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*DREAMCATCHER FROM MAO'S LAST REVOLUTION: MY VENTURE INTO
CREATIVE SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY VIDEOⁱ*

By

CHRISTOPHER SHEA HOWARD, Bachelor of Arts, History and Political Science

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

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ⁱ Changes have been made to the acknowledgments to recognize contributions made by the Dallas Greater Land Choir Society and its conductor, Ellie Lin. The changes are also noted in the appendix.

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CREATIVE SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY VIDEO*

By

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ABSTRACT

Dreamcatcher From Mao's Last Revolution is a filmmaking venture into creative social documentary production undertaken by this filmmaker as his own experimental departure from narrative feature film production and the fiction genre. This thesis report not only describes aspects of this film production that are specific to the methodology of documentary film production, but also describes the film's cinematic expression of memory and the filmmaker's telling of the story. Some cinematic and conceptual aspects of the story are related to the film's influences, specifically to those theoretical concepts and techniques employed by documentary filmmaker, Werner Herzog.

The documentary story is primarily about the life of a Chinese woman named Shelly (Zhimei Xu), age 63, who was persecuted for ten years as a youth during the Chinese Cultural Revolution when hundreds of thousands of Chinese intellectuals and their families were denounced and millions of China's educated urban youth were relocated to countryside villages. She obtained her U.S. citizenship in 2008 and returned to China the same year to experience the Summer Olympic Games and Olympic ceremonies in Beijing and visit her hometown of Suzhou and the countryside town of Huangjing, where she had lived for ten years with a surrogate family and worked as a farm laborer.

The premise of the documentary story is of the filmmaker's making: A Chinese woman from Dallas, Texas, on the verge of becoming an American citizen, decides to attend the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and confronts her traumatic memory of China's Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) which collided with her youthful and idyllic expectations for a higher-education.

This written report contextualizes and reflects on this filmmaker's creative documentary process and production.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis report describes essential aspects of this filmmaker's creative process in the making of *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Last Revolution*, the creative social documentary about Zhimei (Shelly) Xu's experience with, and memory of, the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1967-1976). It takes place in settings of China (1967-2008) and the United States (2009-2012). Each part of the report is written to be read independently, but they benefit from being read with reference to each other. The written text attempts to address those aspects of documentary research with respect to conducting interviews, finding a story, crafting the audio-visual script, developing a personal style, and narrating and scoring the film. It is probably accurate to describe this filmmaker's process as a synthesis of writing, directing and producing.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to describe this filmmaker's production techniques and theoretical storytelling concepts used in the making of the thesis documentary film *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Last Revolution* which is a filmic expression of a biographical subject.

This report addresses the filmmaker's stylistic and methodological considerations that were central to the making of the film. A summary of the film story's events is related to the dramatic structure and relates the filmmaker's theoretical concepts to those employed by director Werner Herzog in the documentary film *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1998). This filmmaker's interest in the film mentioned stems from a personal interest in the filmmaking concepts and techniques reflected in Herzog's style.

WHY CREATIVE SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY?

When I transferred as a student into the graduate film production program, I was transitioning from my profession as a high school social studies teacher. And my interest in filmmaking and specifically in documentary film making is directly related to my experience as a storyteller in the classroom. I grew up hearing Greek myth bedtime stories which profoundly influenced my taste for stories. And most of my filmmaking experience has been in dramatic narrative storytelling. I do not agree with the attitude that fiction is too evasive or indirect for serious matters. No theater is more personal and, therefore, more profoundly honest, in my opinion.

However, as a teacher-filmmaker, I am attracted to the documentary making process and non-fiction documentary storytelling, which was designed primarily to provide insight into the world we live in. Because of my background and curiosity and concern for the world around me, I am drawn to the people and places of real-life events, and I feel compelled to learn about and tell real life stories—especially those stories that give a voice to the voiceless and visualize the personal experiences and transformations of its subjects.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

When I discovered and became friends with Shelly, I learned that she was potentially an ideal subject for a biographical documentary. Shelly, a warm and charismatic Chinese-American nurse with a fantastic memory for detail, was willing to openly discuss her experiences as a Chinese youth and her persecution during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1967-1976). When Shelly realized my interest in her story, she invited me to accompany her to China during the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 and to bring along a video camera.

I was aware of the dramatic possibilities of documenting her return to China. So, I proposed that we consider making a film together and discussed why I thought the film might be of interest to American viewers. However, a good story needs conflict and emotions in addition to the character's development. I asked Shelly to agree to undergo some preliminary, informal interviews and share her personal photographs from China. I was expecting to find a theme or a personal conflict to focus on in order to help establish a main idea. The resulting discussion did help us anticipate our visit to Shelly's hometown and the university campus in Suzhou University where her father had been the Dean of Physics before he was denounced, publicly humiliated, and jailed by the Communist Red Guard. Shelly also intended to revisit the countryside town called Huangjing in China's Taicang province, the setting where she had been forcibly sent to work as a farm laborer and where she lived for ten years with a surrogate family. The 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing would serve as a fresh approach to the film at a time when Americans were receptive to learning about China.

The plans for travel were set in motion. As a graduate student in film school, I shared the idea with my professor. Then I was on the plane to China with my subject whom I did not want to pressure with my early concerns. As the writer and producer of this film venture, I would need to clear my head and solve the task of finding a main idea and turning it into a working script. I was still not clear about what I wanted the film to do, but as a student filmmaker I knew the context in which the film would be shown. But would it be shown around the world? What approach was I going to use and how was I going to approach it?

SHOOTING LIKE A VIDEO JOURNALIST

As a film student who was learning camera work on film sets, I was unfamiliar with the techniques used by video-journalists in the field. I knew that I would be acting as lone cameraman and sound guy once Shelly and I were in China. So, first, I took a crash camera course from a fellow student who had worked as a cameraman in the field. He taught me some basic rules and convinced me to rent his 3-chip Sony DV (Mini-digital video tape) camera, which was more portable than the video cameras I was accustomed to.

I was instructed to hold the camera from below with my left hand and use my dominant hand to press controls and buttons. I was also taught to keep my left elbow in and turn my left hip towards the subject, my feet perpendicular to the subject and my knees slightly bent. And I would not be shooting interviews like in the news, so one shot was not going to be sufficient. I was shown how to quickly shoot adequate coverage of a subject by constructing a simple sequence of shots—mostly close-ups and cutaways, waist-up shots for interviews, and fewer wide shots. And I was strictly instructed to label my tapes with a number and a description as soon as they are ejected from the camera.

INTERVIEWS AND TRANSCRIPTS

The trip to China with Shelly resulted in multiple shoots and productive interviews. Our two-week long travels fortunately included every intended destination--the Olympic Village, Tiananmen Square, the Great Wall, Suzhou University, and the countryside town of Huangjing in Taicang province. In China, Shelly quickly became accustomed to being interviewed on camera. And when we returned to the States, we started planning follow-up interview sessions, which eventually became formal sit-down interviews at Shelly's home in Dallas

and involved a second crew member as a lighting technician/camera-operator who wore headphones attached to the second system sound recorder (Fig. 1). The follow-up interviews served as a comfortable way for Shelly to tell the camera about her childhood memories of the Cultural Revolution and her departure from China to the United States, as well as address her return to China in 2008. My main task as interviewer was to question and listen.

While conducting interviews in China, I realized that Shelly's English vocabulary was very good, but that her accent, especially when she was talking fast, was more pronounced and at times difficult to interpret. The sit-down interviews at Shelly's home, carefully conducted and recorded with a second system sound would serve as the primary interview footage and be effectively supplemented with the footage and on-location interviews filmed in China.

Though subjects are rarely told to speak directly to the camera, Shelly, while being interviewed in China, had become comfortable with addressing the camera directly. The sit-down interviews, conducted over Shelly's kitchen table with an amateur painting of a flower in the background increased the sense of closeness and intimacy. The camera was positioned five feet from Shelly at a slightly oblique angle, in order to create a slightly more three-dimensional look and to put Shelly fairly close to the interviewer. Shelly's boldness in addressing the camera directly served to create a sense of immediacy and tension. Shelly's energy and intensity help hold a viewer's attention.

