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WINDOW TO THE WORLD:
CULTURAL CROSSROADS IN ITALY

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ABSTRACT

When I, an American student, traveled to Italy to study Italian, I expected that I would have little trouble fully immersing myself in the Italian culture and language. But when I arrived, I found myself amazed at being surrounded by so many American, Chinese, Eastern European, and African faces. I found that the allure of Italy has not changed; its delightful cuisine, extensive history, and breathtaking landscapes are still its cornerstones. But, to my surprise, the world is flocking to Italy, with American culture at the forefront, and the Italians are not always so sure how to handle such change. I came to Italy with expectations, and left with a different, yet significant message. The documentary part of this thesis covers these themes and topics, while the written part serves as a supplement to the documentary, providing relevant background information as well as the motivations behind the creative choices made during the pre-production, production, and post-production stages of making the documentary.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This serves as a written supplement to the documentary entitled *Window to the World: Cultural Crossroads in Italy*. It will provide personal information and background to the filmmaking process. I will describe my thoughts, decisions, and motivations in each of the three stages of making the documentary: pre-production, production, and post-production.

Chapter 2

Pre-Production

The Italian Language

I began to study Italian towards the end of the ninth grade in high school. I do not quite remember exactly why I became motivated to study it; I simply remember thinking that if I were to learn another language, it would be Italian. So I thought, why not? It was a beautiful language. Italian was not offered as a class in my high school, and so I decided to study it on my own. I purchased a computer program called “Tell Me More” and, with great enthusiasm, began to teach myself Italian.

It was truly my dedication to the language over the following year that made up the foundation and bulk of my Italian knowledge before I reached college. I compiled a long list of vocabulary words and descriptions of grammar rules, which I would study fervently in my spare time. I would practice writing Italian by simply writing out my thoughts on paper, using the vocabulary words I knew. Unfortunately, it was rare that I had an opportunity to speak the language with anyone, and so my writing and reading skills flourished while my speaking abilities would have to wait until college. Furthermore, I became very busy during my last two years of high school and did not have nearly as much time to devote to Italian studies.

However, I did get the opportunity to put my Italian skills to the test when I traveled with a national choir and band around Europe in the summer before my senior year. I translated the announcements and introductions to songs from English to Italian, and I presented these translations as a speaker during concerts in Italy. Many Italians complimented me, and it was encouraging to know that my hard work had paid off.

When I came to Penn State, I initially decided that I would major in Film-Video and minor in Italian. I started in the second-to-lowest level Italian class, Italian 002, since I was wary of how much Italian I had actually managed to teach myself without the aid of an instructor. I ended up regretting this decision—I wish I had started in Italian 003! That signified to me that I had managed to teach myself the equivalent amount of Italian in probably an aggregate two years (since my studies in junior and senior years of high school were sporadic) to the amount of Spanish that I had learned in school in seven years. I was truly proud of myself! Additionally, it was wonderful to finally begin developing my speaking skills. I continued to progress through the minor, and it became a no-brainer that I would eventually study abroad in Italy.

Italy

When I first began studying Italian, I had never been to Italy before. As a result, I undoubtedly had a very romanticized idea of it in my mind. Since the Italian language became a very personal passion of mine, I often fantasized about Italy as a sort of “escape” from the typical trials of high school. I thought of its rolling, beautiful landscapes, its delectable cuisine, and speaking Italian with kind-hearted, welcoming *italiani*. There was even a brief period of time when I flirted with the idea of doing an exchange program and attending an Italian high school for a year (my parents quickly put an end to that notion). I never thought about what Italy was really like; never studied its politics, its issues, or even its history much. It was more like a Garden of Eden to me than anything—this kind of faraway, “forbidden” place that would be such a privilege to visit.

My first experience with Italy, in fact, did little to change this mentality. I first went to Italy on the aforementioned band/choir trip, and I can distinctly recall feeling so incredibly ecstatic when our bus crossed the border from Austria into Italy. I was finally there! I reveled in the beautiful Dolomite mountains of northern Italy, and overall, my first visit there actually

seemed to verify my dreams rather than refute them! Our first stop was Cortina d'Ampezzo, which was the site of the 1956 Winter Olympics. It was a quaint, beautiful hilltop town, with friendly townspeople who were the ones who first complimented me on my Italian after a concert. We then headed to Venice, with which I completely fell in love! We had the honor of singing in the famous Saint Mark's church during a mass, and I delighted in exploring the many streets of the town, taking a gondola ride, seeing a Murano glass demonstration, and eating wonderful pizza. We then took a pit stop in Verona, where I was able to look at what is called "Juliet's Balcony," which is the supposed famous balcony in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Actually, that was a bit of a peek into how Italy was not quite the perfect place I thought it was—various visitors and lovers had covered the small entrance leading to the courtyard with their names and graffiti, almost as though it was like a little shrine to love. Juliet's Balcony itself, though, was immensely disappointing, since it was simply a very small balcony that would have been otherwise unremarkable had it not been named "Juliet's Balcony." Our last stop was Stresa, a resort town on Lake Maggiore, which still captured the idyllic scenery that I had dreamt about so much.

My second trip to Italy was on a Mediterranean cruise with my family the summer after I graduated high school. I was ecstatic to visit Venice once again, and then had the pleasure of visiting Pompeii, Sorrento, the isle of Capri, Rome, Florence, and Pisa. We saw the highlights of each place, and I knew that I had definitely not gotten a true sense of what each city and town was truly like. Who can see Rome and Florence in a day? However, I have to say that Pisa was a giant slap in the face to my idea of Italy—save for the Field of Miracles where the Leaning Tower is, it was a completely rundown town!

So even though I had a fair overview of Italy before I decided to study abroad, I knew I had really only had a tourist's experience of the country. After both trips, I basically still had the romanticized idea of Italy as I did before.

The reality of Italy's issues and problems did not really arise in my thinking until I got to college and had native Italian professors. I had one from Milan, another from Naples, and a third from Reggio Calabria (a small southern town). It was through them—and not through my prior experiences in Italy—that helped me begin to paint a picture of what Italy was like for Italians. I learned a little about Italian politics, the demographics of its immigrants, and even cultural nuances such as the meanings behind Italian hand gestures.

So by the time I was to study abroad, I had a general idea of what Italy was like, but I truly wanted to spend an extended period of time there and get a *feel* for Italy.

Motivations to Study Abroad

The two main reasons I decided to study abroad in Italy were exactly what I have just detailed: To improve my language skills and to get a “real” experience of Italy, not just a touristy one.

I was absolutely set on the idea of an “immersion” experience. I wanted to speak Italian more than I spoke English, and I wanted to experience the every day life of Italians. Keeping these goals in mind, I decided to avoid cities like Rome and Florence, where I knew there would be a lot of English speakers, and I thought that it would be tougher to immerse myself there (additionally, I am not a huge city person). I found a program through Penn State in Siena, a small, very historical university town in Tuscany, not too far from Florence. The program offered a homestay option, and I thought that would undoubtedly be the best way to have the immersion experience I was seeking.

However, during the application process to the program, I was required to research other programs and list two as “back-ups,” in case I did not get accepted to my preferred program. It was during this process that I came across the program in Perugia. It was still a small university town, and the program at the Università per Stranieri (The University for Foreigners) really

attracted me. I would be studying Italian all day, as opposed to taking extra general education classes in English in Siena (all of which I had already fulfilled at Penn State). I also saw that it had a homestay program as well, and so I was sold.

I found out, though, that the homestay program was not very developed, and that the American establishment called the Umbra Institute, which organized the Università per Stranieri program, did not have good homestay contacts in the town. Instead, I was told that I would be housed with other international students, the goal being that we would use Italian as our lingua franca in order to communicate. This still sounded great to me, as I have always been interested in any kind of culture other than my own, plus I knew that by living in an apartment as opposed to a family's home, I could potentially have a lot more freedom.

I applied to the program and was successfully accepted.

Developing the Idea for the Thesis

I knew that I wanted to create a documentary for my thesis, but initially I was not sure of the subject matter. My thesis advisor, Barbara Bird, encouraged me to choose my study abroad experience in Italy as my topic. I was initially hesitant, since by then I did not have a lot of time before I would head out to Italy, but since I had a camera at home (specifically, a HDR-CX150 Sony Handycam with a built-in microphone) that I could use in order to take footage, I decided to go for it.

The plan was to create a ten-minute “personal journey” film. Throughout the pre-production and production process, I did not have a complete grasp on what that truly meant. When I first heard the term, many different ideas went through my mind: Using the camera as my eyes, having face-to-face conversations with people I would meet, and journal-like voiceovers. Although these ideas eventually did become the crux of my end product, I still struggled with

exactly how to *get* there. It was through the post-production process, mostly, that I began to discover it.

Pre-Production Research

During the pre-production process, before leaving for Italy, I decided to conduct some research not only on Perugia, but also watch a few relevant documentaries so I could begin to shape my idea of a “personal journey” documentary. Professor Bird, who had given me the “personal journey” idea and had a much better feel for what it was, suggested three documentaries that she had made during her filmmaking career: *Album*, *Handmaidens*, and *World Classroom*.

Album documented Professor Bird’s family and the trials they endured while she grew up. It was created with a very simple format: B-roll of the home movies that her father took while she and her siblings were growing up (which was extensive), and voiceovers of interviews with various family members. I liked this simplicity; it was effective and no other “frills” were necessary in order to get the film’s message across. The audience was able to just sit back and enjoy the interesting home video footage, while the voiceovers helped provide context and significance. However, none of the voiceovers made any points outright; all of it was implied and subtle, which allowed the audience to create their own thoughts and conclusions on the matters at hand. Additionally, it was almost like sitting down with the family on their couch and watching the home movies with them. I thought I might especially incorporate these aspects into my documentary; I wanted the audience to feel like they were taking the trip and having the experience right along with me. I also liked the idea of the fact that there were no “talking heads” (interviewees shown on screen), and initially, I thought that I might also do the same.

