

Patrick Lackey  
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FMS-199

*Inside Tufts Hockey 2017*

View the 16-part documentary web-series here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhtY7kEpaxhvipMs1H9zSFh1ZSZklmfKS>



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### The Process: *Inside Tufts Hockey 2017*

Creating *Inside Tufts Hockey 2017* was definitely the largest challenge of my Tufts academic career. It was certainly all-encompassing in terms of allowing me to practically use every bit of my FMS experience. I certainly enjoyed, both, the freedom allotted to me to create this work, as well as the structure and guidance provided to me by the University. I recognize and appreciate the fact that this is a once-in-a-life time opportunity; at no other point in time do I suspect I'll be able to so fully engage myself in a passion project of this magnitude without needing to worry about budget or profit. Instead of worrying about those challenges, I had plenty of others to worry about. In many cases, I relied on my coursework and internship experience to help paint my path. While so many Tufts courses, people, and media sources helped me sculpt this project, I could not possibly list all of them here. (For an in-depth look at how sources sculpted my thought process and decisions, refer to my literature review.) Instead, I have chosen to share a few elements and factors I considered the most while going through the process of creating this project.

One of the first challenges I faced was organizing equipment rentals and booking a crew. Producing for Film- DR152 was the most useful experience I could have asked for when dealing with these challenges. Physically renting equipment was made tremendously easy by Natalie Minik at the Ex-College. However, deciding *when* I should rent equipment was a bit more difficult. I had to consider the team's practice, workout, meeting, and game schedules. Because I was a member of the team, I had to consider the same factors, as well as how much I would

be able to use a camera at a certain time, when deciding if I wanted additional crew members for a specific event.

Furthermore, in order to capture the proper mood of the interview topics, I had to consider the current time of year, the recent results and occurrences, the future challenges, and how attitudes might shift as the year continued. Trying to be as efficient as possible, I wanted to have interviewees speak about as many topics at one time as made sense. However, I was not willing to sacrifice the passion of their statements in order to consolidate time. Additionally, I thought seeing the same players/characters in different settings throughout the project would allow the audience to form connections with individuals, and therefore the team, on a deeper level. The analysis of media like *Last Chance U* and *24/7: Road to the Winter Classic*—among others— as well as the advice from my committee caused me to realize the phenomenon of becoming engaged with the material through connection to individuals— and by transitive property, the team.

An interview cannot simply create the mood; while speech can set the tone, to fully enhance the desired mood, it is necessary to find the precise music for the situation. Music on Film/Film on Music- MUS35 gave me a semester-long in-depth study of the effects music can have on moments in film. For this reason, I prioritized the audio for each segment. By this, what I mean is that I spent a (probably unnecessarily) long time finding the proper soundtrack for each segment. (I also set up a playlist I would add songs to as I heard one I thought would be good in a segment). After cutting the interview audio to the length, order, and message that I wanted, I then trimmed and mixed the music track to the length and build I wanted. Only after that could I start adding B-Roll.

Stylistically, I eventually decided I wanted my interviews to resemble those from *Mars*. The lighting and framing was quite unique from any other interview I had seen before, but the situation was still entirely recognizable as an interview. With the lighting and camera abilities taught to me by Marc Raila as part of my Directed Study- FMS194, I figured out a way to achieve interviews that looked the way I wanted. (Compare the black room interviews, indoor & outdoor track interviews to the conference room interviews. I was particularly pleased with the end-of-the-year interviews with Coach Norton, Sean Kavanagh, Mason Pulde, and Sharad Sagar).

The largest challenge I may have faced was trying to turn the story of a team that came in sixth place—and lost in the quarterfinals of the conference tournament—into a story worth caring about, worth watching until the end, and worth being proud of enjoying (to the point where people would share it with their friends). Again, because I was on the team, I had a different mindset during the season. I thought the story would be one of first-time champions because I truly believed we were going to win the conference tournament. However, after we lost in the playoffs, I had to create deeper stories in the editing room. Thankfully, my committee advised me to record some of the more interesting or powerful stories about my teammates throughout the year. This allowed me to create a project that displayed the team and its individuals, and while the project tracks the success of the team, winning or losing is not the driving factor of the audience's interest.

Finally, the most helpful thing in creating my project was my committee, made up of Professor Jennifer Burton & Julie Schwarz. Both individuals offered me more guidance than I could ever thank them for. Their thoughts in the fall about ways I should approach the project

helped me frame my perspective during the production process, particularly regarding potential storylines, as well as how I planned to remove my own biases as a team member in order to become a (more) unbiased journalist. Toward the end of the process, each offered me incredibly detailed notes and suggestions about technical aspects, narrative decisions, and structure. While these notes were oftentimes quite specific, I still walked away with a better understanding of how to create future projects—not just particular moments of this one.