The sit-down interviews, I realized, would cover many years of Shelly's life, and so I decided to reserve portions of the interviews for other interview locations at Shelly's home—such as the couch and the outdoor patio. And Shelly wore different clothing so that the viewer would be aware that the interviews were taking place over many days.

The filmed interviews, laden with usable discussion, of course needed to be transcribed. I created typed transcripts by listening to the footage and typing an exact description of the dialogue complete with notes that describe the quality of the footage, (ie) whether the subject is particularly energetic or when there is some sound interruption during the shot, a cough (ie).

RESEARCHING PRIMARY SOURCES

Aside from having access to Shelly's personal photographs, which documented her upper middle-class family life at Suzhou University and her life with a surrogate family of Countryside farmers, I felt that I needed to broaden my understanding of the historical event that was the Cultural Revolution and seek out its imagery. I found many illustrated books and historical documentary videos that were historical chronologies—particularly useful in relating my subject's experience to the dynamic nature and character of the overall event. The chronological histories convinced me that I would have to learn much more specific information about Shelly's involvement in the Cultural Revolution--I knew she was deputed as a "Little Red Guard" in 1967 and later became one of China's "sent down" urban youth until 1976. The knowledge required for a thorough grounding in the subject was beyond my abilities as a lone and fairly inexperienced researcher. The results of my online searches for royalty-free (flat fee) images was somewhat disappointing in that such images were most often not political in nature. The rights-managed materials at Getty Images and National Geographic were useful but more expensive and involved more complex licensing agreements. I did find a DVD online, titled "Nixon's Trip to China 1972," which was a National Archives release of the first U.S. president to visit China. The trip took place during the Cultural Revolution on February 21, 1972. NBC's

John Chancellor, Herbert Kaplow, and John Rich reported, along with their co-anchor, Barbara Walters. When I purchased and reviewed the DVD, I learned that it was a compilation of rights free news footage. I was soon determined to follow the lead and search for primary source images myself.

In the summer of 2011, I made a research-trip to the National Archives in Washington D.C. specifically to the Maryland Branch building where many of America's Archival images and maps are catalogued and made available for researchers to duplicate with scanners and cameras.

There, I perused copies of photographs and screener tapes of actual films in the stacks. The NBC Network news footage that features an anchorperson, I was told, would probably require special permission if I were making a documentary for other than educational purposes.

It was also explained to me that the visual materials held by the United States are often in the public domain, which means the material is license free and permission to grant its use is not necessary. In the US film stacks I located propaganda films that were made by the Chinese government in 1966 and translated into English by someone uncredited. The Archive was prepared to make me a copy of the film in either standard definition DVD or HD for a price. Fortunately, I also found copyright free photos of the Cultural Revolution, specifically of those Chinese Red Guard marches and student protests as well as photos of those educated youths who were sent down to the countryside (Fig. 2).

During the last day of my visit, unfortunately, the city of Washington D.C. and the National Archives building were struck by the shockwaves of the 2011 Virginia earthquake, and we were evacuated. A researcher named Mary Benson was excited about my research and offered to complete and catalogue my high-resolution scans of still photographs, 4800 dpi (main scan) 9600 dpi with Micro

Step (sub scan) and mail them to me. She explained that many of the researchers there are intimately familiar with the Archives and that they are happy to assist new researchers. She also suggested that, if I were to do research on American Scholars that visited China during that period, they might give me videos that they made that a news organization would charge for. These scholars might also have their own archives collections at universities in the U.S.

When I returned home to Texas, I had already learned that President George H.W. Bush had been Chief Liaison Officer to China from 1974 to 1976. I thought contacting his Library at Texas A&M University might be profitable. Since the Bush Library is a much smaller place than the National Archives or the Library of Congress, it might be easier to obtain helpful information on China in the 1970's.

ESTABLISHING THE STORY'S PERSPECTIVE AND WRITING THE NARRATION

The essential difficulties in creating the documentary narrative were to establish Shelly's film story goals, express her pursuit of the goals and resolve her personal conflict. Sheila Bernard explains: "A story is not simply about somebody experiencing difficulty meeting a goal; it's also... 'the way in which the audience experiences the story.'" (Bernard, 22). As the documentary storyteller I was facing a choice between the essay and the narrative approach. Shelly's energetic performances and mischievous behavior during the walk-along interviews, along with her personal observations, demonstrate her character and elicit sympathetic and positive reactions. However, while Shelly's performances are full of conflict and change and actively drive her towards her goal, they could

not, in my opinion, sustain the narrative from scene to scene because her story takes place in starts and stops over a period of years.

For flexibility, I decided to put Shelly's performances into the context of an essay that I would narrate as the filmmaker. The narrated essay serves to add a contrasting perspective to that of Shelly's, one which I feel the audience can identify with and appreciate. The essay narrator makes it possible for the story to easily follow change over time when the storyteller perspective shifts from subject to narrator, and it serves to clearly communicate key points about the story avoiding the possibility that Shelly's heavily accented English would muddle her message. Shelly's performances readily sustain a series of episodic vignettes that are transitioned by the narrator's commentary.

MAKING THE AUDIO-VISUAL SCRIPT

In the process of beginning this documentary, I quickly learned that documentaries, unlike scripted narrative films, are constructed in reverse because documentary makers don't have a ready script until after they shoot and assemble the documentary footage. Consequently, the filmmaker must find the story in the assembled materials and craft the audio-visual editing script. When a script is devised before the principal photography stage of a narrative film, the ratio of footage used in the completed film is typically around a 4:1 ratio. During the course of shooting and gathering footage for a 40-minute documentary film, I compiled nearly fifty hours of footage which included 20 hours of interviews. That is just about a 50:1 ratio of unused footage for a forty-minute film. Finding a story in the footage required organization and patience.

In the first stage of creating a script for a forty-minute documentary, I made a detailed survey of the interview transcripts and selected the most useful

material for making twelve scenes with lengths of one to three or four minutes each. The blocks of typed dialogue on the interview transcripts were reformatted so that all useable dialogue was broken down into section lengths of thirty seconds or less and were supplemented with footage source information and specific time-codes (Figs. 3-4). Then I made a paper copy of the selected material and physically cut into strips the time-coded sections of dialogue, reassembling them into workable scenes (Fig. 5). The newly constructed scenes of transcript dialogue were then reformatted into the audio-visual script and supplemented with visual information (Fig. 6).

OPENING IMAGES AND THE INTRODUCTION

The opening images and the introduction of *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Revolution* seek to introduce the viewer to multiple timelines and locations in order to establish that the film will tell the story from changing perspectives in time and place--and will center on the political event called the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The editing of the introduction also establishes that the filmmaker/narrator is interpreting in his own way the story of the film's subject, Shelly.

The opening images of the introduction atop the Great Wall of China in 2008 show that the filmmaker and Shelly are amidst a crowd of visitors from around the world who have come to celebrate the pursuit of Olympic Dreams in Beijing. The camera takes aim at the film's subject, Shelly Xu, who is addressing the Great Wall and the people of China with personal greetings: "I [will] put it in English. Here is the Chinese Great Wall. Every Chinese is Wonderful. We are in celebration for we hiking to the top. Celebration for our smart and brave ancestors." The film's narrator establishes that the subject's dream is also being

realized atop the Great Wall (Fig. 7). Viewers are told that Shelly's dream inspired her departure to the United States in 1987. And Shelly, on the verge of having her new American citizenship, has returned to China in 2008 with greetings for her previous homeland. The narration states the obstacle that menaces Shelly's return: "This crossing of paths in time, she knows, brings a reckoning with her youth during China's Cultural Revolution—that haunted time and place that abandoned her youthful soul and gave rise to her dream."

The camera's perspective transitions to a skyline above Shelly's home in Dallas, Texas, where she is pinning laundry onto a clothesline (Fig. 8). The narration continues and the camera transitions indoors to the television screen which shows grainy images of Chinese soldiers in a desert who wear gas masks and ready themselves for action before the bright blast of a nuclear detonation. Chinese civilians sing and dance together in the streets of a Chinese city: "I would soon learn curious things about my Chinese American friend and the Chinese youth of her generation, and about that defining event that shaped the dreams of China's so-called "Forgotten youth." The camera moves to Shelly's kitchen table where Shelly is sharing her personal photographs. The narrator reflects upon their visit together to China and the Great Wall: "Shelly has consented to look back with me...as I was just curiously following along those years ago as a visitor in her land."