Handmaidens covered the maltreatment of nurses in hospitals. This was a particularly great example to watch because it incorporated several factors that made it into my final

documentary. Firstly, Professor Bird provided her personal motivations to make the film. She had been a nurse for a number of years and had experienced the terrible work conditions firsthand. She was the narrator of the film through her voiceovers. I also did this in my film by providing background as to why I began studying Italian and wanted to go to Italy, the film was from my perspective and through my eyes, and I narrated with voiceovers. Secondly, the film took a topic with which most everyone is familiar (nurses and nursing) and showed the audience a different, unseen, and relatively unknown side of it (the maltreatment of nurses). I *very* much wanted my audience to come away from my documentary having learned something. I knew that most people know where Italy is and are familiar with its famous images and ideas (beautiful Tuscan landscapes, pasta and pizza, ancient architecture, etc.), and so I wanted to introduce a different side of Italy that most people would never even think about. I definitely kept that in mind while I was in Italy.

Finally, *World Classroom* showed a trip to South Africa that a Penn State international journalism class took and how they went about creating news packages there. This helped me understand how powerful and fascinating good b-roll can be; I was really able to get a sense of what South Africa was like through the b-roll of not only its towns and landscapes, but also its people and its culture. I definitely wanted to include that aspect in my documentary as well.

As for research on Perugia, I actually did a minimal amount of research on it before I left, mostly because I wanted to discover what I found interesting while I was there. I did know that it was an ancient city with a long history, filled with cobblestone streets, historic churches, and art. I also knew that it was the town where the Meredith Kercher murder had taken place, and in fact, one of the alleged murderers, Amanda Knox, actually attended the Università per Stranieri while she was there. I actually had not realized this when I chose to study abroad in Perugia, but I did not see any reason for it to make me feel wary about going. I knew it was an isolated incident. I did find it interesting, though, that I would be going from one town of scandal to another: To

Perugia, from State College, that had just been rocked by the Sandusky scandal in the months before I left. I briefly considered doing a piece that would compare the opinion and attitudes of the residents of each town regarding the respective scandals, but considering that the Kercher trial was over and that I figured that the town would be trying to move on, I decided against it.

Overall, in terms of pre-production, I certainly wish that I had started the process earlier so that I could have been better prepared when I got to Italy. I regret not conducting more research on Perugia before I left, because then I could have focused on the topics that interested me from the get-go. That being said, I think the documentary would have come out quite differently if it had been much more planned from the beginning.

Chapter 3

Production

When I first arrived in Perugia, I decided to get completely settled in before I would begin to brainstorm ideas for the documentary. I had brought along the camera and also a tripod, but I barely ended up using the tripod when filming because I found it to be a nuisance, especially on the cobblestone streets.

Perugia was everything I could have hoped for in a place to study abroad. It had a sense of history and culture. I loved its bustling center, with its many shops, cafes, its main *duomo* (or cathedral), and its historic fountain. It was so easy to just walk into a restaurant and have a fantastic pizza, great pasta, and delicious (yet cheap!) white wine. It was in the middle of the region of Umbria, which is a lesser-known region but with its own unique beauty; it was reminiscent of Tuscany, but it was more colorful.

I instantly knew that my experience was not going to be as “immersive” as I expected when I found that I would not be living with international students, but with three other American girls. One was named Kristin, who is from New Jersey, and she was actually already a very good friend of mine from school. She was a Psychology major, had studied a fair amount of French and had taken a couple of introductory Italian language classes. Another was Nadia, who was originally born in Ukraine but had lived in New Jersey for most of her life. She was an Art History major, was fluent in Ukrainian, and was probably on the same Italian language level as Kristin. The last was Leticia, who went by Leti, who was from Texas. She was an International Relations major, came from a Mexican family, was fluent in Spanish, was also studying Arabic, and had good intermediate Italian skills. We all hit it off immediately, and I knew that even

though I was not going to be living with an Italian family or international students that they would still be able to provide interesting insight given their respective backgrounds. We tried speaking completely in Italian initially, but that proved to be difficult, especially since we were trying to get to know each other, so we almost always spoke English.

We lived in a modest apartment that was only a four-minute walk from the Università per Stranieri. My roommates, along with the vast majority of the participants in the program, were going to attend the Umbra Institute, an American-run academic institution, as I mentioned, where they would take one Italian class and then other classes conducted in English. As for me, I was one of eight other students who had decided to attend the Università per Stranieri. We tested into a level of Italian, first with a written exam and then an oral exam. I tested into the second highest level of Italian at the Università.

The level system was the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It began with A1 (complete beginner), then A2, B1 (can hold a simple conversation), B2, C1, and C2 (fluency). I tested into C1, though I would say that I was really in between B2 and C1. For three months I was in the C1 level, then after successfully passing a series of exams at the end of March, I spent the last month in the C2 level.

I had about 27 hours of class time a week, including about an hour and a half of extra tutoring time with an instructor from the Umbra Institute. My classes included general Italian language learning, Italian oral and writing exercises, phonetics and phonology, Italian literature, English-to-Italian translation, and Italian cinema. Native Italian professors conducted each class entirely in Italian. I felt as though in general the work was relatively challenging.

In my classrooms, I met students from all over the world, including Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Poland, and China. The Chinese students had by far the largest presence in the Università, which both surprised and perplexed me! Apparently the Italian and Chinese governments have some kind of agreement that provides scholarships to Chinese

students to study in Italy every year. Interestingly, a large number of students I met also spoke English, and sometimes, they would use English words if they could not think of the Italian word for something; sometimes even the professors would do this! I found it both fascinating and telling that so many students were learning multiple languages, and that English was almost always one of them. I actually met a half-French, half-Czech girl who grew up in France. French was her native language, she also knew Czech, she was studying Italian at the Università, she was advanced enough in English to successfully participate in my English-to-Italian translation class, and *additionally* she was taking both Spanish and Portuguese classes elsewhere in Perugia. I was absolutely astounded. I thought that the general enthusiasm for language learning, and the increased use of English as a lingua franca, really spoke to how interconnected the world is becoming. I knew this would all definitely be something to mention in my documentary.

Perugia's international community in general was one of the aspects of the town that was very apparent to me from the beginning. Now of course, since all of my classmates were international students, I spent time with internationals on a regular basis, but there was also a large international immigrant community in addition to the Università per Stranieri students. The biggest communities were from Eastern Europe (specifically from Romania and Albania) and Northern Africa. It was easy to walk around and see groups of foreigners together, and my interactions with them became a part of my experience in Perugia. I shopped regularly at a small, Chinese-owned grocery store where I would buy Chinese dumplings to make for meals, there were a large number of doner kebob shops that were perfect for a quick meal, and, unfortunately, there were always two or three Northern Africans loitering in the center square to sell drugs (it was common knowledge as to why they were there). I also had a very interesting conversation with a pro-Qaddafi Libyan one night. The internationals' presence was so big that I knew I should address it in my documentary. I found it fascinating and a really significant sign of the changing demographics and increased immigration in Italy.

There was a chocolate and gelato shop on my street, in between my apartment and the Università. A Perugian woman in her 30s named Laura worked there in the afternoons. The first time I went there, I ate some gelato, and she and I struck-up a two-hour long conversation. She barely spoke English, but I was happy to practice my Italian, and she was absolutely delightful. I had not really met any other Perugians yet, and so I was happy to begin a friendship with one. I tried to make an effort to go there at least once a week, if not a few times a week, in order to practice my Italian with her. I also became friendly with a pizza shop owner on the same street named Valerio, and we had a long conversation one day about topics ranging from gay marriage to the death penalty. He also had never heard of Alfredo sauce—it is a completely American invention! Those are the two Italians that I saw regularly, besides my professors, of course.

I first picked up my camera when I went on an orientation trip to a villa in San Casciano, a small village in southern Tuscany. It was just absolutely gorgeous—without a doubt, the quintessential picture of rural Tuscany. I filmed everything I found interesting, capturing rolling landscapes, olive groves, and the beautiful villa. I even interviewed the countess who owned the villa, asking her about her Tuscan identity. There was one thing that she said that really struck me:

“La sera sono sempre molto, molto, molto stanca. Si fa fatica quando s’investe sulla propria persona. Però devo dire che la mattina, che mi sveglio dopo aver dormito poco, apro la finestra, guardo quello che ho fuori e scopro un motivo per cui continuo.”

This translates to: “At night I’m always very, very, very tired. I suffer, like in all moments of great difficulty. So you tire yourself out when you invest so much in what you do. However I have to say that in the morning, when I wake up after having slept little, I open the window, I look at what I have outside, and I discover a reason to continue on.”

I loved how the beauty of land inspired her, fueled her with the drive to continue working the land she so loved (she also cooked and ran a winery at her villa). I started imagining my

documentary opening up with these beautiful images that I had taken, providing the countess's words as a supplement to the "stereotypical" idea of Italy that I had before I came to study abroad. I thought it would work well juxtaposed with the rest of my documentary, which would seek to go beyond the stereotypes and give the audience a look into a different part of Italy.

While I was at this villa, I also came up with the idea for a potential shot that could be the background shot for the title of the film. The room in which I stayed in the villa had a very nice, rustic-looking window with shutters, and it looked out into the Tuscan countryside. I decided to film myself walking over to this window and opening the shutters, letting the light pour into the dark room as I admired the beauty outside. I liked the symbolism of the shot; it was as though my experience in Italy was like a "window" to the country, and that it was going to "enlighten" me and enhance my understanding of Italy.

The second time I picked up my camera was when I first went to an Umbra Institute-organized event called "Tandem." Umbra set-up a meeting place in a restaurant/bar and invited both English speakers and Italian speakers to have a language exchange. Unfortunately, the space was too dark and too loud, and so it was impossible to film there. Additionally, the Italians we met ended up being very aggressive Italian men in their late 20s who just seemed interested in getting us to a bar to get drunk, so that was even more disappointing. I did end up going back a second time, though, and ended up having a very nice conversation with a female Italian university student.

Up to this point, I had been trying to keep not only a written blog, but also video blogs to share with family and friends back home. For the written blog, I wrote about whatever was interesting or inspired me, and the video blogs acted more like a journal, documenting all of the activities that I was doing while there. Additionally, I spoke in Italian while making these video blogs, providing subtitles for non-Italian speakers. I was interested in seeing the progression of my Italian skills over the course of the semester, being able to compare the video blogs in the

beginning of the semester to the one at the end. However, these video blogs were incredibly time consuming, especially when it came to making the subtitles, and so unfortunately I only made three before I gave up on them. I also only wrote three written blogs. The blogs are attached in appendix A.

