

## Assignment 5

### Documentary short

It's time now to take all the new video shooting and editing fundamentals you have learned and produce a documentary short.

#### Here is what I would like to see in your finished piece:

- Your documentary should be no more than 5-10 minutes long. Each student will have a different length and I will help you determine what that should be as you build your final story edit in Final Cut.
- Your documentary should be tightly focused. Avoid tangents that divert from your central story idea. It is important to formulate the basic idea of your doc as precisely and clearly as possible. If you do not know why you want to tell this story, what it is about and where the story is going, then it might not be a very good idea for a documentary.
- Your story can be anything you want, but it would be great if you had a strong central character.
- Think about possible themes for your documentary. Is your story about a social issue? A revealing story about a person? A quest for justice? Maybe a story about a sub-culture within your community. Whatever story you decide to do, the most important thing to remember is to have truth as your foundation.

#### Before you start

Write up a proposal of the story you want to tell. First, tell me what the story is in **one sentence**. Now write up a few paragraphs about the story and who your central characters are. Tell me your basic plan on what footage you'll need to shoot, who you would like to interview and why someone would want to watch your documentary on this subject.

#### Storyboard your documentary

Create a visual storyboard outline of your documentary using sticky notes of all the shots you think you'll need in your finished edit piece. (I will explain further.)

Tell me if you plan on using your own gear or the schools, whether you plan on editing on the School's Final Cut Express or your own.

You now have less than 4 weeks to shoot and edit your doc. As you shoot, get the footage captured into Final Cut so that I can see what you have shot. We are going to be moving into a period of a lot of hands on work, with me giving you a lot of feedback. Do not wait until the last week of the quarter to start shooting!

You will receive two grades for your documentary based on:

## **Shooting and planning**

- Did you get approval from me to start shooting your story?
- Did you write a summary and create a storyboard?
- Did you actively work with me so that I could give you feedback on what you have shot?
- Did you shoot lots of wide medium, tight, and super tight shots? Creative angles? Visual variety?
- Was footage shot on a tripod? If it wasn't, was it steady? In focus?
- Were the lighting, white balance and exposure handled correctly?
- Was audio recorded correctly without distortion or too low of level?
- Did you prepare for your interviews, and did you get good responses from subjects?
- Did you use a tripod for interview? Was interview well lit?
- Did you shoot with a purpose?

## **Editing**

- Did you craft a story that was interesting and had something to say?
- Did you edit in sequences from video footage you shot?
- If you recorded a voiceover, was it well written? Effective?
- Does your video story have enough b-roll to cover most of the talking heads?
- Did you mix your audio so that each clips pings between -6 and -12 db?
- Did you color correct your video?
- Did you use lower third titles for subjects?
- Did you keep organized in Final Cut?
- Does documentary have a beginning, middle and end?  
Did you do a final cut of video where you fixed all the audio bumps and other glitches in the edit?