The Dallas sky swirls with clouds and the sun's rays shine through. Shelly ascends a stairway in her home and the camera follows her to a brightly lit window (Fig. 9). The subject looks out and suddenly there is a transition to video images of the narrator/camera on the Great Wall, aiming his camera into the on looking camera (Fig. 10). The over narration states: "This return, for me, was to see home [China and the USA] through Chinese eyes." The camera turns to

capture Shelly's and the narrator's shared perspective at the window—where neighborhood rooftops of Dallas, Texas, appear to resemble the parapets and forms atop the Great Wall (Fig. 11).

ACT 1: THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION COMES

The objective of the first act of the narrative is to quickly establish the dramatic situation in the form of an incident that alters the story's focus and identifies Shelly's personal conflict so that the viewer may anticipate a range of outcomes. *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Revolution* illustrates the story world of Shelly's memory with visuals that serve as dreamlike landscapes. The portrayal of documentary images as dreamscapes serves to establish a tension between the realism of the documentary images and the unseen nature of Shelly's personal experience. The event of the Cultural Revolution shattered Shelly's idyllic expectations for a college education, established her desire to resist the label of "class enemy," and inspired her struggle to regain her personal dignity and the values of her family heritage.

The audience is formally introduced to Shelly during the kitchen table interviews at her home in 2010. Comfortably dressed and seated, she faces the narrator and the camera and tells of her childhood background. The camera is positioned just behind the narrator's shoulder which is visible in the frame (Fig. 12). Shelly states: "My name is Shelly and I am Chinese. I came from China to US in 1987 to chase my big dream. To further my education. I think people here think this dream is too simple." Her introduction is supplemented with a color photograph of Shelly in 1987, smiling, at age 37. The film transitions to a college campus in Suzhou, China, in 2008 where Shelly is dressed in athletic wear-- jogging in place and warming up for a run. The video footage of Shelly in her

former hometown, along with childhood photographs of her family in 1966, serve to supplement her telling of the story as memory (Fig. 13):

And to me, education is like three meals. Primary school, Middle School, and University, like three meals, like, 3 steps. And my father believed education so important. And China's society was deeply influenced by Confucius' philosophy. Usually people who are highly educated are mostly superior in the society.

Shelly's statement that the "highly educated are mostly superior in society," along with images of her well-educated, upper-middle-class family, establishes that Shelly comes from a family with an educated background.

The scene that follows introduces the coming of the Chinese Cultural Revolution after which educated middle class families such as Shelly's were denounced as political enemies of the Chinese people. The film illustrates the event with clips from a newsreel that shows crowds of militant Chinese Revolutionaries surging through the city streets as China's leader, Mao-Tse Tung, waves with approval (Figs. 14-15). An animated map of China illustrates the speed and magnitude of the event and shows that the Revolution spread quickly from Beijing to the surrounding cities and, eventually, throughout China to Shelly's hometown of Suzhou. She remembers her surprise and excitement: "In China in 1966 I was almost finished with High School. And then I was going to study University entrance exam. But all of a sudden, everything changed. Everything was turned upside down and [the] Revolution started."

Shelly recalls how students of China's universities and high schools were quickly recruited as participants and directed to help achieve the objectives of the Cultural Revolution:

When the movement first started, somehow, I was considered one of the Red Guard. And I was able to put a Red armband, have three words [that] said, "Red Guard Army" Red Guard. And I would wear it just like every kids in my classroom. And I was one of their peers.

The film again transitions to video footage of Shelly at Suzhou campus in 2008. Shelly jogs through the gates of Suzhou University stadium where freshmen students, dressed in military fatigues, are being drilled by the army. An army captain shouts orders and a group of uniformed girls stands quickly to attention (Figs. 16-17). Shelly continues: "And we [were] shouting with our fist right up and said [in Chinese] which mean "crush down the old education system." The girls in uniform begin to march and shout in unison. Shelly, standing nearby, watches intensely as the girls march past (Fig. 18). She recalls the experience with a grin that acknowledges the excitement of her memory: "And we hardly understand what that Cultural Revolution exactly it was. But only we understood to destroy old system." The girls continue to march past in column, shouting rhythmically, but the video is suddenly intercut with black and white archival images of the Chinese Red Guards marching in the streets.

Within days of the Cultural Revolution's arrival the enemies of the Revolution were identified. Those in the enemy's ranks included teachers, professors, and other political authorities—many of whom were publicly

denounced, arrested, and labelled as political subversives (Figs. 19-20). Shelly's own father and family were targeted:

Because of his education was received in the United States, he was no longer allowed to teach physics in the university. The Red Guard in the university supervised the group of my daddy this kind of "class enemy" they [were] called and treat them like uh prisoners. Because my father was class enemy of Cultural Revolution my family obviously is in the trouble. During the Cultural Revolution there is very famous couple of lines [which mean] "Father revolutionary, son is a hero. Father reactionary, son is bastard." So, I am the one was categorized in that group called in English words literally translate is "Evil Puppy" group.

The schools remained closed as Mao and the Revolutionary leaders declared a new children's crusade called the "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside" campaign. The only way to make city youth understand the Revolution's goals, it was decided, was to teach them the ways of the farmer. The entire generation of China's educated youth was sent to make their new lives in the countryside. At home the punishments and interrogations and murder continued. Shelly, at age 17, is forcibly removed from her home and relocated to an impoverished village in a countryside province called Taicang where she learns to work and live with a surrogate family of village farmers. Shelly was not told that her service in the countryside would last for ten years.

ACT 2A: SENT DOWN

In Act 1 of the narrative, Shelly is labelled a class enemy of the Cultural Revolution, is forcibly removed from her urban home, and is “sent down” to become a laborer and live in the Chinese countryside. In Act 2A Shelly must learn to cope with adversity in an alien world of hardship and hunger before she can appreciate the life and education, she dreams of having.

The film transitions from Shelly’s experience as a Little Red Guard in the city of Suzhou to her 2008 reunion with friends in a restaurant in Suzhou (Fig.21). These friends were her classmates in High School and accompanied her to the countryside in 1967. Afterwards, Shelly and her friend, Anming, catch a bus that takes them on a two hour-long ride to the village named Huangjing. They arrive at the home of Fong-Je, one of the village women in charge of caring for the two girls during the Cultural Revolution. Reunited, they share slices of watermelon (Fig. 22). Shelly recalls her arrival at the village in 1967:

We didn’t see any electric lights. But we saw lots of shadows. Everyone hold[s] oil lamp[s] around the house. We could not see detail what they look like, but their lamp[s] check our face. Just [to] make sure what city girls look like.... And three months after, they built a little straw house for us and made of mud for the wall and the top was straw. And the house never will be nice like a farmer’s house built of the bricks because our little straw house budget came from the community funds.

Shelly and her classmates soon learned to work in the fields for ten hours a day in torturous summer heat: “Before you plant that green rice, the land was rough, dirty mud with water. After your hard labor, [it was] just like embroidery--

the earth, the land. It is beautiful, but costly.” (Figs. 23-24) They were paid for ten hours of work per day; and food, other than rice, was expensive:

At the time I wrote the letter to my mother and asked, or said, I wish there is someday a scientist can invented [a] kind of stomach never feel hungry, so therefore we can work hard in the field and come home not worry about cooking and just relax and enjoy the leisure life.

One of my best girlfriends, her name is Chi Wan. And she knew how to cook the eels as a dinner. And farmer knew that and caught lots of eels for Chi Wan one day to cook for us. To kill the eel you have to put it in the bucket with the boiling water with the lid on it. So, Chi Wan put more than ten eels in the bucket and poured hot water inside and before we could put that lid on, that eels jumped out and flew out like fireworks in the yard everywhere--the furthest like 6 feet away. God that was adventure. Scared me. Meanwhile, was fun.

In the countryside the girls did not have running water or electric lights; but as long as they had oil for their lamps, they could read novels that were smuggled out of the cities by other students—western novels by Tolstoy and Balzac and Dumas were banned because of their political nature:

The professor [at] the time was in the movement [was] the center of the target. They could not have these books in their hands, no way. They will be criticized from the time they open their eyes to the time close eyes. The farmers mostly don't know how to read, but we city girls loved it. As

long as we had oil lamp and we had the novels, the books, we could read--we had spiritual food.