In general, I found that I was not meeting Italians as naturally as I thought I would. I knew that this was mostly my fault, since I am shy when meeting new people anyway and did not even know where to begin when it came to meeting Italians my age. I was also very wary of Italian guys, since as I have mentioned, they can be very aggressive, and my roommates and I had already dealt with several of them catcalling to us on the street (one even tried to approach Kristin and only got to touching her arm before she ran away). I became even lazier with that prospect once I began dating a Canadian, Michele, from my classes and started spending time with him regularly. We spoke Italian together and helped each other on assignments, but we spoke English most of the time. There was a decent period of time when I put thoughts of the documentary to the side and just decided to enjoy myself, whether it was spending time with Michele and my roommates, or traveling on the weekends.

Throughout my time in Italy, I traveled to several small towns in both Umbria and Tuscany, visited Venice again during Carnival, saw more of Florence and Rome, traveled to the region of Puglia and then Basilicata for Easter lunch with some of Michele's relatives, and also hiked through Cinque Terre. I was able to practice my Italian when visiting smaller towns (and many Italians were very grateful for being able to communicate in Italian with me!), while most of the time, when I would speak Italian in bigger cities like Rome or Florence, they would respond to me in English. Despite these travels and filming a little bit during them, I knew that my documentary should stay focused on the town of Perugia, otherwise it was going to be impossible to make a ten-minute documentary.

I picked up my camera again when I decided it was time to film b-roll and footage of my classes and of the Università. I filmed not only the Università's interior, but also my professors teaching, the students interacting, some of the activities that we did, and also the café on the bottom floor. At this point, I wanted to incorporate my language learning somehow, but I was not quite sure how to make it interesting or relevant to the rest of the documentary.

I decided to interview a group of Chinese students about their experience with language learning. I asked them why they decided to learn Italian, what their goals were with it, their cultural experience in Italy, and also what they thought about the growing presence of English. They decided to speak in English, since they said that their English was better than their Italian (they had been learning it from an early age). I was kind of worried throughout filming this interview because many of them spoke very softly, and the acoustics in the room produced an echo, but it turned out fine. They said that the reason they were learning Italian was mainly for getting jobs back in China, which ranged from journalist to teacher to translator. They had felt a lot of culture clash in Italy, especially since their cultural background and knowledge was so different from Italians'. They were also wary about the Italian men (all of the Chinese students I interviewed were girls), and did not really seem interested in the nightlife in Perugia. I was pretty impressed with their English abilities, and they told me that English's presence as a lingua franca was growing even in China. I found the parts about English to be the most interesting, so I knew that would probably have its place in the documentary.

Keeping the "English" topic in mind, I decided to interview my roommates and some of their friends from the Umbra Institute around the dinner table one night. I liked the idea of having a "conversation" with my interview subjects as opposed to traditional "talking heads." We discussed everything from the atmosphere at the Umbra Institute, their interactions with the Italians, and the presence of American culture in Italian society. We all had noticed not only how much they liked American music, television, and movies, but we were also baffled by how

integrated the American flag was in Italian fashion. We concluded that American culture was “hip” for the younger generation in Italy, even if they also happened to thoroughly dislike America’s politics. During this interview, I was very concerned about the lighting in the room, which was very dark, but I really liked everyone’s enthusiasm and insight, so I hoped to use it in the documentary, perhaps as a buffer to my opinions.

To add an “authoritative” voice to the documentary on the topic of English and language learning, I decided to interview my English to Italian translation professor, Antonella Dominici, who was incredibly fluent in English. She was able to provide information and insight on the state of English on the global stage today, the positives and negatives to it becoming such a widespread language, and the merits of continuing to study a lesser-used language. I decided to make this interview a “talking head” to give it more of an “authoritative” look.

As time progressed, I was starting to get nervous about the fact that I was supposed to be making a documentary about my “immersion” experience, but my experience had not really been so “immersive.” Of course, I was learning a lot in my classes, and my reading and listening comprehension had absolutely skyrocketed. Even Laura started commenting how my speaking abilities had improved. However, I had not spent a lot of time with Italians, and this made me nervous.

I discovered, though, that perhaps it was not completely my fault. Leti came back from a meet-up with the Neapolitan family one night, and they had discussed the differences between Perugians and Italians from other parts of Italy. The Neapolitans said that comparatively to what they were familiar with, Perugians were very “closed-off.” They tended to keep to themselves and were not very open to outsiders.

Additionally, Perugia is an ancient city that has been subject to numerous invasions over the 2000 years it has been in existence. Whether it was the Romans or the papacy, the Perugians have barely governed themselves until recently. (One of my favorite examples of their protest to

this was when they decided to stop putting salt in their bread in order to avoid a salt tax that the papacy had put in place. Bakeries still make this bread today as a tradition, and while a lot of Americans disliked it, I didn't find it too bad.) So the Perugians finally get autonomy, but then this giant influx of internationals start coming in. We thought that they might be feeling "invaded" again, wanting to preserve their culture that has such a long history. It seemed to make sense.

This topic really interested me, so I decided to talk to both Valerio and Laura about it. Since Valerio was originally from Rome, I knew he would provide an "outsider" Italian's perspective, while Laura, who grew up in Perugia, could provide a Perugian's perspective. I interviewed Valerio and his girlfriend, who also happened to be named Laura (she will be further referenced as "his girlfriend" to avoid confusion with the Laura at the gelato shop). Valerio thought that the Perugians were "provincial" with an "outdated mentality," while his girlfriend disagreed, saying that they are simply so used to their way of life since they spend so much time together in a small town. They both agreed that they could seem "closed-off," especially the older community. His girlfriend agreed that it is probably so they can "protect" their traditions, culture, and way of life since the international community has grown so much. I really enjoyed the way this interview came out, which was more like a conversation than an interview, and I knew that I would undoubtedly use it in the documentary.

Laura gave me an interview about the Perugians, but she did not agree to sign the release form that would have permitted me to put it in the documentary. This really worried me; she was the only true Perugian that I knew! How was I supposed to have a documentary about Perugia without any Perugians in it? However, I decided that noting her reluctance to be in the documentary could actually help prove my point about the Perugians being very private. I still thought that I would summarize her comments and opinions through voiceovers. What she said was very interesting. She thought the Perugians are not only afraid of the international presence,

but also those from other parts of Italy, particularly the South. She agrees that they can be closed-off, but she thinks that everyone has the potential to be that way. She sees the international presence as a positive aspect of the town, allowing the Perugians to “travel,” in a way, without ever leaving.

As my thesis proposal deadline drew nearer, I decided to sit down and start coming up with a general outline of the documentary. I had plenty of material that interested me, and I found myself worrying about the documentary inevitably becoming longer than ten minutes.

This is the outline I first drew up:

The process of an American seeking to learn Italian

Interactions with three different language groups in Perugia

1. The Umbra Institute (mainly American students with classes in English)
 - a. Why not study there?
 - i. “English bubble” – possible to study there and not have to truly learn any Italian
 - ii. Like a piece of America – you forget you’re in Italy when you’re there
 - b. Why study there?
 - i. Fulfill General Education requirements
 - ii. By studying in English, you know you’re going to learn everything well because it’s your native language
2. The International Community
 - a. Università per Stranieri (foreigners learning Italian)
 - i. Immersion (comprehension has improved immensely)
 - ii. Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation

- iii. Learning another language
 - 1. Difficulties
 - 2. Why Italian? Why are students learning Italian?
- b. Lingua franca
 - i. Most students have studied English already at some point
 - 1. Use it when they don't know how to say something in Italian!
 - 2. Used as a lingua franca in the Università
 - ii. Used around Europe
 - 1. With the immigrants here in Perugia
 - 2. Between Europeans
 - 3. With English speakers
 - a. When you speak to someone in Italian in Rome, Florence, etc., they speak to you in English
- 3. Perugians
 - a. History of invasion
 - i. As a result, they are a "closed" people and keep to themselves
 - b. Traditions
 - i. Saltless bread, restaurants, Baci, etc.
 - ii. Do they feel invaded by the new cultures, languages?
 - c. Language
 - i. Italian is not a "natural" language
 - ii. English words "taken" and used in Italian
 - 1. The verb "attingere"
 - 2. Why? Why is it "hip?"
 - a. American culture in Italy

- i. Prevalence
 - 1. Music, TV, Film
 - 2. Fashion (the American flag in EVERYTHING)
- d. Dialects
 - i. How do they feel about the increased use of English?
 - ii. What makes Italian unique? Their dialect unique? What makes learning it difficult?

I sent this outline to Professor Bird for review. She replied with a reformatted outline that had her suggestions.

1) ACT I - The Dream

What you learned, or “thought” you knew, about Italy/Italian/Perugia before you went (book-learning)

- What “Italians” are like
- How “fluent” you thought you were
- Why you chose immersion vs. Umbra Institute (#1 from your outline) not much time on

what you DIDN'T choose.

2) ACT II -The Reality

What it's REALLY like.

- Umbra Inst. is a “BUBBLE” ??
- Are you REALLY good at Italian?
- PERUGIA (#3 from your outline)

- Internationals (#2 from outline)

3) ACT III -The Understanding

What you learned-insights after you get back and can mull it over.

- About Italy/Perugia?
- About yourself? Being American?
- About home
- Taking risks
- What was unexpected? Wonderful? Horrible? Difficult, scary, boring?

After looking over these suggestions, I started realizing that perhaps I was not focusing as much on my personal emotions and thoughts on Perugia as I needed to for a “personal journey” documentary. I really struggled with this when drawing up my thesis proposal, because I kept thinking to myself, what is so special about me? Why is anyone going to care about what I have to say? I had trouble imagining how to include my feelings and such in the documentary without it seeming “preachy,” uninteresting, or irrelevant. I definitely continued to struggle with this throughout the rest of my time in Italy as well as when I got home.

At this point, I felt as though I had enough interviews and ideas, and all that I needed at this point was to film copious amounts of b-roll. I was still kind of unsure on exactly how my documentary was going to be structured and what topics it was going to cover, so I wanted to take b-roll that could be used for any variety of topics. I picked a warm, sunny April day and spent about eight hours walking around the town, filming landscapes, architecture, shops, the center, and passersby. I tried to capture what it was like to be in Perugia. I thought it was such a charming, beautiful town, and I really wanted that to come across in my b-roll. I wanted the audience to just be able to take in the sights, as if they were traveling there with me. I knew that

just looking at beautiful images of Italy would be a good reason for someone to want to watch my documentary. I also took b-roll of items that I knew I would definitely be covering in my documentary, such as the international presence, so I took shots of the various ethnic restaurants and groups of foreigners around the town. Additionally, I had an idea for a section that would feature the word “atingere,” a word I had learned in my Italian classes. It was a word that meant “to draw from” and had originally been used commonly to describe drawing water from a well. However, presently it is also used to describe taking words from one language and using them in another. I loved this as a metaphor for how much Italian “borrows” English words, and so I decided to take a fair amount of b-roll of fountains with running water throughout the town.

