sandinista militiaman recently killed by contras lying in its casket. With him is family, his wife, his father, his mother. It was like they were saying tell the world what is happening here. Tell them of our loss, our sorrow. That is exactly what I was trying to do, first, in the pages of News Week, later in the

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pages of my book of photographs. I lived in Nicaragua during the 1980's at the height of US's sponsored contra-war. Now I come back to find the places and the people printed in my book and imprinted on my life. I want to see what has happened to this country that America said was vital to its national security. I want to find out what was all that lost and sorrow for. I set out from Mulukuku to find the family of the dead soldier. Heading north from Managua, the road falls apart. Even during war time, I remember the highways were in better shape than they are now. Along the way I see children filling the holes and ruts that scar the road. Their pay is an occasional tip from grateful passersby. As I get closer to Mulukuku, there is hardly a road at all. The town has not changed much since I was here 17 years ago.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Do you see what has just happened there? Do you see what has just happened? I mean this stuff goes by as and we do not think about it and we don't recognize but we got to learn to recognize this stuff. You know when it starts or before it starts, so that you can construct these dramatic arts, you can cultivate them and you can have a beginning, the middle and the end. We have a story within a story here and it is all about that little journey, isn't it? I knew we were going up to mountains. The challenge was to find some of these people who grew up in the mountains. So I have to shoot the beginning of the piece. It's simple as sticking the camera outside of the car, shoot the highway. Right? The highway falls apart, but at the time we get to the mountains, it is a dirt road with mud puddles. Along the way we see the kids you know filling up the holes so the people will throw them tips off the window, but you have to see this stuff before it actually happens. You know you are going to a journey, so you know if this journey is going to have a beginning, it's going to have a middle where the kid you know is repairing the road and it is going to have an end where we arrived Mulukuku. Right? This is a dramatic art. These are the things that keep audiences compelled and watching.

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Because the question is “Okay these guy is going to go up for mountains to find these people.” The obvious question is what Karen?

**Karen:** What is he going to find there?

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Or are they going to get there? What they are going to find there or they going to have problems going up there. You know, it is not just the a hell of a lot of drama or tension wrapped into this thing, but there is some level of suspense and you got to learn to put these things into your stories so you can you know inject that suspense, inject that question into your stories and keep these things moving by doing that. So, here is the end of that mini story.

**Cont.)Case Study: Echoes of War  
(Video Presentation)**

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):**

But everything has changed for Aurora Harkin the mother of the fallen Sandinista soldier. I found her less than a mile from where I made the photographs so long ago. Seeing the picture on my book opened up old wounds.

**Aurora Harkin:** Yes! These are all my people.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** She told me about her son.

**Aurora Harkin:** Five days after he left they brought him back dead to Mulukuku.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** The boy’s death crippled her family. Then grief ripped it apart. Her husband was first to go.

**Aurora Harkin:** About four months later we were divorced because I spent all my time in the house crying and he would come home and get mad at me, and yell at me, and

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that just made me worst. So, it was better we got divorced because I could not stand the pain of losing my son.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** One of her other sons left for a nearby town. Her daughter-in-law, the dead soldier's wife, was next.

**Aurora Harkin** She was heart broken and she went home with her children to her father in the mountains.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Sixty-four years old now, Aurora sells tortillas from her house to support herself. She is alone except for the youngest of her five children and her memories. This is the first time she has ever seen a picture of her son as he lay in his coffin.

**Aurora Harkin:** I will guard this as if they fit the eyes on my face.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** The men who killed Aurora's son were called contras. They were denounced by International Human Rights Organizations. The Sandinistas called mercenaries and beasts. But this was during the cold war. The 1980's and the contras were America's surrogate against communism. President Ronald Reagan supported them, called the freedom fighters and compared them to America's Founding Fathers. During the war I photographed both Sandinistas and Contras. Now that I have returned, I want to know the men not just the labels. A woman in Mulukuku identified one of the contras in my book. She alleged this man had participated in an ambush that killed civilians. I decided to try and find him. I had to pass through the northern mountains, the heart of darkness of the contra war. It is where I spent most of my time covering the conflict where I saw roads turned into mine fields, farms into free fire

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zones, hamlets into cemeteries. This is coffee growing country but the bottom has fallen out of the international coffee market. Here, whole families harvest the beans for few dollars a day. Even less than they made during the war. After a six-hour drive from Mulukuku, I found the man I was looking for. Ciriaco Tercero was at a home inside the northern town of Ocotal. He said could not quite remember me but when I showed him my book he found his picture and one of his four brothers who had joined the contra forces with him.

