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BIS 347

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1) The tentative title of the documentary film would be Swiping: Labor of Love*.*

2) My documentary film will be about exploring the new online dating paradigm of Tinder. By focusing on individuals, experts, and company employees, the film would explore why people rely so much on the dating app to meet romantic partners and people. For example, by interviewing and documenting how teens/college students use the app and their experience, the documentary would show how experts and company employees view this trend. Ultimately, this documentary will record, preserve, and reveal a holistic view of online dating with its thrills, dangers, and success stories.

3) The topic of online dating is important for three major reasons: 1) it’s incredibly popular and growing, 2) online dating is still relatively new, and 3) the misconceptions, which will be brought up later, that people have meeting people online. Looking at the first reason, online dating is rising rapidly as a way that many people now meet. According to the Pew Research Center, roughly 15% of Americans now use online dating apps with 27% of adults aged 18-24 partaking in the phenomenon. Compared to 2013, the number of adults using online dating has nearly tripled by 2015 (Smith and Anderson). When looking at the second reason, online dating is still fairly new on the scene with the Tinder app releasing in 2013. Although many websites like eHarmony have been around, apps have popularized the trend. Finally, online dating has stigma attached to it. The interesting news is that this stigma is slowly decreasing with more and more Americans saying online dating is a good way to meet someone. With these three reasons, a look into the world of online dating could reveal a lot about the subject to many who use dating apps, individuals who hold stigma, or just curious about the subject.

The platform for this movie would be best via internet streaming with Netflix being the ideal platform. Streaming as a platform would provide many benefits such as a wide and diverse movie audience, no commercials breaks, the stability of a major corporation, and allowing individuals to watch whenever. For a movie about online dating, it is important to get a diverse group of people to watch, either ones who have tried it or not. By streaming the movie, people just interested in the topic would be more likely to watch without the price tag associated with it unlike if it was done in the theaters. Although airing the program on cable would also have many similar benefits of streaming, the film would be more powerful and impactful without commercials. Due to this concern, streaming the film on Netflix would allow us to not have to worry about interrupting the flow of the film.  Additionally, by having a major company like Netflix producing this film, it would provide additional support and advertisements that would be otherwise be extremely costly. Finally, the ability for individuals to watch whenever is very important. Since online dating does have stigma, many people might find it embarrassing to go see a movie about this. But through the comforts of home, they would be able to watch without having the stigma of going to see it in the theaters.

4) The proposed film, Swiping: Labor of Love, will highlight two of Michael Renov’s tendencies of film. The film will show the first tendency of record, reveal, and preserve and the third tendency to analyze and interrogate (Renov). For the first tendency to record, reveal, and preserve, the film will explore the world of online dating by following the trials and errors of average users, learn from experts about the trend, and interview Tinder company executives about the Tinder trend. By working with average users, the film will reveal what it is like to date online and record what happens. Additionally, interviewing officials at Tinder will allow us to see the inner workings at a macro level. By watching the users and conducting interviews, the documentary will preserve the experiences of what it was like to use online dating in the early 21st century.

The third tendency of analyzing and interrogating will be done through interviews with officials within the government health department, experts in the field such as sociologist and economists, and company officials. For example, questions to these individuals could be about the dangers of using the app or what the government will do, if anything, about such dangers. By including these individuals, the film will explore not only what the experience is like for average users but the deeper trend and what society can expect from this new way of dating. The film will analyze what the impact to society is and how important this social trend is for the future. Including this third tendency is important as the film is holistic and analyzes online dating, both good and bad.

*5)* Swiping: Labor of Love is a documentary film because of its primary intent to educate and maintain a historical record. In order to achieve this, the film will create all of the scenes without actors or staged scenes. Interviews will be setup but questions will not be shared in advanced. Additionally, bias, although impossible to completely remove from any work of art, will be limited as much as possible by inviting as many diverse perspectives. The project will be done partially with the documentary style of cinema vérité in order to maximize objectiveness. However, when focusing on the two young adults using Tinder, the project would use a direct cinema style in order to capture the true aspects of what they go through without making our presence felt. Like many direct cinema films out there, the film would feature a narrator to provide the audience information regarding the subject at times. By using these styles and this approach, the film follows a tradition of documentary films within the United States and abroad that we have learned in our documentary film class.