When I looked through all of my footage at the end of my time in Italy, I was surprised at how much content I had really managed to get. I was confident by the time I left that I was going to be able to make a documentary with which I would be satisfied. I still did not have a true solid grasp on how exactly it was going to turn out, but I was sure that I was going to figure it out when I reached the post-production stage.

Chapter 4

Post-Production

Editing Preparations

I did not begin working on my thesis again until I got back to school in the fall of 2012. I was going to begin composing and editing my documentary through Professor Bird's Comm 437 class, Advanced Documentary Filmmaking, and then finishing it in the spring through Comm 496H, Independent Honors Research. I used Final Cut Pro 7 as my editing program.

For the Comm 437 class, our first assignment was to write an "idea summary." This allowed me to look at the "big picture" ideas of my documentary, such what I believed and thought about the topics at hand, what I wanted my audience to feel while watching it, the main conflict in the film, and the reasons I was making the documentary. Additionally, it also had me specify how my documentary was going to illustrate all of those ideas, the interviews I was going to include, and what the interviews were going to contribute to the piece. When I first wrote the idea summary, I ended up using a lot of very general words such as "interconnectedness" and "globalization." I was too focused on the academic, overarching themes of the documentary when I supposed to be figuring out how to make it more personal, and what those themes meant to me. I also created a calendar that would let me keep on-track with the editing process throughout the semester. The idea summary is in appendix B.

The second piece I had to write was a treatment. This is where my ideas really started coming together and materializing. I first came up with a working hypothesis: "Immersing myself in Italian culture was not so easy since the entire world is flocking to Italy." This felt much more like a "personal journey" logline; it not only included all of those "academic" themes by

mentioning Italian culture and the international community, but it also included my personal experience, particularly mentioning the film's conflict, which was my difficulty "immersing" myself in Italian society. In the treatment, I went on to discuss the theme, structure, style, and point-of-view of the documentary. I also added a timetable for when it would be completed as well as a budget. This treatment is in appendix C.

Finally, I created a production plan, which included some aforementioned items, the equipment I had used while filming, and the equipment I would be using in post-production. This is in appendix D.

I had originally given the documentary a tentative title of "Wind Chimes and Roses," which I had taken from a blog post I had written about my language learning experience (in appendix A). I had described the Italian language as feeling like "wind chimes and roses" to me, so at the time, I thought it could potentially be the title. However, I knew that it did not really reveal what the documentary was about, and so I decided to choose a different title. It came to me when I was looking through my footage and saw the shot I had taken of me opening the window in the Tuscan villa. Then it hit me: Perugia *was* like a window. It was a window not only to Italian culture, but also to the multiculturalism that is growing throughout Europe. So I decided on the title "Window to the World: Cultural Crossroads in Italy." It seemed to cover everything that I wanted to say in the documentary.

I thought that the best way to begin figuring out a structure for the documentary was to sit down in front of my computer and just talk about my experience in Italy. I did not want to just ramble on with no kind of pre-written outline in mind, so I went over some of the previous outlines I had made and thought about what I *really* wanted to talk about in this documentary.

I still had the idea of beginning with the quote from the countess I met in Tuscany, so I translated her Italian to English, tightened up the quote a bit, and began: "When I was in Italy, I met a countess in Tuscany, and I asked her, what makes you feel proud to be Italian? What makes

you feel attached to this place in the way that you do? And she told me...” And after that, using the rough outline I had created, I talked as though the computer was a person, who knew absolutely nothing about Perugia or me. The first time I did this, I had so much to say that I ended up talking for a good half hour. I knew this was too long, as I still wanted to make it a ten-minute documentary if possible, so I listened to my recording and started noting where I could cut information and where I could explain something more concisely.

I had naturally created a structure: In the beginning, I began with the countess’s quote, then talked about beginning to study Italian and my decision to study abroad in Italy. Then I introduced Perugia and my living situation, the Università per Stranieri, my classes and instruction, the international students and the Chinese in particular, the English language and the presence of American culture, the Perugians and how closed-off many people thought they were, the history of Perugia as a supplement to this notion, and then my conclusions. This ended up being the structure of my final documentary, but it took many times of talking to my computer to discover what was the most concise way to talk about each subject.

To decide what interview clips to use, I actually devised a method in Final Cut Pro that was very convenient and useful for me personally. I decided to do this with just the interviews whose interviewees had signed release forms, so this excluded both the countess’s and Laura’s interviews. I would put an interview on the timeline, listen to it, and then splice it up according to topic or if there was a particularly good sound byte. I would then put a slate over each spliced section, so I could just put the cursor over the slate and see what they were talking about during that particular part. I then looked at my voiceover outline and decided which interview clips were the most relevant to certain sections and if they would appropriately support the argument that I was making. I chose several clips from the interview with the Chinese students (which almost exclusively featured one student named Yuchen Ma), the interview with Antonella Dominici, and the roundtable discussion with my American friends. However, I eventually decided to

completely remove the roundtable discussion because I felt as though what they were saying was redundant next to my voiceovers; my voiceovers were enough to get my points across. I also decided to feature an edited version of the discussion with Valerio and his girlfriend in the pizza shop as a stand-alone section, particularly because it was so entertaining and spoke for itself. I decided to put subtitles over the Chinese students' interview since some audience members could have a difficult time understanding their thick accents, and of course I put translated, English subtitles on the pizza shop discussion.

Translating the Italian for this section was actually a very interesting process. I enlisted the help of Michele by sending him the audio from the cut interview (his Italian skills are more advanced than mine). There were certain Italian words that I could have translated to any number of English words, but choosing the word that had the closest meaning to what they were saying in context was challenging yet fun. For example, the word “antico” can translate to “ancient,” “antique,” “old,” “aged,” or a few other words. However, I decided to use the word “outdated,” because it fit best within the contexts of what Valerio and his girlfriend were saying. The first instance of the word “antica” was modifying the word “mentalità,” which translates to “mentality.” Perhaps I could have translated it to “ancient” or “old mentality,” but his girlfriend then goes on to say that “[i perugini] non sono antichi”: “The Perugians aren’t outdated.” Now of course, this still sounds kind of awkward in English, but the connotation of what she is trying to say comes across. It would not have the same connotation had I chosen the word “ancient” or “old”; in fact, it would take on an entirely different meaning. So I settled on the word “outdated” for “antico” throughout the conversation. Another difficulty was some expressions or slang that they used. For example, Michele was helpful in telling me that the word “mo” is a Southern word that translates to “for example” or “like,” and I found that the expression “tutto quanto” translated most naturally to “and all that” in context. “Mo’ c’e’ [sic] discoteche e tutto quanto...”:

“Like, they have clubs and all that...” Michele was also very helpful in discerning some parts of the conversation that I had trouble hearing and understanding.

Regarding the voiceovers, I ended up writing them from scratch, taking into account where I would put each interview clip, but I still used my previous recordings and outline. I then read everything I wrote out loud to make sure that it sounded natural. I was able to make the voiceovers pretty concise, but I would spend the rest of the fall semester gradually tightening them. The “conclusion” section definitely went through the most editing. I recorded these voiceovers with the microphone in my computer and put them on a Final Cut Pro sequence, just to start getting the documentary together. I would later re-record these voiceovers in a sound booth out at the Innovation Park facilities on Penn State’s campus, using a Zoom H4n Handy Portable Digital Recorder.

From there, on the sequence I placed the interview clips where I had planned them to be in between the voiceovers, and then I began to fill in the empty spaces with b-roll.

The Editing Process

I will now describe the creative choices behind the shots and editing techniques that I decided to use for each part of my documentary. Many of these decisions were made over the course of both the fall and spring semesters. I took suggestions from the two times I showed rough cuts to the class of Comm 437, and also from weekly meetings with Professor Bird in the spring.

As I had planned before, I initially chose various clips from the footage of Tuscany that I had taken to accompany the countess’s quote in the very beginning. I first chose to have the subtitles in cursive-like font, placing them in aesthetically pleasing parts of whichever image happened to be on-screen at the time. I thought this would convey a dreamy kind of atmosphere, reflecting the “dream” I had of Italy before studying there. Before I went any further, I decided to

show this beginning section to my Comm 437 class, and they told me that it was too hard to read, that the subtitles progressed too quickly, and that it was hard to follow because the subtitles were not staying in one place. They also did not have time to appreciate the b-roll, and they told me that my voiceovers still needed to be more concise. I fixed these problems by making my voiceovers incredibly concise, then I tried changing the subtitle font to something more readable, and then I had them scroll upwards as the b-roll transitioned with cross dissolves in the background. It still progressed too quickly and was distracting, so I settled for traditional subtitles.

However, eventually Professor Bird and I decided that this section still was not working. Why begin the documentary with someone else's quote when it was really supposed to be about *my* experience? I had to come up with something else. I knew that since it was a "personal journey" documentary, it needed to actually feature *me* at some point. The audience needed to know what I looked like. Since I knew that I still wanted to establish my motivations for learning Italian and going to Italy in the first place, I decided to take footage of me studying Italian at my desk in my room at home. I used my family's DSLR this time, a Nikon D3100. I featured the lists of vocabulary that I had composed and printed out in high school as well as the "Tell Me More" program I had used. I then composited some of these images to give the section that "dreamy" feeling I was seeking.

I followed this part with the shot of me opening the window in my room at the villa. I had the title of the documentary fly in from the center of the shot at the same time that I opened the window in the footage. I then faded to black.

