



Video 8 of 14, Video Journalism Workshop Transcript

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, there are two kinds of interviews. The informal interviews which you guys do in the field, you know, what you are doing, what you're going to do, what did you just do, so that these people articulate their own stories, they tell their own stories. There are also the formal interviews, the formal sit down interviews which, frankly, I don't like to use all the time because I find that, you know, some of the pieces that I've done, they start out really nice. Particularly some of the pieces that my students, they start out really powerful. They've got a great controlling idea. They got wonderful pictures and then about 30 seconds into the piece, they had some guy sitting in front of the camera, staring at the camera like this and it's awful.

Chad: It kills the pace?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It stops it completely.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It freezes it and it's just like it turns you off. Okay? What I like to do is, I like to interview if you use these cameras appropriately, you know, you can do formal interviews, sit down interviews, you can talk to these people and you can generate all the foundational, rather, the information or foundation of these pieces by doing this interview. I'll show you a piece later on at the workshop that I did with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit in Afghanistan and I interviewed the commanding officer probably for 15 to 20 minutes every other day. I've got, you know, hours of him and I spent three weeks with him talking to a camera, giving me information about what this company did that day, what they were going to do the following day, the situation in Afghanistan, the whole nine yards.

Chad: On a tripod?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I didn't have a tripod because I couldn't carry too much stuff, you know. I carried what I had in my backpack, you know, my computer, external hard drives, batteries and camera. That was it. I had

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a helmet. I had a flak jacket, you know, all that stuff, water. I carried some food, everything. So, it was really, really lightweight stuff. It was this methodology backpack video journalism, you know, taken to the extreme. But my point is I have hours with this guy telling me what's happening and I never used a second of him looking at the camera and telling me what's going on, never. Why? Because I didn't need to, so I used, but I used that information, I wrote it into my narration. Again...

Rhett: Oh, did you put his voice under any action?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No.

Rhett: Oh, really?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No.

Chad: Wow.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No. No.

Chad: So, what a waste of time, though.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I couldn't. No, it's not a waste of time because I, you know, number one; it helped me cultivate my relationship with him which turned out to be fantastic. The guy, he said, "Look, if you're crazy enough to be here" -- this is a quote. "If you're crazy enough to be here with us, I'll let you do anything you want to do as long as you don't get in my Marines' way." That's it. If I don't put these guys in danger, I could do anything that I want. I had complete, total freedom and access just like I had with the Chain Gang. It's extraordinary.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You know, I've, I had the ability to select. "I want to go with this platoon today. I want to go with this platoon tomorrow." He said, "Okay, fine. Go ahead." And as long as I didn't get in front of anybody, trip anybody up; as long as I didn't put any Marines in danger, I was okay. It was an unbelievable. It was the best embed ever.

Rhett: You weren't in front of them, were you? [LAUGHS].

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Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I was beside, I was beside the guys, the first guys who were going into like, you know, a market that they had to go through and you know, checkout.

Rhett: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Beside them, not in front of them.

Rhett: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): But side-by-side. It was amazing.

Rhett: So, you mean, this kind of looks like a shoulder...weapon of some sort.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. That can be. It can be. And anyway, these interviews, these formal interviews, you can use them, you know, doing face-to-face, particularly, when it's like a profile of somebody. That's okay. So, there are ways to do this properly and there are ways to do it improperly. What I want to talk about today is the proper way to do the formal sit down interview. Who wants to practice? Who wants to practice? Who wants to show me how to set up for interview? Uh-hmm.

Kalpana: Maybe we'll use the tripod.

Rhett: I am going to use the camera.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You'll use the camera?

Rhett: Sure.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Kalpana, will you be the subject, please?

Kalpana: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You sit here.

Kalpana: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And the camera's here. The tripod's here.

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Rhett: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, go ahead, go to work. Set it up for us. You show us how this thing is done and—

Chad: I...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We'll be able to see it here.

Chad: ...see.

Rhett: I guess I will put maybe some lighting over here and get maybe a little bit of shade on this side—over here.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay.

Rhett: Almost like a portrait, I guess.

Kalpana: You're not going to have light where? Are you going to use the...I'm assuming.

Rhett: Well, it could be window light, you know, that would be even better, you know, maybe open that, you know, uhmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Tell me what we're going to do. Do you want me to open this?

Rhett: Yeah, sure.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay, we have different...

