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Professor Eric Faden
English 639-Film/Video Production Seminar
3/4/13

Documentary Film Treatment

Title: “Re-Entry: A Look at the CARE Program and how it’s changing lives”

Format: 15-20 minute Documentary Film

Audience: Ex-Offenders, Probation Officers, Prospective Mentors, Members of Congress, Attorneys, and General Public

Format: HD Video, AF 100 Camera using various detachable lenses, (18mm to 100mm) ranging in depth of field.

Lighting: All interviews will be a basic well lite 3-point lighting setup.

Text: All titles will be a simple, basic text such as Ariel or Copperplate.

Audio: All audio will be instrumental and contemporary. In opening scene and all scenes where the Participants are discussing their past, the audio will reflect the visual mood. Likewise with scenes where Participants are discussing their success and things that keep moving them forward such as family, the CARE Team, the audio will reflect the mood.

Objective of Film: To show the value of the CARE Program and its positive effects on participants as they are mentored through the process of re-entry into the community.

What I want to capture in this documentary is not only the stories told but also the relationships and bonds formed between Participants and the CARE Team and Mentors. This is the uniqueness of the program.

Style: I will visually share the personal testimonials of the CARE Participants by beginning with extreme close up shots of each participant (hands fidgeting, saddened eyes, creases on the forehead) My intent is to paint an intimate portrait of the participant as they share their lives and stories with us. I want the camera to see close up the pain on their faces and reaction in their bodies as they tell their heartfelt stories. For this part of the interview I will use a 85mm to 100mm lens to capture a shallow depth of field. I would like the background to be out of focus.

Participants will be interviewed in one of the United States Probation Office meeting spaces. Cameras will also follow them throughout their day-to-day life,

which includes going to work, community service, spending time with family, attending CARE Court, and interacting with the CARE Team and Mentors.

If possible, I will interview the Participants family members to get an understanding of how CARE has affected all of their lives.

The camera will then follow the CARE Team and the Mentors, the heart and soul of the program. Getting to know them and seeing their sincere interest in the well-being and success of the Participants involved is what I will capture. This is why the program is so special. It has depth and meaning behind it. I will portray this with a lot of close ups of hands shaking, people smiling, Participants receiving awards, people clapping and graduation scenes from CARE.

These are two very different interpretations of the close up, one representing isolation and separation, the other connection and caring.

Cameras will also follow the CARE Team (CARE Judge, Probation Officers, Assistant United States Attorneys, Assistant Federal Public Defenders as they go about their daily work lives within the United States Probation Offices and Courtroom. Cameras will also follow them if they meet with Participants outside of the United States Probation Office.

The CARE Team will be interviewed in one of the United States Probation Office spaces, such as his/her office or Courtroom setting.

The Mentors of the Harrisburg Rotary Foundation, a unique element of the CARE program, will also be interviewed within one of the United States Probation Offices. Cameras will also follow them as they interact and mentor Participants within the community or at the Participant's home.

Synopsis

Three Participants at various stages of the CARE (Court Assisted Re-Entry) Program examine their lives while they are mentored through the re-entry process.

This documentary provides an in-depth look at ex-offenders who are trying to re-enter society after years of incarceration, the odds that are against them and how one program is trying to change all of that.

Main Characters

The three participants are Tyron, Lisa, and Trevor. They are all at various level of the CARE program. Tyron is the newest member of the program. He recently served six years and his longest stretch out of prison has been two years. He is only 34 years old. He is currently looking for work but feels rejection because of his past. Tyron states "the CARE program is helping me get a handle on life". He

likes that a variety of people and departments are involved and is surprised at the level of care and concern for his well-being and success. He has not encountered anything like this before and is hopeful that the CARE Program will propel his life in a positive direction.

Lisa has been involved with CARE for about 8 months now. She was recently granted release from prison due to her honesty and willingness to cooperate with prosecutors.

Because of the CARE Program, she feels she has goals to work towards such as getting her license. She feels like she is given the support and motivation she needs to work harder. She feels like she receives structure from the program, something that is needed in her life to move forward.

Recently, she tried to go to Cosmetology school but was rejected due to the nature of her past. She was heart-broken and wanted to dig a hole in ground but she felt that the people involved in the CARE Program helped scoop her up and encouraged her to keep trying. She is now trying to find alternate ways to her dream of Cosmetology.

When at first given the opportunity to join the program, she thought it would be torturous and nerve-racking. Now she feels like she has a support system. Lisa states "rehabilitation is the hardest thing".

