

Scarlett Gooch

Lakeside High School

Thea Foundation Scholarship Essay

27 March 2018

Delucas Documentary

The Documentary “Delucas” was not a very hard topic to find. Tony Valinoti, the owner of Delucas, is quite a character in the small town of Hot Springs Arkansas, so choosing him to be the face of my documentary was pretty obvious. I began the documentary making process last fall by learning the story of Deluca’s Pizzeria and Anthony, both very interesting! After an initial meeting with Tony, to make sure he would be down for the full process, I began to invade in his space. We had several meetings in which he showed up 30 minutes late. This definitely taught me a great deal of patience. We met to gather pictures, to collect information, and to set up more meetings, so I could get to know the personality of my documentary’s focal point. I spent many weekends at this beloved pizza restaurant in our quaint downtown, filming the busy restaurant and the character it bestowed on lively Hot Springs nights. Some nights when I would show up with my camera in hand people often hid from the lense, so I learned a way to incorporate almost everyone without being too invasive. My camera skills were very weak when starting this project, but knowing I would have to work alone, I focused on things that I knew I could do well and worked from there. I quickly learned what worked and what did not. Along the way many things happened in Tony’s life, most significantly, he was nominated to be the King of the 15th Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade. He led the parade in perfect King fashion (King Elvis that is) and of course this was a tremendous opportunity for me to capture his personality with his friends and family. Throughout the making of this documentary, I had to prioritize shots and what all I wanted to come out of a shot before taking it; therefore, I found myself taking more notes than ever before, to ensure I got the right shots needed in order to get a point across in the documentary.

The first thing I did for the documentary, after the initial meeting, was make out some questions and interview my subject. I made sure to set him up in the midst of his thriving business, Delucas. After his interview, the sd cards were uploaded to my computer and I began to subclip his sound bites, so that I could form a story. I didn't quite know where to begin on my story line so I drew up a timeline, literally a line. After getting a basic story line with just Tony's soundbites I went back to get another interview and another and another. Eventually my dad felt left out and wanted to be included so I interviewed him as well... he actually contributed a good part to the documentary besides just the singing in the credits. By my dad pressuring me to include him in the documentary, I learned that I should always take advantage of people who are willing to be interviewed regardless of whether their interview makes the final cut or not, because chances are they will have something great to share. In the middle of my process I realized I wanted to take another spin on the documentary and not just focus on the restaurant itself, but also the crucial role Tony Valinoti plays in the Hot Springs Community. The Art of Documentary Filmmaking is the Art of visual storytelling. Anthony Valinoti, what a great character for a story that is dear to my heart. With the help of my teacher, Chris Slaton, the making of this documentary was a learning experience that I'm very thankful for and will never forget.