Rhett: If it makes light but these are very good.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah, Bruce and I had to put this blockage of light here.

Kalpana: But what would you do then? I mean, to set him up next to a window next to something the lights coming in?



Rhett: Oh, not necessarily. I mean, this is the—just in this case.

Kalpana: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's it. It goes in just like your shoe, like your foot into a shoe.

Rhett: Yeah, it wants to come out right up in the front, though.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay, let's see if this sits here well. Here you go.

Rhett: All right.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay. Whoa, whoa, be careful with that, man.

Rhett: What?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Here.

Rhett: I'll get it.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. This...go ahead, adjust.

Rhett: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I watch. I'll tell you. This is really important. I watched a student with an EX1, a new EX1. We were setting up for an interview and she who was repositioning the tripod. And she grabbed the tripod and like pulled it like back like that and it vibrated just like this one just did and she had. It was about this high. And we watched in slow motion a brand new EX1 with a wireless microphone receiver and a Sennheiser would go like this. Whoa.

Kalpana: Oh, no.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And then when it hit the floor, it exploded, poof, like this.

Bruce Jones: Oh God.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Pieces of plastic everywhere.

Bruce Jones: That is something.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, that really feels like, so, from then on, it was like...

Rhett: [LAUGHS].

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Hold the camera with one hand, hold the tripod with the other, you know, and then move it that way, okay?

Chad: I can't believe you haven't busted a camera on all this backpack travel in going to, you know, war zones.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Hey dude. You knock on wood. I've been very, very fortunate. You know, I never, it's...

Rhett: They're really solid, aren't they?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You're right. I was held up at gunpoint twice but they didn't get cameras. They just took money.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): But I never lost a camera. I never, you know, never, you know, my equipment never went down the field, very, very lucky.

Chad: Been shot at?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Lots of times, yeah.

Chad: Just lucky you didn't break the camera.

Rhett: Whoa.

[LAUGHTER]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): The jamb is loosing up?

Rhett: Yeah.

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Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay, here's what you got to pay [crosstalk] attention with this thing. What I do is, when I bring these things to the field, both when I'm...

Rhett: There.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): ...setting up and breaking down, what I do is I let gravity do the work for me because I'm normally in a rush to do this stuff, right?

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, if you just let gravity help you, you can do it quickly. This one is really, it's a special kind of...I had the university buy three of these for my backpack documentary classes. When you use a tripod, just like when you use a camera, there...and we talked about how do you stand yesterday, kind of like this, kind of like...

Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Remember the, what is it, the warrior pose in yoga, right?

Rhett: [LAUGHS].

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You know, and you keep your hips like this, same thing you do with, when you set up a shoot. This little camera here has a level here. It allows you to level this thing very quickly. One of the key, one of the most important points about setting up a tripod is number one, point, you know, point one of the legs of the, tripod towards your subject, okay? In that way, particularly if you're using this thing and it's all opened up like this and you're on an unlevelled field, this where, this is level and it's flat. Most of the time on site, it's not level and flat. But if you have one leg of this tripod pointed towards your subject, then you can get in here and when you've got this thing, this camera on top of the tripod like this, you can actually...

Kalpana: Uh-hmm.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No, this is backward, I think. Yeah, there you go. You can actually, you've got this hand free, you can actually get in here between these legs and move around and access this stuff here without picking this thing around. If you, if this thing is like this, you know, you've got to fight with your own equipment to get in there. But again, if it's like this, pointed towards your subject and then you're on an unlevelled ground here, what you can do is you can pull it this way and you can see what this is doing to the level of the camera.

Rhett: Yeah, uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Look at it. You can pull this leg like this to level it up, maybe a little bit more. You could pull this leg back if you want to change something, you see. But if you're, if these legs aren't open properly, then that makes life a lot more difficult. So, if you start out holding this thing, you know, setting this thing up properly, it's going to make the entire process a lot easier.

Chad: Oh.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah?

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Normally, when you go into these places, you and your subject are cramped for time and I really suggest to everybody, when, you know, when you arrange an interview, you go in and, if the interview's for noon, you'd better be there no later than 11:30. You want to be there at least a half an hour before the interview starts to set up. It takes a long time to get this stuff set up. You have to move people around, you have to move stuff around, you have to move lights around. Give yourself at least a half an hour. An hour is even better.

Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay?