The girls designed their own skirts and made up their hair for photographs: "I imagined that I'm one of the characters in that western novel book, like Anna Karenina, and took these kinds of silly pictures. You will be happy wherever you live, in your dreams, in your fantasy" (Fig. 25). Ten years went by and Shelly learned to cope with hardship, hunger and homesickness: "To me I learned a big thing--appreciation through the hardship life. I learned to appreciate the life I had before I went into the countryside, and I appreciate the life I have now."

ACT 2B: A NEW HOPE

In Act 2B of the film it is 1977 and Shelly returns home from the countryside dissatisfied with the prospects of a future without a higher education. But Shelly's determination and political events between China and the United States conspire to bring new opportunities--along with difficult struggles in pursuit of her new American dream for a college education.

Shelly, like the other "Sent Down" youth, had returned to the city without the skills necessary for jobs in the city. She had contemplated her future in the countryside:

In the countryside when there was no moon and the night total pitch dark sometimes we took a stroll outside the little straw house. We put our hands in front of our face a foot distance and we even cannot see our hands. We say that is our future. You know who you are very clear inside, but you don't know what you would be, what you could be. We were

getting older year by year. What about dating, and marriage and have family, a career, get knowledge, go to school, get a degree, find a better job? (Figs. 26-27)

In 1972, China and the Cultural Revolution had been altered by political events when the American President, Richard Nixon, traveled to Beijing and effected a thaw in U.S.-China relations. The film, with the aim of illustrating the easing of political tensions, juxtaposes historical news footage of the president's visit with video footage of an Olympic Ping-Pong match in 2008. The Ping-Pong match echoes the important role of "Ping-Pong diplomacy" and the exchange of table tennis players between China and the United States. The news-footage includes a statement by President Nixon:

And looking to the future I would hope that, uh, one of the developments that could occur as a result of our visit is that, apart from the relations between governments, that people will be able to come here and that, of course, Chinese people would be allowed to come to the United States. I don't suggest that the exchange of people solves the problems of the world or the problems between governments, but it so enriches the lives of people to know other civilization[s] and not simply to live on their own little islands.

The video of the Olympic Ping-Pong match includes a volley that lasts the duration of the president's comment and serves to illustrate "island" politics (Figs. 28-29).

Years later in 1976, Shelly's father receives a formal apology for his mistreatment and is reinstated as a physics professor at Suzhou University, but when Shelly returns home she learns that she is no longer qualified to attend the university because of her age. She is determined, however, to become educated and enters China's "Self-Learner" program while working a job at the university library sorting books. Within two years Shelly earns her certification in "English" and graduates from the program. Meanwhile, President Nixon's invitation has facilitated a student exchange program between China and the United States. In the film, a melancholy Shelly, wearing sunglasses, surveys the brick buildings of Suzhou University (Fig. 30). Shelly then crosses the university grounds, and the landscape is altered by the film transition in which Shelly appears to be walking out of the campus grounds in Suzhou and onto the grounds of the university campus at Mary Harding Baylor in Waco, Texas (Fig. 31). Shelly had applied to American colleges via the American Consulate and received her student visa. In 1987 she enrolls in the university's nursing program and takes her American name, "Shelly," on the day of enrollment at the age of thirty-nine.

The transition to America is difficult for Shelly who suffers from loneliness and struggles to earn enough money to survive and finish school. Fortunately, she meets a neighbor, named Gladys, who mentors her through school and becomes a surrogate mother to her (Figs. 32-33): "My dearly neighbor Gladys, she was the one who influenced my life extremely. I was highly influenced. And she had a master's degree in Education and was a primary school teacher, retired." Shelly eventually graduates and passes the State Board Nursing Exam and recalls receiving the good news that day:

People had question ask me “How did you feel?” when you got that letter. The feelings just like tornado, thunderstorms, running through. Later on exactly what feel? I think security. You swimming in that ocean, Pacific Ocean, forever. You were struggling, physically exhausted. One more strive and you reach the bank. You landed solid on the ground and you standing up. You feel your dream, you got your further education. You made one dream come true.

ACT 3: METAMORPHOSES

In the third act, the hero, Shelly, returns to China in 2008 to seek out her ultimate goal and resolve her conflict. The inciting event in Act 1 evoked a question that has yet to be answered as to whether Shelly can ever restore her sense of belonging and Chinese pride and reconcile the personal traumas that resulted from the Cultural Revolution. Shelly’s return to China in 2008 must result in a settlement of her conflict with memories of the past. A reconciliation with China’s past, Shelly knows, is to reconcile with the values of today’s China.

It is with hope that Shelly returns to China in 2008. The Olympic Ceremonies being held in Beijing seem to offer the promise of a new and more open China. But Shelly returns to her hometown of Suzhou, where haunting memories of the past are still vivid reminders of their power to harm.

Suzhou campus, where Shelly was raised and her family lived, is under heavy construction in 2008—tractors and carpenters are busy remodeling old campus buildings and constructing new ones. Shelly navigates the network of campus sidewalks and reacquaints herself—it has been forty years since the Cultural Revolution came there. Shelly recognizes the path her father walked on his way to work at the Physics building. She also remembers her father’s name

called by campus loudspeakers in the early weeks of the Cultural Revolution and his hurried walks from detention housing to attend sessions of interrogation referred to as “struggle meetings.” Shelly follows the path to the campus auditorium and inspects the walls and windows:

This auditorium was a joyful place when I was a child. But one day I walked past here and realized inside there was a big struggle meeting. The Red Guards and people filled the auditorium. Through the window I saw my dad’s face with a big cardboard sign hanging around his neck and his head was bowed down. When I saw my father on that stage my heart stopped. The Red Guards loudly asked him a question. When they did not like the answer, they knocked his head down.

Shelly’s memory quickly brought memories of other more vicious assaults on her father by the Red Guards—all in the name of eradicating western influences. Shelly circles ‘round to the front of the auditorium and inspects the street traffic (Fig. 34). The film’s camera finds a curious sight in the magazine stands across the street from the auditorium—a plethora of plastic-wrapped Vogue magazines, adorned with Western faces (Fig. 35).

In a home interview Shelly recounted the day she left for the United States and said goodbye to her family at the train station, and her story reveals her deepest sense of inner conflict:

Suddenly I realize, where is my dad? Then, I could no longer see him. I was leaning over the train window, then suddenly I saw him and he was far away, standing away from the whole family group. My father could not

come near to me, say bye. And I realized, I was shocked. He was taking his glasses off and started use his handkerchief and rub his eyes, the moment broke my heart, because I hardly see my father have tears. Obviously, my dad needs me, I didn't see that before, but I only said one word to him. I shouted, "Dad, dad! I will be your good daughter, I will hold the ambitious you give me, and continue to strive and to study to achieve, and someday I want you to be very proud of your daughter." That was one another personal big event, dream. Sometimes life can be so unpredictable. And in 1989 my second semester [in the U.S.A.] just started. Suddenly I got unexpected news from my dad's best friend, the letter told me my father passed away. Always crush me completely out because he was part of my personal, close, bloody dreams--to come here and define myself, who I am. And to make my dad proud of who I will be, and make him happy. But that dream in just one second was blow away.

We leave Suzhou for Beijing and arrive in Tiananmen Square, where Mao is still an imposing figure of power, but where the Olympic Gardens are a welcome and comforting change (Figs. 36, 37, 38, 39). Shelly is delighted to see a big, lettered sign in Tiananmen Square that reads "China celebrates the opening of the Olympics." I cannot help but be reminded by my research into the exhibition of crudely hand-written dazibao ("big-character-posters") posted in public places like campus universities and Tiananmen Square during the Cultural Revolution. The nature of such signs was to expose and publicly criticize opponents of the Revolution. In this case, the sign faces the portrait of Chairman Mao and suggests, perhaps, that the new China has changed its direction by opening itself to the world—if only symbolically. (Fig. 37.2).

The landscape of Beijing is transformed by Olympic Games adornments. Shelly is amazed at the sight of Chinese cheerleaders wearing American costumes—and the rock music and the presence of people from around the world (Figs. 40-41). Shelly's mood is lifted and the film transitions to the Great Wall of China.