**Ciriaco:** When I see this picture again I feel the excitement the exhaustion in the fear of a one-month march through the jungle.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Ciriaco spent eight years as a contra soldier tramping through the northern highlands. His targets he says were Sandinistas soldiers not civilians.

**Ciriaco:** All of us were peasants. All of us Nicaraguans who simply did not like the repression and we're forced to take up arms to defend ourselves.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Two decades later the will to fight seems a distant memory.

**Ciriaco:** I lost most of my youth during the war. I lost the opportunity to work. If we hadn't had an repressive government to force us into the mountains to fight, maybe the country would be different today. Maybe we would not be living a poverty today.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Ciriaco said all he ever wanted to do was work his land, make a family and be left alone and he has achieved that.



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**Ciriaco:** We are poor but content because at least I am not being hunted down by anybody and I can work in peace and take care of my children.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Like Ciriaco, Carlos the former Sandinista Medic still believes in what he fought for because he said the revolution promised to bring a better life for the majority. But after tens of thousands of deaths, after the disruption of the generation of young lives Nicaragua has moved back in time. Back to the oligarchs who control the ranches, the big farms, the factories. The revolution and the counter revolution are over.

**Carlos:** It is really sad. It is something that hurts but it is the truth.

**Narrator (Prof. Bill Gentile):** In Managua, what I see now is more poverty, more unemployment, more inequality. The earth which received the blood of so many is now owned by the very few. As I photographed Nicaragua once again, I see the how the lives of Carlos, Aurora and Ciriaco, the whole generation that survived the war, survives still -- one day at a time.

**Anchor:** What struck me about that so sadly is that many of the wealthy families in the Nicaragua fled during the Contra-Sandinista war, moved to Miami waited up the war. When the war was over, went back and now there back in control again.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** So, let us got this thing now. You know. What was the intent of the piece, the intent of the piece described? What was my controlling idea? What am I going to do with this thing Karen?

**Karen:** You might have shown physically how different the life had changed, gotten worst actually.



**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Okay.

**Karen:** What I would like to narrow is you had made a foundation for what you provide reveal to us. I mean, as you were showing the road was getting worst.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Right

**Karen:** That also like foretold.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** Kind of a symbol of what...

**Karen:** Yeah! I would like to have that mirror because it will set the agony.

**Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile):** The fundamental I want to give you guys information about Nicaragua, what did happen or not since I worked there and photographed these people for Newsweek. Right? And I can right down the statistics, the data, all those stuff and give it to you and you know read it to you, have someone read it you, have someone stand in front of the chart and give you all the numbers but it is not a very effective delivery of information. So, what I did is I packaged it in these three characters, the former soldier, the former contra and this woman, packaged it in that and my intent was the proposal said, "I wanted to do story about the mother who is breastfeeding the fallen the militiaman's child, but she was way up of the mountain and she was not available. We don't have time to go and it would take two days to walk there. And if we found her we will be lucky, if she was still there. Who knows? So, it is kind of a slight in hand. You know, I want you totally understand what happened to Nicaragua in those years that went by since I made the pictures in this book and since we visited the country. What I did was I did not hide the information but I tucked the information and wrapped the information around the stories of these three people, who embody I think a broader experience. That is what I want you guys to understand about how you use characters and how your proposal, your statement of intent. How it differs sometimes then what ultimately is going to be the piece. This different from what I proposed you know. But you know, I adapted in the field I did not know where we are going to find this guy. I did not know the woman is going to

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be standing there and go, “Hey, this guy was trying to kill me and I was in an ambush. He killed like 40-some people.” This guy. I did not know that were going to see that. I had no idea. I did not know that we were not going to be able to find the mother who is breastfeeding a child. Right? But you are adapting the field. I had a clear idea what we can do. We did it.

[End]