I thought it would be appropriate to first orient the audience and show them where exactly Perugia was in Italy, so I bought a picture of a map of Italy from iStockPhoto and then zoomed in on Perugia's location. I introduced Perugia with images of cobblestone streets, the countryside, and its iconic and famous fountain in the center square. I also originally included a

picture of me with my roommates, but I later decided to scrap it, since this was about my experience in Italy and not theirs. I showed the exterior of the Università and decided to use a few pictures I had taken of the interior placed side-by-side to give the audience a taste of what the beautiful building was like on the inside. I thought this would be a concise way to show the Università, and I also found that I was not terribly pleased with the b-roll I had filmed of the interior. To illustrate my time spent in class and my classmates, I chose b-roll of students of various nationalities, my professors, my classrooms, and some of the assignments I worked on, including a piece of footage that was a close-up of my pencil writing on an assignment, to make it look more like it was through my eyes. Then I began to talk about the Chinese, so I used b-roll of the Chinese students talking and listening in the classroom.

To illustrate the section about English language learning, I used b-roll of the bulletin board outside of the café in Università, which had several postings looking for English language partners or English teachers, and advertisements for English classes. This was to show how interested students were in learning English, and that there were a large number of them. I also used a clip in the elevator of the Università when an automated voice would announce the floor at which the elevator had stopped in both Italian and in English. This demonstrated that English was a sort of lingua franca even in the Università where everyone was learning Italian. I also mentioned in the voiceovers that I heard English in “bigger cities like Rome and Florence,” so I included a couple of pictures, one of me standing on the Spanish Steps in Rome and another of me in front of the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. This was so the audience could see my face, and again maintain the “personal” feel of the documentary.

I still liked the idea of placing words against a beautiful background, as I had originally done in the beginning section, so I chose one of my favorite pieces of b-roll, a gate with ivy around it against a blue sky, and used it as a backdrop for English words that Italians had borrowed. I used the same cursive font that I had originally used in the beginning of the

documentary, but eventually I ended up using a much more readable font for these words as well. I followed this with the “atingere” section, using the fountain b-roll that I had taken specifically for it. I later placed the word “atingere” on top of the first b-roll clip so that the audience could see how it was spelled. I really like the way this part came out; the metaphor of each language being like a fountain from which other languages could draw words fit perfectly with the alternate meaning of the word. I then faded to black, to close out this language learning section.

For the international community section, I used b-roll I had taken of the American flag in fashion for the American culture bit and then used footage of various internationals doing everyday activities around town. I also included the footage of the ethnic restaurants here. I ended up featuring a Japanese restaurant in particular as an example of many cultures intersecting in one place. I had footage of Kristin eating fried dough stuffed with Nutella, then picked a shot of sushi to show that it was a Japanese restaurant, then a shot of a Chinese waiter at the cash register, and finally a shot of Kristin and our other American friend Alyssa with a Chinese waiter in the background, to show that we were still speaking English. Then, when talking about how I was mostly making English-speaking friends, I ended up using footage from the roundtable discussion after all, simply showing us talking and enjoying ourselves around the dinner table. The voiceovers and placement of this b-roll was enough to imply that everyone in these shots were English-speaking. I faded to black again to end this section.

For the part about the Perugians, I used a ton of b-roll that I had taken of Italians doing everyday activities as well as b-roll illustrating aspects of Italian culture that I encountered. I talked about eating pizza, so I showed a pizza, and the “pausa” Italians would take in the early afternoon. So for that, I showed clips of closed and locked shops, with the word “pausa” on screen as I did with “atingere”. Initially, after describing the Perugians, I had a whole section of the history of Perugia in order to support the information about how proud they are of their traditions and how far these traditions go back. I included the example of the saltless bread, and I

also talked about how Italians do not really have a national identity, but rather a regional one, thanks to their differing dialects and customs. I changed and played around with this section many times. I used the map of Italy to illustrate the regional identities and had pictures I took representing different customs pop out from three different regions, accompanied by an explanation. I chose the “trulli” house of Alberobello, Puglia, a traditional Venetian lunch from Venice, and a picture of Dante who helped develop the dialect of Florence. I picked shots of ancient architecture around Perugia for the rest of the history section. However, this section definitely seemed to drag and slow down the flow of the documentary (it felt like a history lecture), so I ended up shortening it considerably. I still felt that it was important to note the regional identity versus a national one, and I even added in the fact that an Italian professor remarked how Italians never feel national identity except during the World Cup. I accompanied this with b-roll I had taken of people playing soccer near the Università, as well a picture of a giant Italy flag amongst a crowd that I bought from iStockPhoto. I still used the map, but I simply zoomed in and panned over the regions instead. I took out a large part of the history section, including the bread example, and was able to have it seamlessly flow into the next section.

I showcased various aspects of Perugia that were a source of pride to the Perugians, including historical artifacts and a restaurant called Dal Mi' Cocco, which serves strictly Perugian cuisine with the entire menu being in Perugian dialect—certainly a symbol of their desire to maintain their traditions and language. I talked about how many people described the Perugians as “closed-off,” placing more footage of Perugians around town over it.

I then had the pizza shop interview, followed by a summary of what Laura said in the interview that I was not allowed to use. For Laura’s section, I still included b-roll of the chocolate and gelato shop, as well as her serving me gelato. I then included more general Perugia b-roll, finally ending on a shot of the steps of the *duomo* in the center square, where people of all nationalities gather to chat together. It was a perfect portrait of her idea of the international

presence allowing the Perugians to “travel without ever leaving.” I ended this section again by fading to black.

I initially struggled a lot with this final “conclusion” section. I had a lot of final points that I wanted to make, but I had trouble making them concise; this ended up becoming an even bigger problem because I was at a loss at what b-roll to use. I also was very afraid of being too “preachy” with these ideas; I did not want to force my opinions on anyone nor imply that there is only one “correct” way to have a study abroad experience. One of the greatest suggestions I got from the Comm 437 was to just let the audience make their own conclusions from what I experienced. So, keeping that in mind, I made my comments as short as possible, highlighting the question of whether or not there was still merit in learning another language when I speak English, the “lingua franca of the world.” I provided opinions on this topic from both the Chinese students (who were doing it to get jobs back in China) and Antonella Dominici, who felt that it was important to study other languages in order to better understand the people and the culture of that language. I agreed with her, and noted that not only did my Italian abilities allow me to get to know Valerio and Laura, who barely speak any English, but that Italian were also very appreciative of me knowing Italian. For this part, I used more general Perugia town footage, footage from talking with Valerio and Laura, and point-of-view shots of me interacting with Italians. I also used the same technique as I did with the borrowed English words from earlier, taking a nice piece of b-roll and putting the translation from the phrase “Parli italiano? Meno male!” (“You speak Italian? Thank goodness!”) over it.

I ended the documentary with a point-of-view shot of me walking onto a train, then looking outside the window to the sign that said “Perugia” at the train station. The train then starts to move, and then it fades to black. I took this piece of footage when I was traveling for the weekend, but I thought it was a good shot to end on since I was still leaving Perugia.

Additionally, it was a shot through a window, which I thought nicely reflected the title and my last words of the voiceover, “window to the world.”

I put the credits over some nice b-roll that I still wanted to include.

Because I ended up not using a tripod to film much of this b-roll, I utilized the “SmoothCam” effect in Final Cut Pro for as much of the b-roll as I could. For the most part, it was successful, but if it turned out poorly, I either removed the effect and accepted it as something that could not be fixed, or I would try to find a different piece of b-roll with smoother movements.

Additionally, I also color corrected a large portion of the footage using the “3-Way Color Corrector” in Final Cut Pro. Most of the time I would darken the blacks and lights, bring up the mids, and then increase the saturation. I had some issues with some shots being too dark and therefore grainy, so I tried to fix it as much as I could, but sometimes it was simply unavoidable. It was one of the problems I faced with the kind of camera I had brought, which mainly worked off of automatic settings.

Audio and Music

For the audio, after I re-recorded all of my voiceovers, I toned out all of the empty space using room tone.

For the music, my family is friendly with a world-renowned pianist named Robin Spielberg. From the beginning I had thought that her music, which is very lyrical, would work very nicely in the background of my documentary. I asked her if it were possible to use her music for free, and she agreed. I am very grateful to her for this.

For the beginning of the piece, I chose a very “dreamy” sounding piece, entitled “Eileen,” in order to build on the dreamy atmosphere I wanted.

For the introduction to Perugia, I chose a piece called “This Busy Life,” which has a fast tempo and a feeling of “Let’s go!” to it. I thought it was a good way to reflect the excitement I had when I first got to Italy.

The next pieces, “Soldier’s Journey” had a light-hearted and calming feel to it, which I thought worked well against the backdrop of the topics of English’s presence and the “attingere” fountain example.

Originally, I had wanted to use a cover/arrangement that Ms. Spielberg performed of the 1952 song “That’s All” for the American/internationals section. It had a jazzy feel to it, which definitely worked with the American aspect, but also kind of a “sauntering” feel, which reminded me of relaxing days exploring Perugia. However, obtaining the rights to this song would have required time and money that I did not want to spend, so I settled on a song called “It’s All Just As Well,” which still invoked the jazzy, “sauntering” feeling. I cross-dissolved this song into the next one, since the empty air between the two sections seemed awkward.

For the Italians section, I chose a song called “Starlight,” which still had a lyrical sense to it, but it still had more of a feeling of being in reality as opposed to being in a dream. I wanted to reflect the feeling of Italians going about their everyday lives and business.

“The Orange Fox Waits” was appropriate for Laura’s section because it kind of gave the sense that the documentary was “wrapping up.” It also had a very “warm” feeling to me, and I wanted to reflect how “warm” Laura was to me, despite the fact that she was a Perugian—she was not closed-off at all.

For the last section, I chose “Piano Parlour Soiree,” which had a tinge of sadness to it, I thought. It invoked the bittersweet feelings I had about leaving Perugia. I knew how much I was going to miss the wonderful life I had built for myself in Italy, and how attached I had grown to its culture, but at the same point, I was looking forward to being home again.

I ended with the song “Flying” in the credits, which had the “dreamy” feeling again. This was very appropriate because I still dream and think about going back to Perugia so much. Even though I have left, it has become a dream for me once again.

The Final Product

The documentary is 14 minutes and 41 seconds. Even though this is longer than I had originally planned for the documentary to be, it does not feel that long. The audiences that I have shown it to so far, even in its various stages of editing, have consistently said that the documentary is engaging and interesting throughout.

After exporting the project in Final Cut Pro, I then ran it through MPEG Streamclip in order to de-interlace the footage. I also added the “frame blending” option as well. I exported it in the H.264 format in 1080p with dimensions of 1920x1080.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I am very pleased with how the documentary came out. I really like how it combines all three of my areas of study—Film-Video, Italian, and International Studies. I love how this passion for the Italian language that started simply as a hobby so many years ago has led me to create this thesis documentary.