Chad: Wow.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You have a couple of minutes to sit down, collect your thoughts, figure out what you're going to do, all right? So, here we are. We got this thing set up. This tripod is especially cool. Excuse me, Rhett...

Rhett: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I am getting in front of you like this.

Rhett: That's okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): This one is especially cool because I can grab this core. I can loosen this thing up and there's a bubble here. I look for the bubble and there's a level. I level that up. See that thing right there?

Rhett: All right.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, I'd level that up and, guess what, a perfectly leveled, okay? I want to keep this thing kind of loose so I can swivel back-and-forth without jerking this thing around, just like that. I could barely touch it. I can move it.

Chad: Wow.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And I will open this thing up so that I can change the level of this without jerking the thing around. Okay? So, what do you think? Are we good?

Rhett: I guess if you're going to use the zones and so, I'm going to do, what, something like that or, even tighter.

Chad: Sixty minutes.

Rhett: Something like that.

Kalpana: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I like that.

Rhett: Got the...

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Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I like that.

Rhett: Got chin, got cut off the top of the head. It's slightly off the center.

Ann: That is your aim.

Rhett: ...which gets you something behind it.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Uh-hmm. Rule of thirds.

Rhett: And my...

Chad: And you don't put her in the center, right? She's just level.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Never.

Rhett: I might lower the camera, actually, because it's kind of it's slightly looking down on her. You probably don't want that. You probably want to be, I guess eye level.

Chad: Wow.

Rhett: What do you think about that?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I think it looks eye level.

Karen: Yes, eye level.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): To tell you the truth.

Rhett: Okay, okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I think it's just...

Chad: And you look great. You look like a movie star.

[LAUGHTER]

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[Crosstalk]

Chad: The light...

Kalpana: That looks like...

Chad: The light is even good, right?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Well, you know, here's the...

Chad: I like it.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): ...thing. The first thing you do when you walk in to an interview situation...

Rhett: There's a white card, too.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You do this. Chad, you're right about where we put her. You know, we didn't have time to discuss the rule of third or we did yesterday, briefly, I think. No?

Ann: Maybe not.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I mean, whose picture did we see?

Chad: We did it on the Washington monument shot. [Crosstalk]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yes.

Karen: Ivan

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You know, what you're after here is this. You want this person on one-third of the screen. Remember the game we used to play; tic-tac-toe, "x" and "o's"?

Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Remember that? You never want the person in the center of the screen. You know, why? Because it's really, really, really

11

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boring; there's no motion here, nothing's happening. It's really visual death, right? So what you want is, you want that person in one third of the frame, kind of like this, right? About like that, you want this person looking into this empty space here.

Rhett: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And what you want is, you want the light source coming from there. So, the person is looking into the light. These are all critical components of how to make this stuff look right, okay? If you, well, let's see what...

Rhett: Actually, the look like the back lit from that one...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): She is.

Rhett: There. I would've front, maybe moved her back, you know, to get...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay.

Rhett: ...side lighting or so.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): The closer she is to this camera, you know, the wider angle you have to use. So, if she's a little bit further away, that's okay because the longer lenses will help compress her features as opposed to broaden her face like that.

Chad: But still ideally you have light source [crosstalk]—

[Crosstalk]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Ideally.

Kalpana: ...to move back?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Ideally, what you do is this.

Chad: Uh-hmm.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): The first that thing you do when you go into a formal interview situation, the number one thing that you do is you want to determine the source of the light. Okay? We have all kinds of light here. We've got, there are three kinds of light. There is natural light. There's artificial light and there's ambient light or existing light. Whatever. We have a mixture of this stuff. We have ambient.

Rhett: We have colors.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We've got natural light coming in from up there and from here. We have artificial light. These are tungsten. These are white lights. We have existing or ambient light. We got a mix of these. We have to control the situation somehow because this looks kind of cold and plastic to me. There's very little emotion. That's not your fault. It is the way this light looks.

Rhett: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, what do we do? What do we do?

Chad: Take that light and put it over here.

Rhett: Yeah, or maybe, right here.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Let's assume that we don't have these things. Can we turn this off? What if we don't, what if you all bring these things with you. You don't have these lamps.

Chad: Open the window.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We open this one window here. We move this around a little bit.

Rhett: It could change the light balance, too, you know.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Now, she's all yellow because of these tungsten lights.

Rhett: She is very yellow, yeah.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Because tungsten burns yellow, doesn't it?

Rhett: Yeah.

Chad: Oh man, that's it.