Atop the highest parapet of the Great Wall, Shelly has just spoken her greetings for home speech and is blowing bubbles that hover in the updraft. The small group of climbers at the top look out at the view of China's seemingly timeless symbol of authoritarian power. Shelly calls out in Chinese and sings a short phrase of the Olympic theme song. And then something surprising happens in the form of a teenage girl wearing a red hat. Shelly's fate of ongoing trauma and the loss of her idyllic and youthful pride, is confronted by a chance occurrence.²

The teenage girl is sitting on the steps and watching Shelly intently. Curiously, the teenager, like Shelly, is also wearing a red-brimmed hat. Shelly launches another stream of bubbles and the girl reaches out and catches one. Shelly addresses the girl in Chinese, and the girl responds, to Shelly's surprise. Shelly faces the cameraman and says, "She says I look 20 years old, Shea!" Shelly seems thrilled by the sight of the girl who sits facing her a dozen feet away (Figs. 42-43-44-45).

The film then transitions to a wide shot of the Great Wall hillside, where a Hollywood-sized sign is lettered with the message-theme of the Beijing Olympics,

² The "chance occurrence" of the final scene is both related to and revealed by the film's use of the dream mode, which is explained in the section entitled "SHEA'S VARIATION ON HERZOG."

“One World, One Dream.” Below the sign and the Great Wall, the Red Flag of China’s republic seems to wave with acknowledgement for the dreams being realized along the Great Wall (Fig. 46).

The film returns to Shelly’s home in Dallas, Texas. Shelly turns from the upstairs window and looks to the photo of her father—who sits contentedly at his professor’s desk (Fig 47). Outdoors, Shelly waters plants with a pig-shaped water-pitcher. The narrator explains that Shelly has joined with others of the “sent down” generation and the film reveals that a Chinese-American choir is performing the film’s music and that Shelly is among the singers (Figs. 48-49). In Shelly’s garden wind chimes ring softly in the breeze and nearby, a dragonfly flits away.

USE OF THE DREAM MODE IN DOCUMENTARY

Frank E. Beaver in his *Dictionary of Film Terms* describes Direct Cinema and Realist Cinema styles in traditional documentary films as those which “avoid techniques that impose subjective or directed attitudes on the recorded material” (Beaver, p. 250). The dream mode was a departure from these styles, and Beaver defines its traditional use:

Dream mode: A term sometimes used to describe motion pictures or parts of motion pictures whose stories and techniques suggest the workings of the mind, resembling either dreams or situations which are derived from the imagination. Films operating in the dream mode are often so labeled because of their lack of continuity and the illogical, unconnected manner in which images come and go on the screen. *Un Chien Andalou* (1928), a surrealist film, is often described as a film which operates in a dream mode.

Some parts of the screen version of Slaughterhouse Five (1972) function within a dream mode....

Important critics such as Hugo Munsterberg and Suzanne Langer have used the concept of dream mode as a distinguishing characteristic of the film medium. Langer maintains that films are like dreams, moving rapidly through space and constantly changing the images for the viewer as in a dream.

The use of the dream mode that portrays the psychological aspects of its subject has much in common with the “Avant-garde” films of the early surrealist movement, films Beaver defines as those that sought “to express subconscious states” (Beaver, p. 282) and that “arranged the imagery in incongruous ways so as to affect subjective, dreamlike meanings” (Beaver, p. 283). Beaver also notes that “Surrealism was born in a revolt against realism and traditional art” (Beaver, p. 283).

Walberg speaks of those artists at the heart of the surrealist art movement as belonging to a “spiritual orientation,” artists who endeavored to put surrealist methods of expression into practice and who gave “recourse to the imaginary, to dreams, to the unconscious and to chance...and defined [surrealism] as not a matter of aesthetics but as a way of knowing and a kind of ethics. ‘To change life,’ according to [Arthur] Rimbaud, was the prime concern” (Walberg, p. 7).

HERZOG'S VARIATION ON THE TRADITIONAL

The climactic scene in my film, *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Last Revolution*, was inspired by and created in response to the “dream mode” film techniques used in another documentary film, *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, directed

by Werner Herzog, who uses the dream mode to express an ambiguous reality or surreality that fuses real world landscapes and the psychological.

In the introductory scene of *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, the traditional use of the 'dream mode' is altered by Herzog in order to bring the viewer close to the film's subject in a personal way. He partially fabricates the scene in which the subject, Dieter Dengler, a real-life American hero, is filmed while he oddly and repeatedly opens and closes the door to his car and then the front door to his house. Dieter tells the camera that his captivity by enemy soldiers made him "realize the importance of having the freedom to open and close doors."

Herzog's fabrication of the scene became controversial, but he explained that his concern was to reveal profound truths in addition to merely objective truths. Herzog invented this controversial scene, but his subject, the real-life Dieter, was convinced by the director to go along with it. Herzog, as the story teller, however, is more concerned that the audience should experience Dieter's psychological truth which is his claustrophobia--a result of his wartime captivity and torture. The viewer, by watching Dieter explain his repeated opening and closing of doors, is being confronted with a hallucination; the 'real world' objects, like the doors and bags of rice that Dieter buries beneath his kitchen floor, become psychological landscapes within the subject's mind. We, the viewers, are experiencing the cinematic 'dream mode.' But the 'dream mode' as traditionally defined is being subverted by the director, Herzog, who brings order to "illogical images" by performing both psychoanalysis and dream interpretation.

Herzog's treatment of actuality is fused with the psychological, and the filmmaker and the subject collaborate to project a sort of shared hallucination. Because the subject, Dieter, goes along with Herzog's fabrication, it seems as though the filmmaker and Dieter have developed an intense emotional

relationship. Herzog intends for the story to be a confessional narrative, but his approach to a confession is the reasoning of Freudian psychology. Robert B. Downs, in *The Books that Changed the World*, states that “Freud discovered what he called a factor of undreamt-of importance, an intense emotional relationship between the subject and the analyst. This is called ‘transference’” (Downs, p. 180).

Herzog and Dieter, it seems, are both playfully recognizing Dieter’s neurosis of compulsive thinking and paranoia; and they make use of Freudian psychology by illustrating Dieter’s repressed identity. Perhaps, clinically speaking, the story of Dieter Dengler is a subconscious mental journey of self-discovery and an explanation of Dieter’s tormented soul.

Herzog told of his use of landscapes in Paul Cronin’s *Herzog on Herzog* in which he stated, “The starting point for many of my films is a landscape, whether it be a real place or an imaginary or hallucinatory one from a dream...the landscapes aren’t so much the impetus for a film, rather they become the film’s soul” (Cronin, p. 83). Herzog’s explorations of the realm of the unconscious or the dream has much in common with those early surrealists. It was they, Waldberg writes, who had also sought “‘the language of the soul’ ...the expression – stripped of all logical device – of the profound ‘me’ in its nakedness” (Waldberg, p. 13).

SHEA’S VARIATION ON HERZOG

In the film’s introductory scene, the main subject, Shelly, a Chinese-American citizen, who wears a red brimmed hat, hikes to the top of the Great Wall of China in 2008. Armed with a hand-held plastic toy pig that blows bubbles from its pink snout, Shelly smiling and full of energy, shoots a stream of bubbles

that twirl from the toy into the Great Wall winds above the majestic view. Shelly, closely watched by the camera, gives an impassioned speech that expresses both her Chinese pride and greetings for home in which she states:

Congratulations, guys! I put it in English, so you all can understand. Here is the Chinese Great Wall. Every Chinese is wonderful. We are here in celebration for we hiking to the top. Celebration for our smart and brave ancestors.

The climactic scene near the film's end is a continuation of the introductory scene and becomes a surreal mixture of documentary and dream mode. The camera watches Shelly perform a speech and sing, while blowing bubbles, for a small group of onlookers who sit nearby on the steps (Fig.42.2).