Overall, I enjoyed the challenge of creating this project. To me, it was a great way to blend all of my academic experiences in order to create something about which I am passionate. Furthermore, I found incredible benefit in creating something that directly applies to the industry in which I hope to work. Being able to show this project as a finished product, as well as a proof-of-concept or proof-of-ability is invaluable to my professional career development, as were the skills, theories, and thought processes developed during the entire creation process.

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Literature Review:  
*Inside Tufts Hockey 2017*

After consuming several sources of literature and media, I have decided to separate my literature review into three sections: Narrative Structure, Stylistic Approaches & Production, and Crossover—referring to ability of a source to influence my thoughts on both of the former two areas. While some sources proved to be beneficial specifically for storyline development and others proved to be beneficial for the stylistic choices of production, most sources seemed to help me in both areas. After reviewing these sources, the two sides seem inherently connected as the style of a film directly affects the mood and theme of the narrative. While I plan to use these sources to develop the strongest project stylistically as well as from a narrative perspective, to create the best production I can, I need to consider the intersection of these ideas and how every choice I make will be perceived—consciously and subconsciously—by the audience.

Part I: Narrative Structure

*Hoop Dreams*. Dir. Steve James. Prod. Fred Marx. By Peter Gilbert. Perf. William Gates, Arthur Agee, Isiah Thomas, and Spike Lee. Feature Film Company, 1994.

Tracking the development of two high school basketball players, *Hoop Dreams* is successful in making the viewer care about two seemingly normal high school athletes. The

documentary gives the audience a much deeper look into the lives of these individuals, drawing on these students' life circumstances to grow personal connection with the audience. The basketball careers and dreams of these individuals seem to be at the forefront of the story, but the strength of the story is truly in the off-the-court moments. *Last Chance U* seems to have drawn on *Hoop Dreams* in terms of sculpting a compelling narrative, both choosing to use the traumatic backstories of the individuals to create deeper empathy in the audience.

*Hoop Dreams* has provided me with the ability to think about how to structure my own documentary. While *Hoop Dreams* was quite long—much longer than I plan to make my project—it has still shown me, structurally, how to keep an audience engaged with both sides of an athletic story.

*The Fourth Phase*. Dir. Jon Klaczekiewicz. Perf. Travis Rice. Red Bull Media House & Brain Farm Digital Cinema, 2016. *The Art of Flight*. 2 Oct. 2016. Web.

The sequel to *The Art of Flight* [see page 5], *The Fourth Phase* pushes the cinematic abilities of the documentary even further. Nature shots, oftentimes aerial, are even more epic in this film. The snowboarding action is even more dangerous and action-packed. However, the film's narrative was less luring. Relying less on characters for entertainment, *The Fourth Phase* uses the scientific processes of the cycle of water to sculpt an adventure narrative. While the storyline was more complex, *The Fourth Phase* was less entertaining from a viewer's perspective without offering too much significance for the change in structure. Certainly the film pays respects to nature—specifically water and snow—but nothing is too extraordinary in the narrative to justify the sacrifice of entertainment.

What I am taking away from this film is the concept of sacrifice in narrative creation. On paper, *The Fourth Phase* should be exponentially better than *The Art of Flight*. The technology of equipment, the artistry of the crew, and the talent of the athletes have all improved dramatically since the earlier film. Furthermore, the narrative structure is complex and includes non-snowboarding elements and pays homage to nature, while providing a philosophical perspective towards life and earth. However, something did not quite work. When editing my project, I need to recognize what works and what does not. I need to separate what should work on paper with what does work in actuality. Sometimes this might mean re-editing a segment, restructuring the narrative, or even cutting entire segments. While this will feel difficult to do, *The Fourth Phase* will serve as my reminder of what is necessary.

Hays, Tyler M. "Season 1." *Friday Night Tykes*. Netflix. Esquire Network. 14 Jan. 2014. Television.

This documentary series tracks the lives of coaches, players, and parents of a football league in Texas for nine-year-olds. The narrative is focused on the success of four teams, with emphasis on the coaches and few key players and their families.