Rhett: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, that doesn't...looks good, doesn't it?

Chad : Nope.

Rhett: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): All right. What if we kill this stuff?

Chad: Oh.

Rhett: That's actually pretty cool.

Chad: Better.

Bruce Jones: Bluey.

Ann: Really dramatic, I would say.

Rhett: What if...we color balance it. It has natural light, basically, yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): What if we covered some of this stuff? I'm going to need you guys as help here. What if we drape this over the back of that wall where Bruce is and we cut out one source of light, that source of light? What if we did that? Some of you guys...

Chad: That's great.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): ...are going to hold this up.

Chad: The light is just one side of her face.



Rhett: Yeah, you get, what is it, was it like one stop difference from one side of the face to the others or something?

Chad: Oh, I don't know.

Rhett: You know...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): For the sake of demonstration and so that we don't have to rip those little pieces of paper down from that window, we're going to pretend that this is an open window light, okay?

Rhett: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We're going to pretend that this is an open window light and we're going to block out that light from the back. This is the light that would be coming through that window.

Rhett: Good, good.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay? If it were sunnier and all the rest, okay. Now, we have some light here, right? How are we for the interview? How does that look? And we block this stuff out here as best we can with limited...

Chad: Better.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): ...tools. Are we okay? How are you going to frame it that, Rhett, is that okay?

Chad: You're not worried about it being bright on one side of her face, kind of shiny? She's real shiny.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I'm not worried about it.

Chad: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Is that okay?

Karen: Uh-uh, the picture quality to me is still way...

Chad: Yeah.

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Karen: ...grainy.

Ann: Coarse.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It's still going to be grainy because there's not much, not much light in here.

[Crosstalk]

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. Here's what I would do. Again, you walk into a situation where you're going to do a formal sit down interview. I'm going to turn this on just for a bit so we can get a sense of where we are and so forth. First thing you do is figure out where the source of the lighting is, okay? In this case, we have one window here. We're pretending here that this thing is a window, right, because it's pretty gray outside and we don't have a lot of natural light coming in which we would actually prefer, all right? So, this is a window, all right? So, what I would do here I will do a couple of things if I were going to interview Kalpana. What, first thing I will do is I would move her. I would move her around because I can move her around a lot easier than I can move furniture around. So, I'm going to ask Kalpana to sit here.

Kalpana: Okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay? She's going to sit there. I'm going to use the light from this window and I'm going to use that light; I have to operate with this. This is what I have. This is all that I have, okay? This window here, that's the light that I've got to work with. So, what I'm going to do is—it's a little bit bright everyday out there. What I'm going to do is I'm going to ask her, you sit, you're okay. Okay. I'm going to have her turn toward the light.

Chad: Oh, yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay? She's looking at the light and she's looking a little bit over her shoulder when she looks toward the camera, right? She's

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going to look a little bit over her shoulder. You never make a picture of you, your family, your member, whoever it is in front of the Washington Monument standing there like this with the monument behind them. It's always like this. You always frame like this, that person looking a little bit toward this empty space looking a little bit toward the light, okay? It's just the way it works. So, what we're going to do if...

Rhett: Somewhat like that?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Oops, sorry, yeah. So, what we're going to do is we're going to pull back just a little bit and she's going to, I'm going to frame her just like that and, you know, Kalpana might say, "But wait a minute, I can't be here in front of the, you know, in front of the fireplace. I want to be in front of my books. I'm going to turn here. I want my books to show up." "Well, the fact of the matter is, you know what, I'm going to put this thing on manual focus. The stuff behind me is going to be out of focus. So, don't worry about, so, we're not going to see your law books anyway."

We can move—you know, we can move the president of the bank or the president of the law firm around his/her office and we're not going to pay attention to the background. I want to shoot her really tight. We want to have a true close up here because I don't want to shoot her like this. You know why? Because I've already got, you know, two hours of her running around the law firm or doing whatever she does.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I already know what she looks like from a distance. I've already got that stuff. What I want is this especially if I'm going to do something that's going to be intense or emotional. I want to see the expression of her face, right? And I want this to be, I want her to be looking into the light and I want there to be some shadow on the other side of her.