During Shelly's performance, the camera discovers that a teenage girl is sitting on the steps and watching Shelly intently. Curiously, the teenager, like Shelly, is also wearing a red-brimmed hat. Shelly launches another stream of bubbles, and the girl reaches out and catches one (Figs. 43.2). Shelly addresses the girl in Chinese, and the girl responds to Shelly's surprise. Shelly faces the cameraman and says, "She says I look 20 years old, Shea!" Shelly seems thrilled by the sight of the girl who sits facing her a dozen feet away (Fig. 44.2). While I was watching Shelly's interaction with the teenager through the viewfinder of my camera, I was suddenly struck by the significance of the image of the teenage girl in the red hat, who mirrored Shelly on the Great Wall and who reaches out to catch Shelly's bubbles. My perception was suddenly changed, and the teenage girl became a symbol of Shelly's youthful soul and Shelly's dream goal being realized. The girl in the red hat was transformed by my

perception, and she became the reflection of Shelly's idyllic youthful pride, which was lost when the 17-year-old Shelly and her family were denounced and labeled class enemies of the State. Shelly's ascent of the Great Wall, along with the symbolic, joyous encounter, becomes the restoration of her youthful pride--the stuff of Shelly's dreams for 40 years.

Shelly delivers another stream of bubbles from the little plastic toy pig: "Do you think [the] pig is the best? Some people think [the] pig is stupid and ugly and dirty. But I think "pig" is pretty, intelligent and great. See, he can do lots of things you cannot do!" Shelly kisses the pig and blows another at the camera. The camera tilts up and out to the mountains as bubbles swirl. Shelly launches another stream of bubbles and calls out to the onlookers to "catch it!" The film then transitions to a wide shot of the Great Wall hillside where a Hollywood-sized sign is lettered with the message-theme of the Beijing Olympics which reads, "One World, One Dream." Below the sign's message on the hillside, the red flag of the Chinese republic waves with acknowledgement for the dreams being realized along the Great Wall (Fig. 46.2).

Werner Herzog contemplates the nature of such filmic hallucinations:

In the desert you can actually film mirages. Of course, you cannot film hallucinations which appear only inside your own mind, but mirages are something completely different. A mirage is a mirror reflection of an object that does actually exist and that you can see, even though you cannot actually touch it. It is a similar effect when you take a photograph of yourself in the bathroom mirror. You are not really there in the reflection but you can still photograph yourself. (Cronin, p. 49)

In the context of *Dreamcatcher From Mao's Last Revolution*, the little girl in the red hat is a real life hallucination that is sustained by the documentary camera's eye. She exists where the dream language of Shelly's personal truth, when realized, may negotiate the viewer's perceptions about the nature of the real and abstract world, where chance may provide hope against the inevitable forces in the universe.

The Great Wall becomes something other than a changeless symbol of Chinese authority. And Shelly's fate of ongoing trauma and of the loss of her idyllic and youthful soul is confronted by a hopeful, chance occurrence.

cont.

SCORING THE FILM

In 2012, Shelly became a member of the Greater Land Choir Society, a Dallas, Texas based Chinese American choir in Richardson, Texas, whose members include those of the zhiqing or “rusticated youth” generation of China’s educated youths who experienced the often traumatic events of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which included being forcibly removed from their urban homes and “sent down” for up to ten years to labor in the Chinese countryside (Fig. 49.2). The choir director allowed me to use the recordings of one of their performances to supplement the soundtrack for the film (Fig. 48.2). The inclusion of Shelly’s voice in the choir music of Chinese and American songs and hymns adds a personal addition to Shelly’s story.

STILL PHOTOS

The photographs that I have included, with a few exceptions, are stills from the documentary, *Dreamcatcher from Mao’s Last Revolution*, which for the most part serve to illustrate the narrative documentary story. Other images are included as supplemental descriptions of my documentary making process, and include personal photographs that were taken during my research trip to The National Archives at College Park, Maryland. A few of the documentary stills consist of images made from archival photos and archival film footage. The last photos (Figs. 50-51) are personal photographs of the subject with the filmmaker.



Fig. 1 The cameraman sets focus with a digital SLR Canon 7d. 2012

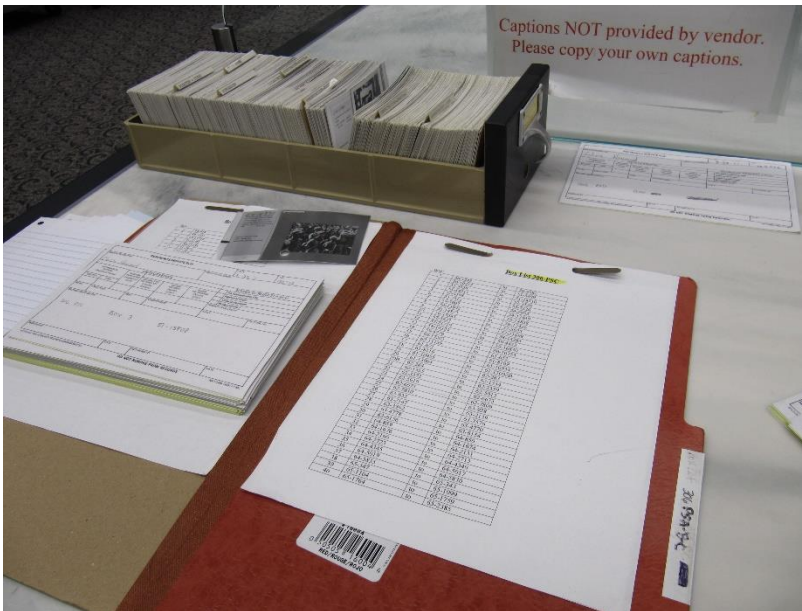


Fig. 2 Catalogued drawer of photos at the U.S. National Archives.

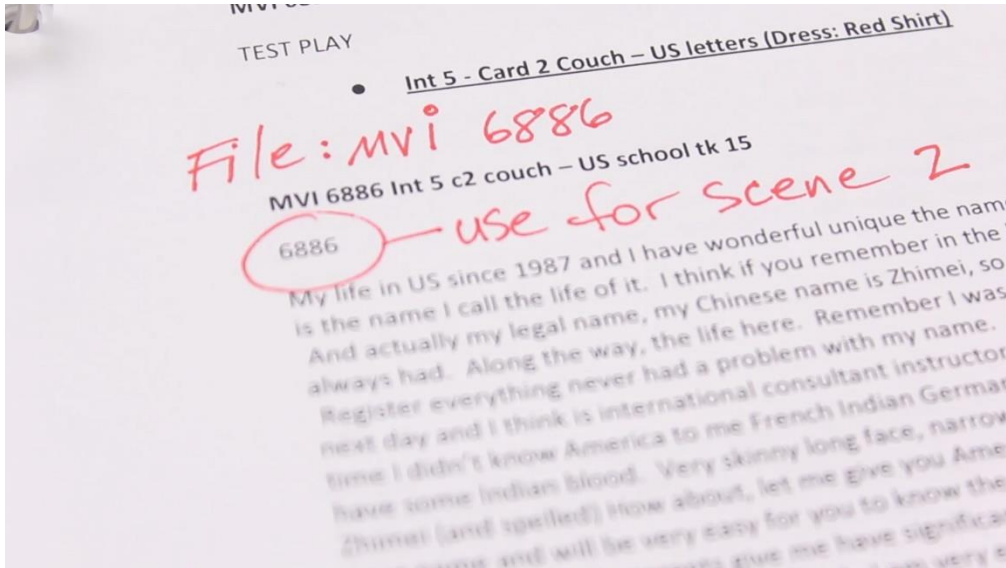


Fig. 3 The video interview audio is transcribed into text. The MVI video file numbers are used to reference the video sequences downloaded from the camera.

	believed education so important. Confucious philosophy."
.10	Int 1, 0269 (Wearing Scarf) = 3.40-3.50 / OTS WIDE; Superior in who are Highly educated are mostly superior in the society."
.08	Int 1, 0269 (Wearing Scarf) = 0.16-0.23 / OTS WIDE; father / educated and I came from this kind of family.
.10	Int 1, 0269 (Wearing Scarf) = 1.15-1.26 / OTS WIDE; Mott she was very strong and wise and very indep woman in r
	THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION COMES TO SHELLY'S HOM replaced with a new world

Fig. 4 The decimal point designates the time length in seconds for each sequence of the video interview.