While one season of the show covers as much as I hope to during the course of one film—an entire season—, each episode's structure was helpful to me as I thought about my own project. *Friday Night Tykes* helped me realize the importance of recurring storylines. I need to find interesting and intriguing storylines in the subjects of my documentary that I can sprinkle in throughout the course of the film. This strategy will keep viewers engaged and will provide some comfort to them each time the narrative continues with these chosen storylines.

Cunningham, Megan. *The Art of the Documentary: Fifteen Conversations with Leading Directors, Cinematographers, Editors, and Producers, Second Edition*. 2nd ed. New Riders, 2014. Web ISBN-13: 978-0-13-376502-1. Web.

In a section about crafting the documentary narrative, there is an interview with Geof Bartz, an award winning editor. He likens the art of editing the documentary to that of scriptwriting. Before I begin heavily editing entire segments of the film, I plan to create a detailed narrative progression in order to keep my energies focused. It is also worthy to note the importance of allowing the subjects of the film to further the narrative and share details themselves. The audience will respond more favorably when information is not directly told to them from the director or editor. I will keep this in mind and place larger emphasis while editing to create a compelling narrative told by the subjects' words and actions, as well as by the segment progression.

Rosenthal, Alan, and Ned Eckhardt. *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Digital Videos*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2016. *Project Muse*. ISBN: 9780809334599. Web. <<https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/book/44164>>.

In the chapter on "shaping the film," Rosenthal and Eckhardt discuss the differences in crafting a documentary essay and crafting a documentary narrative. They heavily favor the narrative style, as it includes several elements that draw and keep viewer attention. Essentially, to keep the audience interested in my film, I need to create a narrative with conflict and drama. This may stem from the overall team narrative, or it may be part of the segments and storylines based on individual subjects.

*The Endless Summer*. Dir. Bruce Brown. Perf. Michael Hynson and Robert August. Bruce Brown Films, June 15, 1966.

Tracking the adventure of two surfers around the world, *The Endless Summer* takes one binding theme, surfing, and sculpts a strong narrative by including interesting details and segments—about different cultures, women, nature, locations, etc.— that have less to do with “the perfect wave.” Though the film achieves most of its narrative progression through voiceover audio, it remains interesting and even funny.

This film is helpful for my project as it reminds me about how important the strength of a story is for documentaries. Capturing supporting stories to strengthen the main storyline will keep the audience engaged.

## Part II: Stylistic Approaches & Production

*The Art of Flight*. Dir. Curt Morgan. Perf. Travis Rice. Red Bull Media House & Brain Farm Digital Cinema, 2011. *The Art of Flight*. 8 Sept. 2011. Web.

As an action-packed snowboarding documentary, *The Art of Flight* redefines how artistic and beautiful a documentary can be. Extremely cinematic in its nature, the film captures the audience’s attention and keeps hold of it by interspersing nature shots, action shots, and documentary segments—both serious and comedic.

The largest takeaway *The Art of Flight* has given me is that it has completely changed what a documentary can be. It can be artistic and cinematic with staged or elaborate shots. Mixing in these cinematic elements boost the production value of the film, as well as create an awe-factor in the audience. These elements may be mixed in one-by-one in my film, or entire (short) segments may be dedicated to this style.

Grossman, Todd. *Shooting Action Sports: The Ultimate Guide to Extreme Filmmaking*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2008. Publisher's Note: Transferred to Taylor & Francis as of 2012. - *ScienceDirect*. ISBN: 978-0-240-80956-4. Web. 29 Sept. 2016.

Chapter 3 of this source covers the pre-production challenges of creating an action-sports documentary. Among the best advice is to have a written plan of shots needed at each event and of specific athletes that will likely be highlighted. This lists should cover broad bases, as well as being extremely detailed—this way a crucial shot is not missing.

The chapter also covers several ways to finance the project. It has caused me to think about reaching out to corporations, alumni, and players' parents as ways to raise funds for the project's creation.

Chapter 6 discusses shooting techniques for an action-sports documentary. There are several suggestions for how to capture an artistic shot while maintaining focus on the action. There are a staggering number of suggestions offered—namely lens techniques, composition styles, tracking techniques, and filters— that can help achieve unique style. Using these techniques during games, as well as during staged shoots can add the cinematic element I hope to achieve with this documentary.

Artis, Anthony Q. *The Shut up and Shoot Documentary Guide: A Down & Dirty DV Production*. Amsterdam; Boston: Focal, 2008. *ScienceDirect*. ISBN: 978-0-240-80935-9. Web. <<http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/science/book/9780240809359>>.