Chad: And it's okay to cut her head off like that?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Totally. Well, you tell me. I mean, you know, if I'm doing an interview and I want this person to be, this thing to be intimate, I think, it did give us some emotion and I think, you know, the picture gives

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us a sense of motion here and emotion. Now, if I turn her around, if she turns away from that light, turn your chair like this, please, uh-hmm. That's it. Now, if I do this thing like this and we have the interview like this. This is a misuse of light.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Why? Because she's looking into darkness, if she's looking at me, she's looking into darkness and any person who's looking into darkness, what do you know about that person?

Rhett: Sinister.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry?

Rhett: Sinister.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): He's lying.

Rhett: Uh-hmm.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): He's not telling you the truth.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): He's looking at you in the darkness.

Chad: And probably sell drugs.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I mean.

[LAUGHTER]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): So, we want Kalpana and all decent human beings, we want her to be looking toward the light. That's it. We want her to be looking toward the light, okay? So, we've got her looking into the light. We have all the set of stuff controlled around us. We don't, you know, we don't have a bunch of noise in the background. Okay. You know, it's

18

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noisy as we would call it because, you know, we have to jack up the **gain** here, okay. The camera had to be more, has to be more sensitive. She's looking into this empty space. Now, we're going to begin the interview, right? So, and this is going to be eye level. Rhett's right. I mean, we don't want this thing to be higher or lower than her because there's an implication if the camera's looking down at her; there is something implicit, about that, right? And if the camera's down looking up at her, there's something implicit about that, as well, all right? So, we want to be on a level basis with her. We're making no moral decisions about who she is or what she does, you know, in terms of, you know, adjusting the light of this thing, okay?

So, the first question that she's going to ask me is what? Think about it. You know, I put a camera in front of you, what?

Leonard: Do I look good?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Do I look good? You always look good, man.

[LAUGHTER]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah, "Do I look okay?"

Leonard: Yeah, my first.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): "Do I look okay?" All right.

Kalpana: I would say one. "Well, what you want me to say? What do you, want me to do or say?"

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): What else? You do these things. You do critical stuff. What's the interviewee going to ask the guy behind the camera?

Leonard: "Ready?"

Chad: I'll say, "What are you going to ask me?"

Leonard: "Are you ready?"

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): "You're ready?" What else?

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Ann: "Where is this going?"

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay. How about, "What do you want me to look at?"

Chad: Oh, yeah.

Ann: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Right?

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): "Am I looking at you?" Or "Am I looking at the camera?"

Chad: [Crosstalk] Exactly.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Right? Okay. If you're working with a correspondent, try this. So, if I'm asking the questions here and Kalpana, you know, "Can you tell us who you are, please?" and she's looking at me, look at the screen. What's happening there?

Karen: She's looking up.

Chad: She's looking up, her eyes...

Kalpana: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): How does the screen look like?

Chad: Her eyes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Dude, there's no contact with the audience.

Chad: Right.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): She's talking to the man on the moon.

Chad: Yeah.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay? If the correspondent or the video journalist is standing here, it's even worse. "Can you tell us your name, please?"

Kalpana: Yes, Kalpana Biswas.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Look at where she's looking.

Karen: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): She's looking way off camera. There's no connection. The idea here is to get this person connected with the audience, the people who are watching this thing, okay? So, what do I tell her when she says, "What am I looking at?"

Ann: Me, the camera.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's two different things. Me or the camera?

Ann: Well, if you're right behind it and you're going to be behind it the whole time, she'll look at you.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay, here's the key. You tell her that she has to be looking at you. You want to have a conversation with her. You want her to look into your eyes. And the key to this is that there's an invisible line here from this camera lens to her eyes, to her face and from her eyes to mine. Because, as you say I'm looking right over the top of this LED screen, there's an intersection of those two lines of vision and it looks like they're talking not just at me but more importantly to people on T.V. who are watching this thing, right? They're connected.

If I'm working with a correspondent, right? If I'm working with a correspondent, you know, I'm going to put the correspondent right here, right in front of this thing so that, you know, she's looking at him but I—still make that line of intersection. You guys know when you're going to be working by yourselves, okay? So, I want to be having a conversation with her.

So, I, you know, I tell her to look at me. We've got this intersection going on. We've got her looking into this negative space. We control the light

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here. We listen for a sound. If there's a radio on, you ask somebody, "Can we kill this?" If there's a television on, you ask him, "Can we turn this thing off?" If there are kids playing, unless it's really important, unless they're critically important to what the story that you're trying to tell, let the kids play around. That's fine. But if they're not, get them out of the room, okay?