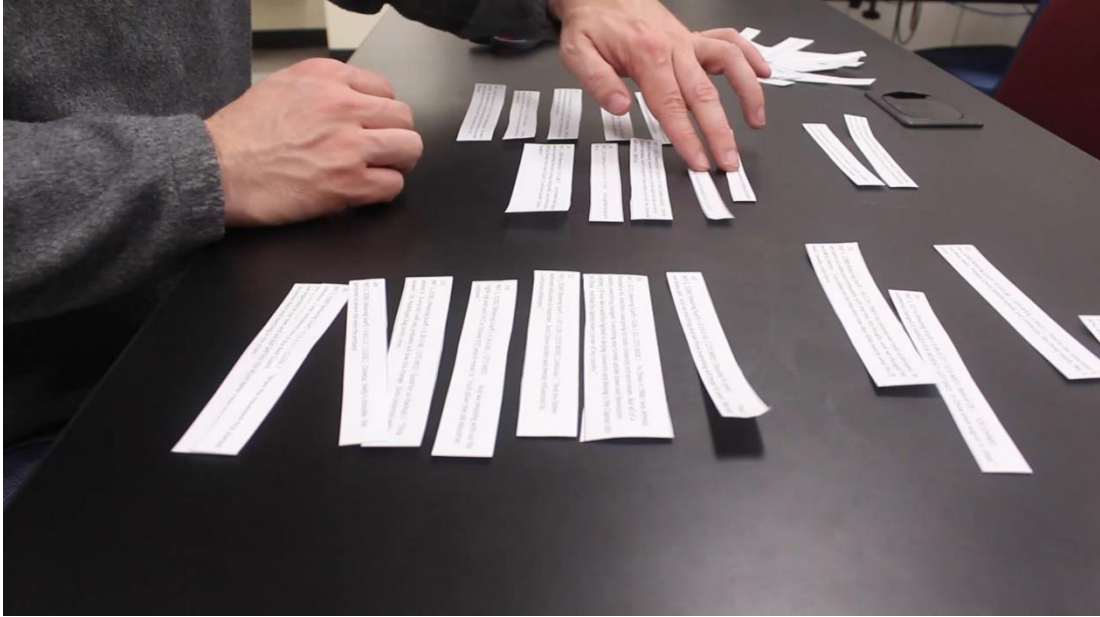


Fig. 5 Each transcribed sequence is cut into strips and rearranged into a new script and scotch-taped into place on another sheet of paper.

INTRODUCTION - SCRIPT: OPENING IMAGES

VISUAL	AUDIO
GREAT WALL - GREETINGS	
USE: DV Tape 02; 00-8.10 / DV Tape 03 / DV Tape 04 /	
Title Card: Beijing, 2008 The Great Wall is filled with people DV Tape 14, 12.32-42 = We see the Olympic torch and field at the Bird's Nest stadium--NIGHT. DV Tape 15, 7.27-8.10 = Torch at Bird Nest pan / cross dissolve with... DV Tape 14, 2.46-2.54 = We see Shea survey the field at an Olympic event at the Bird's Nest--NIGHT.	Shea: "It is July here in Beijing. I have come along with the people of the world to celebrate the pursuit of Olympic Dreams.
DV Tape 03, 00.05 – 00.40 = See Shelly buy bubble machine.	I learned that another dream was being realized / here along the Wall / In the spirit of my Chinese American friend.
Shelly ascends the Wall	A youthful dream inspired her departure from China to the United States nearly 20 years ago.
	On the verge of having her new citizenship, Shelly has returned with greetings for home.
DV Tape 3, 32.59-33.06 = Great Wall, Final Summit	
DV Tape 3, 28.56-29.12 = Steep step climbers up and wave	
DV Tape 3, 31.11-31.17 = Shelly climbs very steeply into camera	
Shelly climbs high on the wall to a place where few others remain	
Shelly gets an audience at the Top of the Wall NARA: We see a frenzied scene from the CR. DV Tape 4, 19.32 – 19.39 = Silhouettes on the Wall's Summit	But this crossing of paths in time, she knows, brings a reckoning with her youth during China's Cultural Revolution—that haunted time and place that abandoned her youthful soul and gave rise to her dream." We hear an aggressive crowd of Chinese Red Guards shouting.

Fig. 6 A video script features two separate narratives: one visual and one audio.



Fig. 7 Film's title set against a cinematic backdrop of China

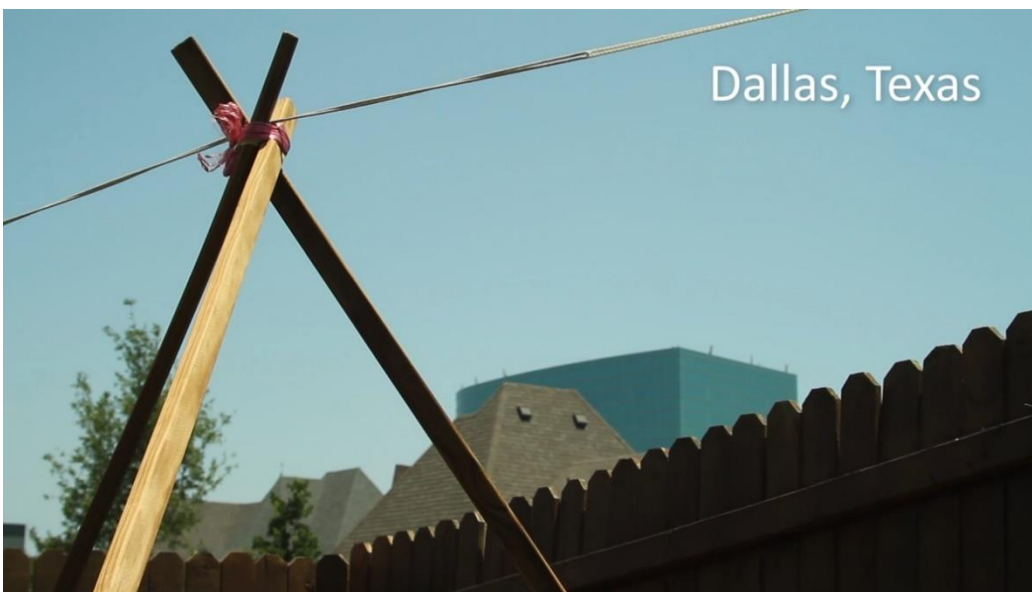


Fig. 8 Title sequence screenshot of a backyard fence and a laundry line in Dallas, Texas, in 2010



Fig. 9 The film's subject, Shelly, at her upstairs window in Dallas, Texas. 2010



Fig. 10 The filmmaker takes aim at the subject. China, 2008



Fig. 11 Shelly's neighborhood rooftops in Dallas, Texas. 2010



Fig. 12 The audience is introduced to Shelly during a kitchen table interview at her home in 2010



Fig. 13 Shelly (behind, right, age 17) with her family in Suzhou, China, in 1965. One year before the start of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in August, 1966



Fig. 14 Mao Zedong overlooks a crowd-filled Tiananmen Square. 1966

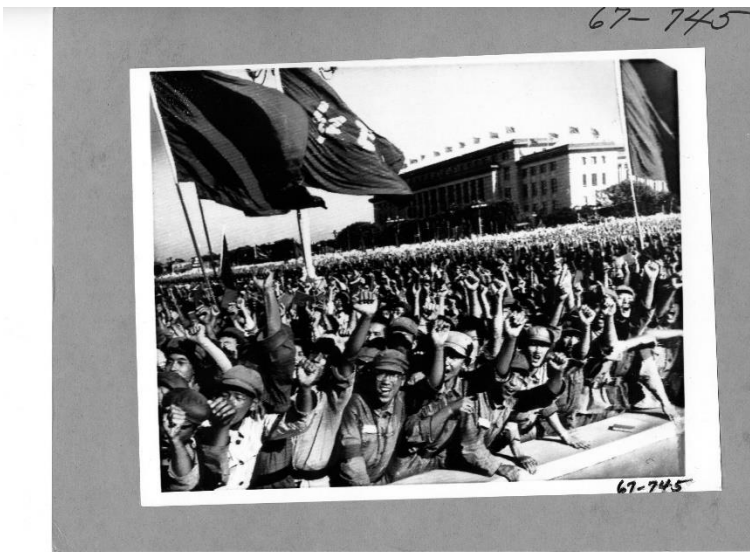


Fig. 15 Peking (Beijing), China: Members of Communist China's Red Guard, in their first appearance, demonstrate in Heavenly Peace Gate Plaza on Aug. 18, 1966. National Archives



Fig. 16 An Army captain addresses freshmen engineering students at the Suzhou University athletic field. Suzhou, China, 2008