The first chapter of this source gave me confidence that I could complete my project very well while also making me feel as though anyone could complete my project well. Artis

does state that most people have the ability to create a documentary film. However, there is much hard work that goes into pre-production, production, and post-production. Artis's point is that today's technology gives people several ways to learn how to complete the tasks required by each of these areas.

Chapter 4 speaks to the importance of good quality sound recording. I have to rethink my sound recording method. When possible, I will try to have a boom pole operator—especially for interviews. However, I believe Artis, by providing me with several technical skills, has given me the confidence to record sound on my own with lavalier microphones and with shotgun microphones attached to cameras.

Mason, Ben Young & Justin Wilkes. *Mars*. National Geographic. 14 November 2016. Television.

Stylistically, I appreciate the way interviews are incorporated into the fictional miniseries. This technique causes me to think about how to creatively present a story. Norms do not necessarily need to be upheld. Furthermore, norms of a different genre may be used or incorporated in order to achieve a different effect. In this case, the use of documentary style interviews in the fictional story causes the audience to care more deeply for the characters—as they feel they are building a personal connection. This style also allows for genre bending and blending. I will think about how I might achieve this style of blend, so I am not presenting the same, tired narrative of a sports team (especially because the subjects of my project—my hockey team—did not do anything truly remarkable, as we were eliminated in the NESCAC quarterfinals). [Note: as I interview more subjects, I will attempt to mimic the lighting, and

potentially framing, of some of these Mars interviews; they too are beautifully unique, while relying on tradition.]

### Part III: Crossover

Whiteley, Greg. "Season 1." *Last Chance U*. Netflix. 29 July 2016. Television.

This documentary series tracks the football team at a junior college in Mississippi, which has won multiple national championships and consistently sends several players to Division I programs. Focusing on a smaller sampling of players, coaches, and staff, viewers gain a personal connection with the team and are thereby become deeper invested in the story of the program. While the program's storyline is decently interesting on its own, the personal connection to individuals is what makes this series so successful in connecting to the audience.

This work has influenced the way in which I hope to sculpt my own project by forcing me to search for the individuals in my documentary who might have unique stories or perspectives to add to the narrative in order to allow the audience to feel a deeper personal connection. Additionally, there have been several stylistic choices that inspire my own vision of how I want to shoot and edit this project. The use of stylized color correction, changes of speed (slow motion, speed ramping, etc.), and sculpting layered audio are among the factors that have inspired me. However, while I have absorbed these stylistic and technical decisions, what I have taken most from this series is the importance of personal connection to subjects.

*24/7: Road to the Winter Classic*. HBO. 2011-2014. Television.

AND

*Road to the Winter Classic*. EPIX. 14 Jan. 2015. Television.

The documentary series, originally on HBO and more recently on EPIX, serves as the model for my project. It relates directly to my subject; a hockey team. Each year, the series tracks two hockey teams as they near the Winter Classic game, in which they will play against each other. Nothing else is truly extraordinary about these teams, besides the fact they will be in this outdoor game.

I plan to incorporate my own version of some of the establishing and artistic shots as I find them successful in creating the proper mood for the series—and what I am to achieve in my own project.

Chosen individuals are highlighted, team routines and player superstitions are shared, and ordinarily hidden details of the athletes' lives are shown. Finding enticing details in this unusual (hockey) world—one I have become accustomed to—will be one of my most important challenges. I only have one chance to share this team's story, so determining which aspects are worthy is of the utmost importance.

Ennis, Drew. "Tufts Lacrosse: Back to Back - The Road to the 2015 National Championship" and "Tufts Lacrosse: Full Circle - The Road to the 2014 National Championship." [Http://www.jumboslax.tv](http://www.jumboslax.tv). 6 Feb. 2016 and 30 Dec. 2014. Web.

These documentaries about the Tufts University lacrosse team is another clear model for my project. The films are about Tufts student-athletes and a

team's success, making them directly relatable to my project. Much of the film is dedicated to game highlights, which gives me a good source to model my own game segments after.

However, while I plan to include many game highlights, I hope to incorporate many more personal segments in my film. The game highlights will serve as my action segments and one of my binding storylines. However, I want the audience to feel a deeper connection to the team than is achieved in the lacrosse documentaries. This connection can be achieved by tracking selected individuals throughout the film and including behind-the-scenes action.

Malitsky, Joshua. "Knowing Sports: The Logic of the Contemporary Sports Documentary." *Journal of Sport History* Summer 2014 41.2 (University of Illinois Press): 205-14. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 29 Sept. 2016.  
<<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/10.5406/jsporthistory.41.2.205>>.