It has taken me this entire process to understand what a “personal journey” documentary is, and, in the spirit of a thesis, I think that I have created a documentary format that is all my own. I know one of my main concerns from the beginning was that it was going to be too personal and not teach the audience anything, but I think I certainly achieved my goal of imparting new information through the documentary.

When it comes to learning about another culture or people, it is possible to try to do that through reading a book, but there is nothing like going to the country and *being* there. What I ended up doing in making this documentary was trying to let the audience *have* that experience by seeing it through my eyes—almost as if they were in my head while I was taking in the world around me, listening to my thoughts and insights about what I was seeing and learning. However, I did not preach to them exactly what they *should* think, but rather hopefully brought up topics that can incite discussion and contemplation. I could have made a documentary from a completely neutral perspective, but I do not think that I would have achieved the same result—that would have been like translating a textbook into a documentary, as opposed to translating an *experience* into a documentary. However, I do feel that in order to truly understand what the “personal journey” documentary is, it is necessary for one to watch it for his or herself.

I hope to send this documentary to film festivals in the near future and share this experience with others around the country and the world.

Appendix A

Written Blog Entries

“La Bella Vita” – December 11, 2011

I have been joking, with a small, awkward chuckle, that I will be traveling from one university town of conflict to another.

For the next semester, I will be studying abroad in Perugia, Italy--the town that was shaken by the murder of Meredith Kercher and the Amanda Knox trial. In fact, I will be attending the exact same school that Amanda Knox attended: L'Università per Stranieri (literally, “The University for Foreigners”). It is strange to go from State College, Pennsylvania, which was recently shaken by the Sandusky scandal, to another town that is now recovering from the aftershock of the Kercher-Knox ordeal.

I have been told that I probably won't be hearing too much about it while I'm there. This relieves me, because Perugia seems like an incredible town that is so much more than the media hoopla. Just like State College is.

Really, Perugia does kind of seem like State College in Italy. It's a small university town, nestled in the region of Umbria (which is right next to Tuscany) that has about 40,000 students living in it. It's a pedestrian town with cobblestone streets and a whole lot of history. Additionally, it's very hilly; an alumnus of my program said that he walked uphill both ways to and from his classes. Well, at least I'll be burning off all of the calories from all of the delicious Italian food I'll be eating. That is, if I decide not to take advantage of the escalators that are built into some of the steeper roads.

I read in the Collegian the other day that at Penn State, Italy is the most popular country to study abroad. 530 students studied there last year. I don't tend to pick the most popular thing to do, but ah, *La Dolce Lingua Italiana, mi fa una serenata!*

For the past several years, I have swooned over the beauty of the Italian language, so much so that I decided to begin teaching it to myself through a computer program in high school (and no, it was not Rosetta Stone, which is not nearly the best program, by the way; it was called “Tell Me More,” and I highly recommend it). I poured over vocabulary lists, conjugated verbs in the margins of my Spanish homework, and memorized grammar rules. It was only natural for me to choose it as my minor.

So I travel to Italy not to jump on the bandwagon--I really, really want to get fluent in Italian. I am participating in a “full-immersion” program; the only subject I will be studying is Italian. Additionally, since so many students come to study the language from all over the world, not only will I get to interact with Italians, but them as well. The program even rooms you with students who do not speak your native language (with the prevalence of English these days, I’m wondering how hard or easy it will be to pair me with a non-English speaker), so that way, you are forced to use Italian as your lingua franca. Is that not the coolest thing ever?

I am really getting pumped. So pumped. I’m going to be jumping out of my skin by the time January 5th rolls around!

So, a little bit about me. I’m a junior in the Schreyer Honors College here at Penn State. I’m originally from York, PA, which is about 2 hours south of State College. I am majoring in Film-Video with a dual major in International Studies, and, as I mentioned, minoring in Italian. I participate in a student-run news show and game show through the PSN-TV club, and I am also a proud member of Springfield THON. I have sung for a large part of my life and I sing with the University Choir here on campus. I have a huge passion for travel and have visited over 20 countries, including Eastern and Western Europe, China, Israel, Costa Rica, Canada, Mexico, and all over the US. I enjoy long talks on the beach, that moment when you eat really good food and drop your fork, and wasting ridiculous amounts of time traversing the Internet.

Mi chiamo Ariel Siegelman--e mi sono innamorata d'amore.

“Thoughts on Learning a New Language” – February 3, 2012

Trying to immerse yourself in a language is really difficult. Well, at least I’m finding it so. I’ve always been pretty good at languages in general, or I guess Romantic languages; Japanese didn’t exactly come as easily to me when I dabbled in it last year. But I always got good grades in Spanish during middle school and high school, and for the most part, I’ve been able to breeze through Italian in college.

This was because of the way it was taught. This is a vocab list, memorize it. These are the grammar rules, write some practice sentences with them. It’s easy to get into the routine of that teaching style; just go with the flow and get the grades and that’s it.

I’m not studying Italian for any particular reason. I don’t have a drop of Italian blood in me, and it isn’t exactly a very widespread language. In fact, the Italian that I learned in college and the Italian that I’m learning now isn’t even a “natural” language. It didn’t develop naturally, like English did. It was created in order to unite Italy. Everyone in Italy speaks a regional dialect; a person from the north can barely understand someone from the south, because they’re like two completely different languages. But at least they have “standard Italian” to fall back on. If they know it.

But anyway. One of the big reasons I decided to start studying Italian was just because it’s pretty. It sounds nice to the ear. It’s flowy, and it reminds me of windchimes and roses. It sounds even better when it’s the language of an aria, because it’s really like a song.

Language--particularly written language--is my only way to describe my emotions. Inside my head and heart, I don’t actually define things with words, but rather with feelings. Everything and everyone has its own feeling, particularly if there’s also a distinct smell, sound, touch, taste, or sight associated with it. Periods of time in my life and locations also have incredibly specific feelings attached to them. I won’t remember someone with words, but with feelings; I see the

image of their face in my mind's eye, and the image immediately sends an electrical message of emotion right to about where my diaphragm is. If you ask me to describe someone, I'll have to feel the feeling about them, dip my hand into the soup of feelings, and pull out whatever words I manage to find. I wish I could just touch my hand to yours and transmit the feeling instead, that way you'd know exactly how I mean.

It's rare that I'm able to pick out the perfect combination of words to precisely convey those emotions, and it feels so satisfying when I do. Actually, the "windchimes and roses" bit is a good example of this moment. It's vague enough that it's fuzzy around the edges and blurry enough to be ethereal, yet it still gives you the right idea. Just like emotions. It's like mist. Words need to be like mist, and they need to be visible--a tangible mist, something that you can feel floating through your fingers but can't quite grab onto. That's what it's like.

This is why I'm so much better at writing than I am speaking. When I speak I find it very difficult to find exactly what I want to say, and I'll stumble over my words, and you'll often hear me say, "Oh...oh...you know what I mean!" because I just don't know how to word the feeling. Yet, I still talk very quickly and I prefer writing in a stream-of-consciousness style (which is what this is) because everything comes to me so fast and it just kind of all spills out and I want you to know exactly what I'm feeling at this very instant! But writing does give me the time to think about it, plus some things I write would sound weird in colloquial speech. And typing is better because it's faster than writing by hand, and usually I end up saying more because writer's cramp sucks. Plus, I can proofread. But I usually don't end up changing too much, unless I can finally think of those perfect combinations of words, the kind that makes you smack your lips and tongue in satisfaction. "Crisp" is a fantastic word for the feeling.

It is this fight between words not being enough and words being everything that is making this language immersion experience difficult for me.

It's not that I go into class and am completely lost. Well, okay, admittedly sometimes. It's mostly a lack of vocabulary if that happens, or if I drift off into space, which happens way more than it should. But after trying to listen intently for the first week of being here and exhausting myself because of it (just speaking Italian for awhile makes my mouth feel funny, because I'm exercising muscles I don't normally use), I fell into a "lazy" mode during the second week, and instead of trying really hard to understand what was going on, I sat back and wanted it to come to me. I didn't try. I had realized how listening to English was so easy for me--that it required no effort and that I could just listen and understand. I guess that's where I want to be with Italian, and since I'm really impatient, I wanted it ASAP. But it was like pulling two elastics from opposite ends and trying to tie them in the middle, but the elastics were too short. I was trying to force a connection I wasn't prepared to make.

I think it's also a bit of a shock because I'm used to my Italian professors at home not only speaking at a good pace but also mostly using vocabulary that they expect us to know. But the professors here just talk, and they have regional accents. If they use a word that they don't think we'll know, they'll define it--but in Italian. I'm so used to just getting the equivalent in English!

That's the biggest problem, I think; if I really want to understand a word, I have to look it up or translate it into English. I rely on my Oxford English-Italian dictionary a lot, or if I do listen to the Italian definition, I'll just come up with the English equivalent. I especially needed to do that for words like "siccome" and "a patto che"--"since" and "provided that." "Andro' al cinema a patto che Laura anche venga." "I'll go to the cinema provided that Laura also comes." (And "a patto che" requires the following verb to be subjunctive and that's a whole other ballgame that seems very much reliant on intuition.) But in order to truly understand "a patto che," I needed the translation.

But why?

It's because I inherently understand what it means. This is where the whole rambling feelings bit comes in. Not only have foreign languages come rather easily to me, but also my native English language. I've always prided myself on being good at grammar. I did well on the Writing SAT not because I studied hard or memorized rules or came up with any particular strategy, but because I could just look at a sentence and know if it FEELS right or not. I tried to tutor my younger brother on the Writing SAT once and I found it hard to explain why something was right or wrong (not to mention that I still don't get 100% of the questions right). "It's...just... 'cause it is!"

Obviously the brain works in a way during the critical language period that makes you innately understand your native language(s). But when you're an adult language learner, it's different. A lot of people in the class want very technical explanations for grammar rules, and sometimes those are useful for me, too, but I understand it much better when I can just translate it into English, because then I can just attach an intuitive feeling to it and hopefully remember the next time it comes around. For example, prepositions can seem really arbitrary in Italian, and in many cases you just have to memorize which preposition is used with which verb. But of course, it's been a lot easier for me to memorize the more "feely" ones. An example that comes to mind is "inammorarsi di" ("to be in love with," but the preposition "di" usually means "of"). English speakers often will use "con" ("with") instead of "di," for obvious reasons. But it's something I've been able to remember because it's such an emotion-filled word.