Listen to this. There's not more of ambient sound of are going on here and that's cool. And if she's properly mic'ed, these mics, these microphones don't read people's mouths. They read their voice boxes here. You want to make sure they're not close to her jewelry, to her chains, to her pearl necklace and whatever because it's going to have a clinking sound. Make sure you can't see it.

If you have a piece of moleskin, the stuff that we put on the back of our heels when we buy a new pair of shoes, you know, take this thing here, take this pin off. You know, put the moleskin on and take it to the inside of her clothes. Moleskin is porous. Sound goes through it and it won't—capture any clinking or shh-shh rustling sound, okay? Go ahead.

Chad: And it's here as opposed to up here. You know, like going to cut...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It's here.

Chad: ...like you need some space.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Do this.

Chad: Yup.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It's this far away.

Chad: Yup.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It's this far away. That's where it is.

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay? It's reading your voice box. Okay. So, we're going to start the interview. She asks me, "Okay Bill, where do you want

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me to look?" I'll say, "I want you to look at me right in the eyes." All right?
So, Kalpana, who are you, please?

Kalpana: I'm a documentary filmmaker. I live in Pittsburgh. I'm working on our project on group of filmmakers from Afghanistan.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Good. What's your name?

Kalpana: It's Kalpana Biswas.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): No, no. What's your name?

Kalpana: Kalpana Biswas? [LAUGHS]

Chad: My name is...

Kalpana: Oh, my name is...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): My name is Kalpana. I mean, you're going to catch these people all the time. They're going to give you good answers. You know, it, you can't be "My name is." It can't be "Kalpana Biswas." It can't be "How old are you?" You know, "27." It doesn't mean anything.

Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): It's got to be, "My name is Kalpana Biswas." How old are you? "I'm 27 years old." What do you do? "I'm a documentary filmmaker." You get them to do this three times at the beginning of this thing, okay. Give the answer to this thing. Now say, can you say this with the whole sentence, please? Identify yourself. Tell me what you do.

Kalpana: My name is Kalpana Biswas and I'm a documentary filmmaker, 37 years old.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Great.

Kalpana: [LAUGHS].

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Fantastic. Okay. Be careful with these backgrounds. You don't want busy backgrounds because it distracts the hell out of

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people. You don't want to put a person in front of like a chalkboard and it has writing on it because they're going to go, "What the hell does that say back there?" You know what I mean?

So, when you do these interviews, you start with the easy questions first, right? And you've got something right here, what do I keep here when I'm doing these interviews all the time?

Ann: A reporter's notebook.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): A reporter's notebook and it's got what?

Ann: It has your questions in it.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And they go from what to what?

Ann: Easiest to hardest?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): This woman, she's been through this before.

Ann: [LAUGHS].

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Exactly. They go from the easy questions to hard questions. What do I do before I actually sat down for this interview, though?

Chad: Research.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Research, what else? I asked her to do something. I asked Kalpana to do something. Ivan, what do you think?

Ivan: I don't...

Kalpana: What you've asked me to do?

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): If she hasn't already done this, I ask her to sign a release.

Ann: Yeah.



Rhett: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay, strategic, okay? And you treat it in a very flip manner. As a matter of fact, you know, "I'm sorry. I've got to ask you. I mean, let's get this thing done before we start. You know, we live in a litigious society; everybody wants to sue everybody. I got to have you sign this thing, you know, just to make sure I don't have a gun pointed at your head and you did this interview without consent. So, you know, take a second, a couple of seconds while I fidget around with this stuff. Sign the release, read it and then we'll get on, okay?" Because if you don't get it done before the interview, if the interview goes south, you know, and she ends up being angry during the interview, she's going to rip it up and through it at you. See and you don't have an interview anymore.

Chad: Yes.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Colin Powell—a friend of mine interviewed Colin Powell and they asked him to sign the release before the interview. He goes, "I'll sign it after the interview."

Kalpana: That's what I faced.

Chad: Wow.

Kalpana: That a number of people don't want to sign it before because they don't know what the interview is going to be about.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): I know, I know, I know, I know.

Chad: Wow.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's the, you know, you try. [Crosstalk]

Rhett: You really have to watch what to expect.

Chad: Maybe that's part of the new journalism, too.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. You got to try to get them to sign that thing before. You know, if you could not get them to sign it before, you actually sit down maybe before you're in this room. And if, you know, they say,

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"No," then, you know, you just throw the dice. So, yeah, you have to measure the way what would be the cost of that's going to be. So, we're having this conversation and I've got, you know, I want to keep her chin, though...