The author focuses on the ESPN series *30 for 30*. While making several claims, the ones I found most relevant to my project dealt with the spectacular qualities of the visuals and the expression of individuals. The series is successful for several reasons—many listed in this article—but these are the two applicable for my film. In order for my project to be successful, according to Malitsky, it must include visually spectacular athletic feats, as well as spectacularly beautiful supporting images. Furthermore, the success of the narratives come from the ability to share insight to the perspectives of individuals. While oftentimes this can be achieved

through interviews (in one location or on-the-go), it can also be achieved through tracking the non-verbal actions of the subject. Moving forward, I will place increased importance upon spectacular visuals and individual expression.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*. 6th ed. Burlington, MA: Focal, 2015. ProQuest. Print ISBN-13: 978-0-415-71930-8, 19 Sept. 2014. Web. 29 Sept. 2016.  
<<http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/9780415719308?uicode=tufts>>.

In a chapter about “documentary ingredients and human consciousness,” Rabiger notes how actions on screen are perceived by the audience. Several assumptions are made by the viewer when watching something on screen. These assumptions are applied to more than simply actions. They can be subconsciously applied to shot styles, camera movements, and cuts. I will refer to Rabiger’s tables in the future when I have difficulty determining what an audience’s perception would be in response to viewing a shot or edited segment. This work has also caused me to realize I can edit together multiple seemingly unrelated clips in order to create meaning for the viewer. This can come in the form of parallelism or even manipulating the chronology of events— although I do not mean this in a malicious way whatsoever.

Daniels, Greg, and Ricky Gervais. "Seasons 1-9." *The Office*. NBC. 24 Mar. 2005 – 16 May 2013. Television.

The sitcom, *The Office*, though not a traditional documentary, tracks the lives of an American workplace through a mockumentary form. Episodes can focus on the entire group of workers at the office as they undergo things together, but usually the storyline follows certain

individuals. These individual storylines may only show up once in one episode, may recur several times throughout one episode, or may recur several times throughout several episodes or even seasons. Furthermore, because the mockumentary series is fiction, there is a certain, almost scientific, style and pattern of camerawork and editing style. Not only do these techniques help convey narrative progression, they also help the audience develop a better understanding of the characters.

The staged mockumentary style allowed me to analyze and predict how each episode's narrative would unfold. The pattern and style of camera work became so consistent over the course of the series that I was able to predict who the camera would show next, how they would be shown, and how they would be reacting. The benefit for my project is threefold. First, it is helpful to see how a certain style of camerawork and editing can help progress the narrative so effectively. Secondly, as I began to learn trends of the characters' reactions in *The Office*, I realized I could start to do the same thing for people in my own life (i.e. my teammates, the subjects of my documentary). If I can predict how people will react in certain situations, I can have a camera ready to capture the moment. Lastly, the final episode of *The Office*, while being quite meta, reflects upon how the 'documentary' was able to enhance seemingly lacking storylines and, more importantly, capture the beauty within the ordinary. With my project, I hope to achieve success with both, as well.

*This Is Penn Lacrosse*. BEAST Entertainment. 23 July 2014. Web.  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utRXOFqcOpl>>.

The 22-minute documentary film documents the University of Pennsylvania's lacrosse team, with particular attention given to their Ivy League tournament run. While the film is not

extraordinarily heavy on highlights, I also felt the storytelling was slightly lacking. Learning about the players' lives and seeing behind-the-scenes was interesting, but nothing was particularly exciting. The flat lighting and slightly weak interviews—in terms of content and composition—did not boost the energy of the film.

This film helped me to realize the importance of excitement to a film that documents a collegiate athletic program. This can be achieved through action, storylines, color, editing, or any number of aspects that this film slightly lacked. It should be noted, so that I do not only present negative aspects about the film, that the cinematography overall was relatively high quality with beautiful, shallow depth of field shots.

*Making of a Royal*. [NHL YouTube web-series.] 25 October 2011.  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCWkAWE250E>>.

This 24-part web-series serves as a strong inspiration for the format of my project. Rather than creating one feature documentary, I plan to create several episodes to better tell the larger story with more— potentially seemingly tangential— details. This format not only attracts viewers more easily, but it also allows for a looser format and transitions between segments—due to the physical disconnection provided by the episodic format.

Furthermore, *Making of a Royal* relates directly to my project as it tracks the success of a youth hockey team across the season. It highlights individuals, as well as capturing the group's performance. The content, as well as the techniques used to present unique topics is interesting to me as I continue to thinking about which storylines will make the cut based on