6) Yes, the proposed film will resemble other films that we have seen during our class. The film that this will most resemble would be Michael Moore’s, Where to Invade Next, Harlan County, USA, and *Streetwise*. With the film *Where to Invade Next*, our goal is to replicate the narration and interview process that Michael Moore conducts. The film would then break from interviews to provide a look at other subjects, either other officials or the young adults using Tinder. Aspects of Harlan County, USA would also be used to show the history of how online dating manifested with historical film or graphics. A narrator would be used which would be similar to both Harlan County, USA and Where to Invade Next. Finally, the moments with the young adults who would be using the app, we would adopt a Streetwiseor Don't Look Back approach to filming which would provide the viewer a realistic viewpoint of what they are going through.

*7)* Swiping: Labor of Love would carry on and build on the American documentary film tradition by combining different types of filming into the same documentary. The proposed film would use traditional elements of exploring an overarching topic like The Plow that Broke the Soil and Harvest of Shame did for farming. For example, both of the documentaries focused on a topic on the macro level and discussed the issue to the audience through narration. The proposed film would explore a new trend in society through similar methods of narration and on a macro level while also examining the stories of two young adults. As such, we would look at cinéma vérité films such as Streetwise and Don’t Look Backto get the very personal and objective aspects of how Tinder is used. By using both styles cohesively, Swiping: Labor of Love would not only pay tribute to past documentaries but also blend styles to distinguish itself from other notable documentaries.

8) In general, Swiping: Labor of Love will feature different types of shots for the different styles of documentary filming. For example, when recording the young adults using the cinéma vérité, the camera crew will be extremely limited with shaky camerawork and close-ups detailing the emotional aspects of swiping and messaging prospective daters. These shots will help to create a sense of realism and objectiveness to the audience as events will be shown as they were filmed. Events like dates that the young adults attend will also be shot in a way that is shaky, but in a way to minimally affect the outcome. Again, by using these techniques, the film will show realistically what it is like to go on a date as a Tinder user. By using similar shaky filming techniques, the audience will still be immersed in the action and drama of the young adult in question.

For the other aspect of the documentary that will cover the macro trend of online dating and specifically Tinder, the documentary will use sound bridges of both diegetic and non-diegetic sounds, graphics, interviews with multiple static shots, and a narrator. By using sounds such as music accompaniment to match the mood of the moment in the film, the audience will be able to be more engrossed into the documentary. Sounds might be diegetic if the scene allows it but a lot of score will most likely be non-diegetic that plays in the background during animations. Furthermore, adding graphics will help show the audience information that is important regarding the trends of online dating. Interviews will provide additional educational material for the viewer to help them understand the trend even further. The static shots of the interviewers will help the viewer focus on what they are saying. Finally, the narrator will help guide the viewer during the film. By having a narrator, the audience will be able to understand the facts while also understanding what is going on in the film. A narrator will also negate the confusion that could be caused from the different documentary styles that would be found in this proposed documentary.

9) Yes, there have been some documentaries that have been made around the subject of this. Some of the most notable examples that were available include Catfish (2010 film), and Catfish, the TV Show (2012-present) which were relatively huge successes and had professional articles written about them. The premise of the movie and TV show was around “catfishing” which someone lures another person into a relationship using a fake profile. The 2010 film Catfish was well received by audiences and critics alike with an 80% on Rotten Tomatoes, and 7.1 on IMDb. The movie was produced for a cost of $30,000 while making $3 million worldwide (Movie Insider) (Box Office Mojo). Due to the success of the film, MTV decided to make a TV show that matched the premise of the original movie and find people who catfish other online dating users using fake profiles. This TV series has received academic notoriety as EBSCO publishing had an article in their extensive database. The article, “The Catfish Came Back”, talks about the show and how widespread this phenomenon is (Rothman). Finally, there are many other documentaries that did not have academic articles, one of the most noteworthy would be the future TV series Hot Girls Wanted by Netflix which will explore how online dating impacts society (Woodley).

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