So, I'm going to probably open this thing up a little bit like that, okay? I want to keep her chin. I can cut off her ear a little bit. I cut off the top of her head. It's okay. I want to see her face. I want to see her eyes. I want to see her emotion when I go on this list from the easiest questions to the hardest questions. By the time I get to the end of the list, then I ask her, "Did you really rip off all that money?"

Chad: [LAUGHS].

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah, I want to see wince. I want to see her do whatever she's going to do, grit her teeth. You know what I mean? I don't want to see this. I don't want to see that. [Zooming out the lens]

Chad: Right.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We've already seen this. I know what she looks like. I want to see this.

Steinar: Okay. But do you think, I have to frame it so that there's going to be text underneath? So...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Sorry?

Steinar: Is this going to be one [Crosstalk 00:29:48]—

Chad: You want to deal with the lower part.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah, yeah. There might be...

Steinar: And so...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Maybe if she speaks a different language, I need, I am going to put the text underneath.

Steinar: I think you're going to have to frame it maybe more of...

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Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Open up a little bit more?

Steinar: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay.

Steinar: Show me a little bit of...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Like that?

Steinar: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Okay.

Steinar: There is room for flexibility [00:30:04]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You know, different companies, you know, you go to one shop and they'll say, "No, no. It's going to be tight." And then you go to another and they'll say, "No. We have to have his face." So, it depends, you know. BBC has its own rules. National Geographic has its rules. You know, but basically, what you don't want, I think, is a really wide shot unless, you know, she's Italian and she articulates with her hands a lot and then you probably would have opened this thing up.

At the end of the interview, you know, one of the keys to doing these interviews, you really have to know where you want to go with the interview. Before you sit down with these people, you have to know just like these stories like we were talking about Chad in the kitchen...

Chad: Yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You want to know what the end point is. What is it you want from these guys? You have to have a clear idea, you know, these people will give you 20 to 30 minutes of their time not so that they can have a conversation with you. You've got to have an idea where you want this interview to go. What do you want out of this person? Where do you want to end this thing up? And you work your way, that's what your reporter's notebook is about. You work your way toward that final goal.

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You know where you want to go and you question your way, you talk your way to that final goal, okay?

I did a story about a foreign correspondence in Afghanistan and I went with a Washington Post reporter. She interviewed some guy who was accused of attacking a female candidate who was running for the same office that he was running for. And it was pretty common knowledge this guy had been behind the campaign, a secret campaign to scare her, to intimidate her, to keep her from running for office. And this girl from Washington Post spent probably an hour and a half with this guy.

And she knew exactly what she wants about this guy. She wanted to get this guy to say, you know, "Yes, you know, I'm intimidating her. No, I'm not intimidating her. I think what she is doing, and women running for office is great or I don't like the idea that women are running for office in Afghanistan." Okay? And it took her an hour and a half to get to that final point, you know. And she said, "Well, you know, we've heard some people say that you're behind this campaign of intimidation, but, you know, of, against this woman who wants to run for office. Is that, you think, is that true?" But this is an hour and a half after she started the interview. And then he said, "No, I deny it." And she insisted a little bit, "But this is what these people say. So, you think, people, women running for office in Afghanistan, do you think that's okay?" That's where she wants us to go. It took her an hour and a half to get there.

Chad: Wow.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You have to know where you want to go with these interviews because she talked to this guy about his personal life, his family, his little camp, little campaign, how he would change things if he won the office. All of this stuff was a prelude to really, "Are you intimidating this female candidate?" She wants to tell a story about the female candidate who's running for office in Afghanistan and they're all being intimidated with that. You got to know where you want to go.

After you get to where you want to go, you ask two critical questions to this person and what are they? There are two questions you ask at the end of every interview.

Chad: "Is there anything else you'd like to say?"

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Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): A matter of courtesy, isn't it? Okay. You know, "Did I miss something? Anything else you want to talk about?" And when you suggest topics to these people, you know, be careful not to lead them into where you think you want to go. You know, ask these people the simplest way to get some reaction with these folks and just say, you know, "You know, we've heard about, this intimidation of women and we don't know that it's true or not, you know. But can you talk about that a little bit?" Ask him to talk about something. "Can you talk about that a little bit? Talk about that," and then they'll start, okay? Get the view—to end the interview, "Did we miss anything?" And there's one more question that you ask them. What is that question?