But for me, "to be in love with" still has a stronger meaning than "inammorarsi di," even though they mean exactly the same thing. Yet I think the latter sounds nicer. Additionally, it is more concise, though Italian isn't always concise. "Laura's dog." "Il cane di Laura." Yeah.

Though actually, now that I'm thinking about it, "love" and its Italian equivalent "amore" have different meanings for me. "Love" is not as nice-sounding, yet it seems more serious, deep,

and cutting, like carving words into wood, permanent yet breakable. “Amore” is like a music staff on an ocean wave--it is more carefree, happy, blissful, yet fleeting. Hmm.

A better example of what I’m trying to describe is a couple weeks ago when we read a poem in my general Italian language class. I was able to read it, not knowing a few of the words, and get the general idea of what it was about. I could tell that it was a good poem, but I couldn’t quite grasp its beauty or genius, and I wasn’t on the same wavelength as the writer. For funsies, I decided to translate it into English (I have a translation class anyway, so why not?). When I had finished, I read the poem over again in English, and that’s when I was like, “Oh, oh...this is a REALLY nice poem.” What’s more was understanding that some of the Italian words I didn’t know had double meanings, which contributed to the poem. The poem itself was about a woman being obsessed/insane over a man who never truly loved her. There’s a part that says:

“Non devi rinnegare quell’alone (You don’t have to renounce that halo)
per te creato, che tu solo emani.” (That I create for you, that you alone radiate.)

The word “alone” (pronounced “ah-LOH-neh”) can also mean “ring,” which is what I initially translated it to until I saw the word “emani” in the next line, so then I changed it to “halo.” But I thought it was interesting that it could also mean “ring,” which implies marriage. That’s just something you don’t get when you don’t know the language! And regardless, I was frustrated that I could get into the author’s feelings until I translated it back into English. Here is such a nice-sounding language and I just want to dive into it head-first, but I’m too impatient and I can’t...

I guess what I’m trying to say is that learning a language in this way is making me appreciate my relationship with the English language. It makes me more proud of it, more connected to it, my safe place. I feel like no matter how much vocabulary I learn or how fluent I get, I’ll never have the same relationship with Italian as I do English. Despite the beauty of

Italian, right now the words kind of feel like cardboard. I need to fill them with something (someone?), inject them with some kind of meaning in order to really entangle myself in it.

At the same point, however, I feel like a lot of students in my classes are too technical with it. It's easy to see a language like a machine, I suppose; just learn the different parts and buttons and then make it work, let it whirl. I suppose one could learn a language like this, but it just seems so...mechanical and detached. Like you're just skimming the surface when there's so much deeper.

So that's why I need to find that balance. I still don't know how to get it. I'm too attached to English, but even when I'm fully immersed in Italian, I can't push it away. I guess it's a part of me I'll never be able to push away, but why would I even want to? I don't need to.

I guess...maybe I'm seeing this wrong. Italian has always been a joy for me as well as a source of pride because I've been relatively successful with a passion that came from within me, that I incited on my own, not because I had to learn it in school. It's still a balance, though; if I want to learn, I have to try, but I can't try so hard. Just let it be a joy: not a mandatory job, yet not something that's easy to put aside.

Maybe I'll just keep thinking about wind chimes and roses.

“A Conversation with a Pro-Qaddafi Libyan” – February 3, 2012

My friends and I often like to go to a bar/restaurant called La Tana dell'Orso (“The Cave of the Bear”). It's run by a cheery Irishman from Dublin and it's a hotspot for English-speakers. Unfortunately, I heard that it's closing down, but at least the last experience I had there gave me an understanding that I will keep with me for the rest of my life.

I am not sure how I began talking with this man, and I do not remember his name. He asked if I was from the United States, and I said yes. He said oh, I've lived in Cleveland, I really liked it there! I couldn't help but chuckle to myself, because I know that Cleveland right now is

kind of one step above Detroit (these two videos came to mind: [1](#) [2](#)), but I don't think he realized that. (Later my friends and I mused that perhaps Cleveland was still miles above his living situation in Libya, and comparatively it was nice; but I don't know what his socio-economic status was there.) So he was saying all of this generally nice stuff about America and that now he was in Italy to work. He spoke English relatively well.

Then I asked where he was from originally, and he replied Libya. So my first question was, "Do you have any family who was there during the fall of Qaddafi?"

That got him started.

He reacted immediately, saying that he was upset about the fall of Qaddafi. It took me a second to register that he was saying that he supported Qaddafi, but it was one of those situations where I made myself swallow it, accept it, and say to myself, Okay, this is probably going to be your only chance to talk to anyone who supports Qaddafi, so keep an open mind and ask as many questions as possible.

For starters, he believes that everything that happened was the fault of NATO. The bombs, the violence, the fighting, everything. It was clear from the beginning that he was very passionate about the subject--he later mentioned that not only was his family living without light and power, but also that his brother was still missing and that he assumed he was dead. "I just want a finger, just a piece of him, just to know," he said to me. And I told him that I understood. Well, that I didn't understand because I've never had to deal with that kind of emotional trauma, but that I recognized the motivation behind his impassioned words. One of his family members died amongst the violence, and the quality of life has dropped for his family. It was pretty clear just from those facts that nothing was going to change this man's mind about anything he believed.

Mind you, I had no intention of changing it. I just wanted to know what he thought. I tried to make that as clear as I could.

Anyway, so back to NATO. He also believes that it was NATO who took out Qaddafi. Now, admittedly, I did not follow the events that unfolded in Libya very closely. In fact, I haven't even done any research since that conversation. But I decided to go on what I knew.

"I'm going to tell you what Americans saw on TV, on the news--what was reported to us about Libya, and I want you to tell me how much of that is true."

So I brought up how it was reported that civilians were the once who started protesting, and that the violence started when the government was trying to repress it. While I knew that NATO and several countries, including the US, stepped in militarily, I was under the impression that most of the ground fighting was between civilians and Qaddafi's forces. (Someone correct me if I'm wrong.) I also brought up the cell phone picture that was taken of people carrying Qaddafi's body through the streets.

He said it was lies, all lies. That NATO had been doing all of the fighting and that the cell phone picture was fake. He said, "Don't watch the news, you Americans are brainwashed! You only hear one side!"

Not only did I bring up the fact that the Internet provides many points of view for reference and comparison (and he said that he also uses the Internet in order to do exactly that, but I think he said some negative things about it, too; I don't remember and his English wasn't clear enough), but I also emphatically tried to introduce the idea that perhaps he, too, was also "brainwashed"--in the exact same way that he was saying Americans are. Of course, he denied that, and said that he was right. This irked me severely, of course, particularly because he wasn't even in Libya during that time, and he was being a hypocrite.

The biggest point that he tried to convey to me, I feel, throughout the entire conversation was the idea of pacifism. He really, thoroughly disliked the idea that NATO, the US, and other countries felt as though they had the right to come and get involved in Libya's business; additionally, he doesn't like how they pick and choose whom to help. "Why don't they go to

Yemen, then?" he said. "They are having a civil war, it is terrible! They go to Iraq, why? They say oh, because they have nuclear weapons, but then they don't have them. No, it's because they want oil!" I didn't disagree with him. I let him know that a lot of Americans agree with him on that subject. "So you say that America should stay in America, and Libya should stay in Libya, and all of the other countries should mind their own business?" I asked. And he said, "Yes, yes!"

So I asked him why he supported Qaddafi. He said, "Because he is my leader!" Alright, I said, but what is so great about him? What did he ever DO for you, for the country? I must have asked this question at least ten times, because I wasn't satisfied with his responses. At this point, my roommate Nadia had joined in on the conversation, and she stopped me.

"Ariel," she said, "for them, it isn't about what he did. That's such an American idea about what makes a good leader: what they do. But that's not what they focus on."

I blinked a couple times. I had...never thought about it like that before. I had never realized that. To be a good leader...how ELSE can you be a good leader? I couldn't understand it; I couldn't wrap my head around it.

To supplement my emotions connected to this revelation, I also at some point asked him, "How do you define freedom?"

"Security," he said. Just being able to live. Being able to go to school, to work, to have his family. What else did he need? Oh, also he told me that in Libya, university-level education is free. I asked him to confirm that at least two times to make sure I heard him correctly. I then proceeded to rage for a couple of minutes. "Freaking LIBYA has free education but AMERICA doesn't!?!?" ...Really. UGH.

Anyway. He said that he supported Qaddafi because when Qaddafi was around, he had "freedom." His brother was still alive, his family was still living well. They could live, have a life. Basically, Libya had a routine that he was comfortable with, and with the fall of Qaddafi, everything had been disrupted. Every institution that had been run by the government was now

unstructured and not working. There's damage from the fighting. "It will take 15 years for Libya to be stable again!" he said. And he's probably right.

But these two things: His definition of freedom, and the way they see their political leaders...they just...I was speechless for a couple of minutes. I know I really do try my hardest to see issues from both sides, and that was exactly why I had gotten into the conversation in the first place, but it made me realize how much my American upbringing was really ingrained in me.

"Try to take yourself out of the American mind," he had said to me. "Try to see it from outside it."

"Yes, I am trying, I can try," I replied, "but it is such a part of me that it would be almost impossible to do that. I can ask you to do the same thing, but for you, you are inherently Libyan." And he acknowledged the truth of it.

And I wanted to cry. In my silence while he and Nadia talked, tears actually welled up a little in my eyes. I know a lot of it was the shock, the overwhelming emotion of this grand epiphany, this bulldozer of an understanding that had pushed its way into both my mind and heart, but my American-tainted thoughts bounced all around my head.

This man will never know or understand any other idea of freedom... He will never be able to change his mindset about the way he sees leaders. Libya could perhaps be so much more. But who am I to say that I have the right answers? That American ideas are the right answers? Because we still have so many problems.

Yet, I learned from my Moldova experience that we still very much take our government for granted. I kept that in mind.

I also thought to myself, this man doesn't have any comparison. All he knows well is Libya under Qaddafi. It's what is stable and safe for him. Maybe after those 15 years, I thought so idealistically, as I do, he'll finally have a comparison and maybe he'll realize that it's better. That's assuming, of course, that something better WILL come out of this. One can only hope.