Fig. 17 Six weeks of Army drill is compulsory for freshmen. 2008



Fig. 18 Shelly observes teenage Chinese students in army fatigues being drilled by the Army at Suzhou University athletic field, 2008



Fig. 19 Two targets of a struggle meeting. The sign says the wearer belongs to the "black group" and his family name (at right) is crossed out. 1967. National Archives

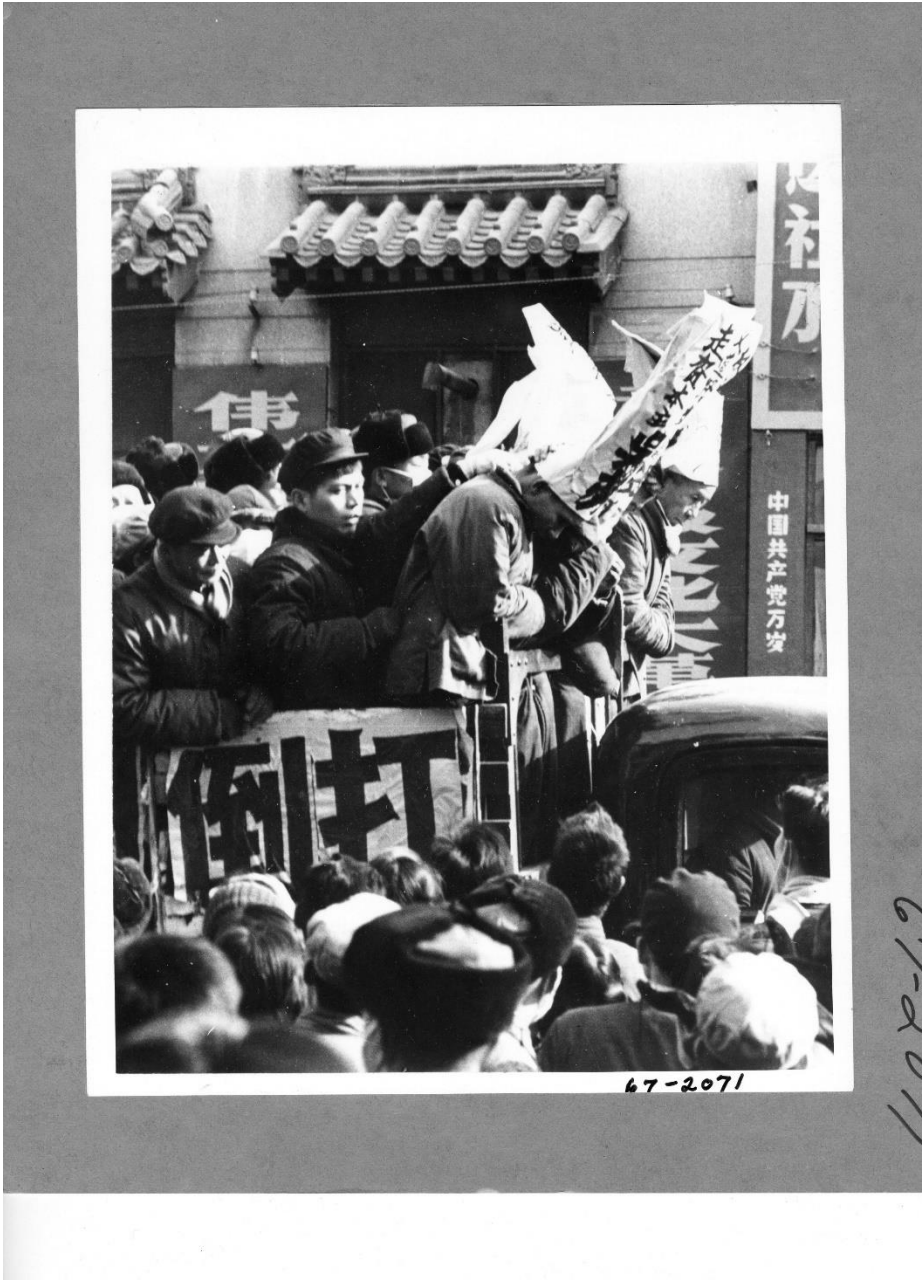


Fig. 20 Red Guards ridicule "Anti-Revolutionary" Chinese, forced to wear dunce caps. 2/10/1967 Source A.P. National Archives



Fig. 21 Shelly with her high school friends in Suzhou. 2008



Fig. 22 Shelly reunites with Fonje. Huangjing, China, 2008



Fig. 23 Sinkaing, China: Farm Plots at the Paotzuhong Production Brigade. 9/30/75. National Archives



Fig. 24 Sinkaing, China: farm plot and production workers. 1975



Fig. 25 Shelly and Anming play dress up in their home made skirts.
Huangjing, China, 1969.



Fig. 26 Corn crops beneath the moon at dusk. Huangjing, 2008



Fig. 27 Shelly visits with a farmer. Huangjing, China, 2008



Fig. 28 Richard Nixon giving an interview in Beijing, China, 1972



Fig. 29 Olympic Table tennis match. Beijing, 2008



Fig. 30 Shelly crosses the Suzhou University campus. China, 2008



Fig. 31 Revisiting Mary Harding Baylor campus. Waco, Texas, 2012



Fig. 32 Shelly becomes an employed nurse in Belton, Texas. 1990



Fig. 33 Shelly is reunited with her mentor "mother," named Gladys.
Belton, Texas, 2012



Fig. 34 Outside the old Soochow (Suzhou) University auditorium, 2008



Fig. 35 Magazine stand near the old auditorium. Suzhou, China, 2008



Fig. 36 Portrait of Mao Zedong on the Tiananmen Gate. 2008



Fig. 37 A big, lettered sign facing Mao's portrait in Tiananmen Square reads "China celebrates the opening of the Olympics."



Fig. 38 Olympic gardens near Tiananmen Square, 2008



Fig. 39 Standing guard at the Olympic gardens, Beijing, 2008



Fig. 40 Beijing National Stadium (Bird's Nest) 2008



Fig. 41 Chinese cheerleaders, Beijing National Stadium, 2008



Fig. 42 Blowing bubbles atop the Badaling Great Wall, 2008



Fig. 43 Swirling bubbles encounter a girl wearing a red hat.



Fig. 44 Shelly is delighted by the chance meeting at The Wall.



Fig. 45 The girl in the red hat applauds Shelly's speech and playful performance. 2008



Fig. 46 Olympic tourists crowd the Badaling Great Wall, 2008



Fig. 47 Shelly at her upstairs window in Dallas, Texas, 2010



Fig. 48 Film musical credits incorporated with a 2010 image from Shelly's upstairs window in Dallas, Texas.



Fig. 49 Shelly performs as a singer with the Greater Land Choral Society. Plano, Texas, 2012



Fig. 50 Shelly with the Filmmaker, Shea, at the Great Wall, 2008



Fig. 51 Shelly and Shea, Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, 2006

APPENDIX

This thesis was changed on 09/05/2022. The changes were to the acknowledgment section, the “Still Photos” section (including numbering in the article), and to the bibliography.

On the acknowledgements page an additional sentence has been added. This acknowledgment is to the Dallas Greater Land Choir Society and Ellie Lin, the conductor.

The caption text beneath the photos (Fig. 1-51) in the section “Still Photos” has been changed to clarify the descriptions of the photos. Additionally, the figure-photos have been reordered and renumber to reflect the references in the thesis text in linear numerical order.

The bibliography was amended to include credit to the National Archives at College Park, Maryland Branch.

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VITA

Christopher Howard graduated High School from Nacogdoches, Texas, in 1989 and entered Stephen F. Austin State University at Nacogdoches, Texas. He received a Bachelor of Liberal Arts in History and Political Science and Teacher Certification in May of 1997. The following year he moved to Dallas, Texas, and taught High School Social Studies at North Garland High School, MST. In 2005 Christopher entered graduate school in Amberton University before he returned to Nacogdoches and Stephen F. Austin and entered the Graduate Interdisciplinary program. In 2008 Christopher transferred into the MFA program and received the degree of Master of Fine Arts in May of 2014. During his enrollment in the filmmaking program, he co-produced two feature length films and performed as 1st Assistant Director. He produced his own feature length documentary and participated in dozens of short film projects, music videos, and commercials.

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