Rhett: "What do you want to ask me?"

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That should be covered in the one that we just asked, I think.

Rhett: Yeah.

Ann: "What is the most important thing you need to know?"

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You ask them this. You're close. You ask them this. You say, "What are your greatest concerns and fears about this? What are your greatest concerns and fears?" And for the first time, you may get these people to actually stop and dig in to themselves and think as opposed to giving you the canned, "You know, I've been, I've answered this question 500 times already. You know, what are your greatest concerns and fears about this issue?" And they'll give you solid answers, I think.

And then you say, "Okay, you know what, the interview is done but I want to make some picture of you. I want to get some ambient sound and I want to do a little bit of video portrait." Okay? So, we open up the camera just a little bit. "And I'm just going to talk about the things that we discussed here. We talked about your job as—your role as a—female filmmaker and we talked about women who make films."

Kalpana: Uh-hmm.



Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): We're rolling now, okay? We're rolling. "And we discussed the intimidation of women in Afghanistan during elections."

Kalpana: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): "And we talked about what you do as a candidate if, you actually won the seat in the parliament. So, I'm just going to sit here for a bit. You know, if you want to, you know, just think about those things and we'll get some ambient sound that I may need here to mix these things up and we'll do that for about 60 seconds."

Rhett: So...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And the material you get from this could be extremely usable when you want to cut this thing together because you watched this person's face change a little bit and here she will shift maybe in her chair. And you can use this stuff just looking, not talking and it could be great stuff.

Karen: That's like she said, "I do intimidate people. And so I'm nodding my head."

[LAUGHTER]

Rhett: Do you think the gap pulls stuff out of them? I mean, that it creates, you know, a...

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's the intention.

Rhett: Yeah, okay.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's it. To provoke emotions, provoke a bit of a reaction to, you know...

Rhett: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Just some change of their facial expression that you might feel appropriate as you can cut into, you know, the final version of the interview.



Rhett: But for them [00:36:31] the journalist's trick is that, not to nod or to say, "Yeah." Well, look there, whatever.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You raised a good point.

Rhett: Just look straight out, you know.

Chad: Yeah.

Rhett: Because they'll sometimes continue on.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah.

Rhett: Dig deeper.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. You raised a good point. You know, you don't want, you have to be careful and recognize that this is not in your work. During a review of students' work the other night, you got to be careful not to step onto your interviewee. You can't say, "Uh-huh, uh-huh." You have to learn how to sit there and go.

Chad: Uh-hmm.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And if you doubt something, you go, you know.

[LAUGHTER]

Chad: Shame them.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): You know, you use your body language to communicate because your verbal language is going to show up on the tape. So, when you get a minute of this stuff of silence and her—hopefully, squirming in her seat because she really did steal all that money.

[LAUGHTER]

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): And intimidate those candidates, then you're done. Any questions? Bruce.



Bruce Jones: I often use, at the end of an interview, ask them again to say their name and title.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah.

Bruce Jones: Because they're very much more relaxed.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah.

Bruce Jones: And you get it much better.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): Yeah. And they'll slow it down a little bit too.

Bruce Jones: Yeah, yeah.

Speaker (Prof. Bill Gentile): That's a very good point. I ask them, I try to get this thing at the beginning, get it in the end and, you know and if it sounds too rapid fire to me, you just say, "Take a breath. You know, you have to be slower." And you got to be careful about having these people run on forever and ever, you know. Don't ask them for sound bites because it sounds, too, I think, people recoil [00:38:06] against that idea of giving sound bites.

You know, if they're running along, you know, tell them, "Look, I'm going to ask you these questions and take a minute to think about the answers because if you give me answers that are really long, I can't cut them, I can't use them. So, if you can condense them a bit, make them more a little bit more compact, they're going to be a lot more usable, okay? So, when I ask you, how do you feel about women running for office in Afghanistan? Think before you answer." And then kind of turn away, you know.

This relationship here can be one of the most gratifying components of everything that you do because there's an intimacy about this. There's intimacy about this relationship and there's a level of gratification and satisfaction you get. This might, these aren't always bad guys. These are some good guys here. You know what I mean? You're talking to these guys and, you know, you want to draw them out and it's a really compelling dynamic here if you do this properly.

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Thank you for being our subject.

[End]