Like I said, I was trying to keep as open of a mind as possible, but I found it difficult when he started saying that everything Qaddafi said was true. “Go listen to the speech he gave when he last came to America,” he told me. “At the UN?” I asked, making sure, because I knew which speech he was talking about. “Yes!” he said. “Listen to that speech--that is the truth!” “Okay,” I said, “I will go watch it.” And I couldn’t help but feel...I don’t know...I don’t want to say sad for him. I guess sad for him, perhaps as a Jew, because I’m pretty sure Qaddafi said some anti-Semitic stuff in that speech (by the way, I did not let this man know that I was Jewish). But maybe I was just very wary because I remember everyone in America (and Europe...and I think just about everywhere else) making fun of that speech.

Unfortunately, he left the conversation in the middle of a misunderstanding. I was trying to say, “If the American government used the money that they spend on war on education, then it could be free!” He kept saying in response to that, “No! No! America gives Libya nothing!” It took me a little before I figured that he was misunderstanding the word “spend”--perhaps he thought I meant “give,” as in, give money to other countries to aid them (which I know they do, but I don’t know about Libya). I kept trying to tell him that, but at that point his emotions were so heightened and we were shouting over each other and the music playing in the background that there was no way he was going to calm down enough to try and think it through. He then insisted that he needed to go to a different bar in order to meet up with other friends.

We shook hands, I thanked him as best as I could for his time, and he left. Oh by the way, he had a shot, so if he’s Muslim I guess he’s not terribly religious. I was very unsettled by the fact that he left thinking that I believed something that I didn’t, but what could I do?

Not too long later, another guy who knew him came up to us and apologized...apparently he was drunk. I guess I’m bad at recognizing drunk people unless they’re stumbling and throwing up all over the place. Heh.

Regardless, I'm very glad that I had that conversation. I gained a real understanding about the mentality of people under dictatorships. Well, as close of an understanding as I'm ever going to get. They support what they know, what they're familiar with, what works for them. Freedom for them is just being able to live, and have a life with security. And as long as they have that, leaders don't have to "do" a bunch of stuff for the country.

It's so different from America. Is it the correct mentality to have? That's a debate I'm going to step away from because I'm not educated enough in that area. But this is the point of studying abroad, is it not? It's to look at the world from another perspective, get inside the minds of others around the globe, look past what we watch on the news, just hear what they have to say and digest it being as unbiased as possible.

I feel like if everyone in the world had the opportunity to do that, planet Earth would be a much better place.

Appendix B

Idea Summary

Title (tentative): *Wind Chimes and Roses*

I am going to make a documentary about my experiences abroad in Perugia, Italy, and how those experiences helped me to understand how globalization is shaping and changing every corner of the world.

I believe that it is important for people to realize that globalization is truly reaching the most unexpected of places. People are moving to different countries looking for a better life, bringing their languages and customs with them. The Internet and media are allowing people from all over the world to share information and culture, and the growing presence of English is allowing increased communication. I went to Italy expecting to experience its stereotype—rolling hills, mounds of pasta, serenading attractive men—and be immersed in its language. While I experienced those aspects, I found it not only difficult to break away from my American friends and meet Perugians, but I also discovered a fascinating city with a vibrant international community and saw it as a representation of a phenomenon that is growing all over the world. I came back to the United States having learned something very different than what I originally expected.

My film will illustrate this by showing the city of Perugia and its historical Italian aspects (churches, the center, the food, etc.), but also its international dimensions (the Università per Stranieri, the foreign restaurants, the people, etc.). I will provide commentary through voiceovers in order to explain my journey, and interviews from others that I met on my trip will supplement this information.

The main characters I have interviewed are:

Antonella Dominici: English-Italian Translation professor at the Università per Stranieri, native Italian who is fluent in English; provides insight about the presence of English around the world and its influence in Italy and on the Italian language.

Group of Chinese students at the Università per Stranieri (Ding Yi Tong, Sun Bo, Chen Xia Lu, Ma Tuchen, Chen Xin, Zhu Jian Mei): Explain why they are learning Italian and the opportunities it provides them in China, and their lives in Perugia.

Group of American students at the Umbra Institute (Leticia Luna, Nadia Koltsoon, Kristin Karg, Elizabeth Lutzvitch, Jordan Ashwood, Dao La): Discuss the presence of American students in Perugia and their attempts to integrate into the community, as well as American culture in Italy.

Valerio Pentene' and Laura Schintu: Owner of a pizzeria and his girlfriend, a university student; Talk about the Perugia community in relation to the international one.

Countess Maria Giulia Cimorelli: Runs a villa and winery in Tuscany; discusses Italian identity, particularly Tuscans, and describes how the Tuscan land inspires her to live a full life.

Laura Tosti: Works at a gelateria in Perugia, born and raised in Perugia; discusses the Italian Perugian community and its history, comments on the growing international community in Perugia and the Perugian community's reaction to it.

The main conflict in this film is between my wanting to be “immersed” in the Italian culture and language and the difficulties of truly doing so as the town is becoming more and more globalized.

I want my audience to feel a sense of awe at the beauty of Perugia and Italy—its landscapes, tradition, language, and history—but also to understand that Italy is more than the stereotypes and is in fact changing due to cultural influences from all over the world.

I want to make this movie because I think it is important to heighten people's awareness of the effects of globalization, even in places that have a long-established cultural identity.

Appendix C

Treatment

Working title: *Wind Chimes and Roses*

Director: Ariel Siegelman

Working Hypothesis: Immersing myself in Italian culture was not so easy since the entire world is flocking to Italy.

Theme: This film is a personal journey story, exploring themes such as alienation, wonder, and fear of the unknown. It seeks for the audience to develop an understanding about different cultures and how they interact, which is exceedingly important in this increasingly interconnected world. It will show my struggle to truly immerse myself in the Italian culture and language and the lessons I learn instead by being in such an international community.

Structure: The film will be chronologically structured throughout three acts. It will begin with my expectations of Italy: What were my preconceptions about the country and culture, and what did I expect to happen over the course of my time there? What were my stereotypes about Italy? Why did I even dream about going there in the first place? The second act will cover the majority of my time spent there and how I almost immediately realized that immersing myself into the Italian community in Perugia was going to be incredibly difficult. It will cover the interactions I had at the Università per Stranieri with international students, the Americans I naturally gravitated to and America's influence in Italian culture, and the rather closed-off Perugian community and why they are so closed in reaction to this international community. The last act will cover my realizations and conclusions about my experience and how my perspective on not only Italy, but also the world, has changed.

Style: It will be from my point-of-view, with me as a narrator. The narration will not only provide impartial information, but also my personal opinions and insights. There will mostly be b-roll and

photographs, and my perspectives will be supplemented with interviews, which are mostly conversation-like with me behind the camera.

Format: This will be a short film, 7-10 minutes. It was shot in HD.

Point of View: The film will be from my perspective with my voice, as it is my story and experience in Perugia, but I will almost never appear in front of the camera. I hope that I can represent many demographics in this situation: A college student, an American, an English-speaking person, a person trying to learn another language and culture.

Timetable: I currently have all of the footage I believe I will need and am currently logging this footage. I have selected a week in late October where I will retrieve any other interviews or footage I wish to obtain. I plan on using music from creative commons websites, and I am even considering composing my own music. I plan on beginning to edit as soon as possible, with a rough cut finished by November 8th and a fine cut finished by December 4th. I will be continuing to polish it from January to April of next year as well.

Budget: Unless I plan to retrieve some kind of archival footage or music that requires money, considering that I have all of the footage I need and equipment rental is free as a Penn State student, I do not expect to have any additional expenses.

Appendix D

Production Plan

Title: Wind Chimes and Roses

Production Team: Ariel Siegelman

Equipment:

Camera: HDR-CX150 Sony Handycam with built-in microphone

Drives: 1 TB MyBook, 1 TB Seagate

Hypothesis: Immersing myself in Italian culture was not so easy since the entire world is flocking to Italy.

Synopsis: This personal journey film will explore the experiences I had as an American student studying abroad in Perugia, Italy. It will document my expectations of Italy before I got there, my difficulties in trying to have a “full immersion” experience and getting to know other Italians, my interactions with and observations on the American and international communities in Perugia and their dynamic with the Perugian community, and my realizations and gained knowledge at the end of my trip.

To Do List:

Research: Historical background on Perugia, information about the international community in Italy

Shopping list:

B-roll: Pictures from my trip, headlines about the international community or possibly Amanda Knox

Music: I need to find creative commons music, or possibly write and record some myself.

Narration: I need to figure out what I’m going to say and then record myself doing a V.O.

I may need some stock footage of old Perugia.

Schedule:

October 18th, November 1st, November 6th: Free periods to edit

Week of October 23rd: Period to shoot any other necessary footage

November 8th: Rough cut due

November 27th, November 29th: Free periods to edit

December 4th: Fine cut due

Budget:

I may buy another 1 TB hard drive. (\$90)

Possibly may have to buy stock footage. (\$1-\$50)

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ACADEMIC VITA

Ariel Siegelman

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Education

B.A., Film-Video, 2013, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

B.A., Italian, 2013, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

B.S., International Studies, 2013, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Università per Stranieri, 2012, Perugia, Italy

Honors and Awards

- Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Scholarship, Pennsylvania State University, 2009
- Josephine J. Rhea Italian Excellence Award, Pennsylvania State University, 2010
- The Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant, Pennsylvania State University, 2011

Association Memberships/Activities

- Phi Beta Kappa
- National Society of Collegiate Scholars
- Gamma Kappa Alpha
- PSN-TV
- Springfield THON

Professional Experience

- Editing and Creative Intern for a television production company and a post-production company.
- Proficient in editing both video and graphics using Final Cut Pro, Adobe Photoshop, After Effects, and Flash.
- Proficient in MPEG Streamclip, Compressor, DVD Studio Pro, Microsoft Office, and Internet applications.
- Produced several short films, documentaries, and news packages with HVX and DV-cameras.
- Knowledge of the production process, formal elements of composition, and common film concepts and terminology.
- Experience in the directing and producing positions.
- Certified in C1 Level of Italian according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Publications and Papers

Siegelman, Ariel. *Window to the World: Cultural Crossroads in Italy*. Pennsylvania State University. 2013.