Despite her recent rejection from Cosmetology school, Lisa has a lot to be thankful for including her new boyfriend, her job at a nearby candy store, being drug free and her support system at CARE.

Trevor is a major success story. He has a strength and determination that is inspiring and with the help of CARE has shaped his own destiny. He went from running guns and serving 42 months in federal prison to owning his own residential glass company. What CARE gave him was direction. He didn't know what he wanted or should be doing when he was released. He states "it's hard because you become institutionalized".

In addition to owning his own company, another positive attribute in his life is his family. Trevor is married and they are now welcoming their second child. He simply wants to provide for his family and do it legally. He is more than convincing when he says, "I am never going back to prison". Trevor is about to graduate from the CARE Program.

Story Structure

The video begins with a montage of images of a prison environment such a close up of barbed wire fencing, the silhouette of a guard as he emerges from a gun tower, inmates looming faces behind bars, and guards with guns walking the corridors, inmates pacing. While we are seeing these images a title screen appears with statistics of how many ex-offenders are released from prison each year and how many actually end up back in prison.

“More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison every year, and studies show that approximately two-thirds will likely be rearrested within three years of release.”

(United States Department of Justice. Prisoners and Prisoner Re-Entry. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_reentry.html)

We now see another title screen appear below the first one.

What can be done to help ex-offenders re-enter communities and stay out of prison, while having the best interest of the community at hand?

As the statistics fade out, the camera holds on a long, wide shot of the outside of a prison. We see it in the distance, it's detailing still visible. It is a stark and gloomy winter's day. The first signs of rain begin to berate the barbed wire fencing. The sound of rain and cold wind fade out the scene.

After a few seconds of black a long, wide shot of the outside of the United States Probation Office in Harrisburg slowly fades in. We see images of the nation's capital and courthouse. It is bright and the contrast in weather is very different from the previous scene. The Title of the documentary “Re-Entry: A look at the CARE Program and how it's changing lives” slowly fades in.

The video cuts to images of people going about their workday. We see Probation Officers walking down the corridors as the camera follows closely behind. We see the Judge in his/her chamber working diligently.

The camera now cuts to CARE court and Participants file in for their session. We are now introduced to the members of the CARE Team. We see Participants talking and smiling with members of the CARE Team. We now hear the CARE Judge speaking over these images talking to Participants.

Camera cuts to Probation Officer stating what the CARE Program is, what it stands for, how long it has been in existence, and the programs mission. As the probation officer is relaying this information we can see him/her talking to the Participants, especially Participant number one.

Camera cuts to Participant number one as he introduces himself and talks about what brought them to CARE and how long they have been in the program. It is here that we learn about the Participants past. As the Participant speaks about their past, we will “parts” of that person such as extreme close ups of their eyes, hands, parts of the face.

We are then introduced to Participants two and three in the same manner. Each of them will talk about their own individual reasons for being in the CARE Program and the past that brought them there.

We are now introduced to the CARE Team as their interviews give the audience a more in-depth look into the program explaining what the program is, when it began, who created the program, and why it is so special.

The CARE Team interviews now intercut between the Participant's interviews, as we get more involved in the stories of the Participants.

We now discuss the struggles and temptations, the trials and tribulations, the wins and the losses. The camera follows the Participants as they go about their daily lives interacting with family, co-workers, and the CARE Team. We see the Participants in his/her surroundings and gain a stronger connection to them as they tell their stories.

We now discuss why the CARE Program is so special, why it needs to exist and the Participants reveal the ways in which the program has mentored them into a positive life style that he/she could not gain on their own. The camera will show Participants interacting with CARE Team and see them engaging in situations that CARE has provided i.e. waiting in line to get a license, working the job that CARE helped that person receive, reading their writing assignment at their monthly CARE meetings.

As the video reaches its resolution, each Participants individual conflict is different. Some Participants are success stories (images of Participant at CARE Graduation), others remain hopeful and continue to aspire towards change (images of a happy family spending a day together) with the CARE Team always on their side.

We now have our resolution. As the video wraps up we have a better sense of the CARE Team, we are engaged and sympathetic to each Participant's story and want success for each one, and we understand why the program is special and essential.

One last final title appears over a black screen.

A very special thanks to the Participants who took a chance on this program and became pilots for the possibility of change. It is through your heartfelt stories that we become shareholders of the impact this program has on re-shaping destinies and in turn re-shaping the communities in which we all live.

Fade to Black. The End.