

FEATURE SCRIPT WRITING FOR RADIO AND VIDEO STORIES

Presentation by Jim McCarthy

Joseph Gregori High School
Modesto, CA

Andrea worked at a bakery restaurant, under the convention hotel. At first it was fine, waiting on the conventioners.

Andrea But then you start to dread them. I mean absolutely. You're like, no, not another convention. They just flipped me out. I was just listening and watching them and getting them their croissants and their coffee.

Fact is, when people are together with others of their own kind, they act differently.

Andrea This thing happens. I mean you're so focused into this one aspect of your life that you just absorb into that whole facet of your life.

You become that facet of your life.

Andrea You become that facet of your life, yeah.

If one Mary Kay saleswoman walks up to your bakery counter, you don't think twice about it. But 90 of them, that's something completely different.



This
American
Life

Transcript

74: Conventions

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Convention worker

Ira Glass Andrea worked at a bakery restaurant, under the convention hotel. At first it was fine, waiting on the conventioners.

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< [Full episode](#)

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Convention worker

What did you hear?

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MUSIC FEATURES

20 Years Of Cher's 'Believe' And Its Auto-Tune Legacy

October 22, 2018 · 6:06 PM ET
Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



STEPHEN THOMPSON





Cher's dance anthem "Believe" was released 20 years ago this month.

Rick Stewart/Getty

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Auto-Tune sounds like digital stretching or flexing, as you hear a singer kind of slide up and down the register in a way that doesn't sound natural. And though the tactic is used seemingly sparingly in today's pop soundscape, the impetus for music's infatuation with Auto-Tune can be traced back to

Cher's dance pop song from 20 years ago. The deliberate distortion of her vocals could have been perceived as a gimmick, but, decades later, the success behind "Believe" lives on.



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CHER: (Singing) Do you believe in life after love?

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(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "BUY U A DRANK (SHAWTY SNAPPIN'")

T-PAIN: (Singing) I'm going to buy a drink. Then I'm going to take you home with me. I got money in the bank. Shawty, what you think about that?



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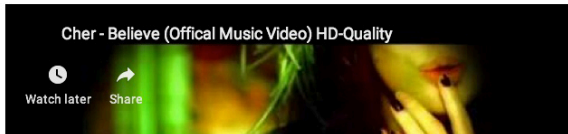
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THOMPSON: To me, Auto-Tune sounds sort of like digital stretching or flexing. You're hearing a singer kind of slide up and down the register in a way that doesn't sound natural. But Auto-Tune can amplify an expression of passion in - or emotion in a singer.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "HIDE AND SEEK")

IMOGEN HEAP: (Singing) Where are we?

THOMPSON: I think of a song like "Hide and Seek" by the singer Imogen Heap

NEWS STORY WRITTEN FOR THE EYE

THE MOST IMPORTANT OR LATEST FACT

INFORMATION TO BACK UP THE STORY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EXTRA COLOUR / QUOTES

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NEWS 5
CLEVELAND



NATURAL SOUND: [Gloves hitting bag]

Reporter Voiceover: Freddie Neil's boxing gloves...

NATURAL SOUND: [Gloves hitting bag]

Reporter Voiceover:...have taken him around the world.





TYPICAL REPORTING PROCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO REPORTERS

REPORTING

1. Story is assigned
2. Student reporter may or may not research subject/topic in advance
3. Student reporter shoots b-roll
4. Student reporter conducts interview(s)

EDITING

1. Student editor reviews interviews, identifying potentially useful soundbites
2. Begins to recognize story structure possibilities
3. Begins to realize missing elements that would make for better story
4. Editor begins to fill in gaps with reporter voiceover script
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Parachute journalism



Parachute journalism is the practice of thrusting journalists into an area to report on a story in which the reporter has little knowledge or experience. The lack of knowledge and tight deadlines often result in inaccurate or distorted news reports, especially during breaking news.

[Wikipedia](#)



“Most assume that [reporting with video] to be a backwards process...they’ll shoot video, then write to it. But I find it so much more fruitful to have an idea of the WORDS first, then look out for the correlating video. Often times, on my drive to an interview, I’ll track the story in my head.”



Lavalier (Lav) mic

Dynasty Youth Program Reporting Process

“Many of our best stories come from people reaching out to us.”

Day 1:



I knew the **police officers** would be there to chat with the kids.
I mic'd up one of the officers and shot the **WHOLE thing**. 30 minutes.



Interviewed John Calvino. 30 minutes.



I met boxer Freddie Neal. Learned about his background and decision to come home to help the kids.
“I knew he had a prominent role to play in the story.”

Day 2:

Shot Freddie Neil sparing with kids.

“I ALWAYS have my subject mic’d up when I’m shooting b-roll.”
45 minutes.



Interviewed Freddie Neal.

“I purposely wanted to talk with him after the workout for two reasons: I knew the sweat beading off his face would look great against the lights, and I find subjects are more relaxed and thoughtful when they’re completely exhausted.”

Day 3:

Basketball camp day. Randy Barnes is mic'd throughout. Nate Phillips speaks to a group of kids. He was mic'd before he spoke.



Interviewed Randy Barnes.

“Because I already spoke with John and Freddie, and knew the direction the story was going, this interview was much more direct.”

Day 4:



I went back strictly to find a kid to talk to. I strolled around, without my camera, chatting up different kids...and that's when I found and interviewed Cameron.

I had edited much of the piece and wasn't happy with my first few shots, so I got together with one of our top photographers to pick his brain. We looked back over some of the sports stories he'd done in the past, and that's where I got the idea for the opening scene.

Day 5:

I went back to the gym looking for one specific shot...I dimmed lights on Freddie and shot him punching the heavy bag for about 20 minutes before I finally got the shot.

EDITING:

I probably had 5-6 hours of video to weed through to put together for a three minute story.

The bulk of the editing took place over the course of about 8 hours.

I have some idea of what my script is going to sound like BEFORE I even go in for interviews/video, that way, I know what to look for in the camera lens when I get there.

Most assume that to be a backwards process...they'll shoot video, then write to it. But I find it so much more fruitful to have an idea of the WORDS first, then look out for the correlating video. Often times, on my drive to an interview, I'll track the story in my head.

Obviously, my origins as a writer fostered this. In TV, reports/photographers so often get caught up in the video, because that's what people see...for me, the writing is so much more important. Make the footage work with your words, not the other way around.

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Calvillo: The streets are undefeated. You're never going to beat the streets. So our whole commitment is keeping these kids off the streets.



Reporter Voiceover: And the program does that not just with boxing, but basketball and bonding too.



NATURAL SOUND: You got this, you got this.

Reporter Voiceover: Open and free to all.



Barnes: Inside these these walls, they're safe.

NATURAL SOUND: OK, all right, all right, all right...



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Barnes: We either invest in our kids now,
but we're going to pay for them as adults late.

NATURAL SOUND: Good job. Good job, good job.

Calvillo: Lot of people tell me when groups
and we have, you saved the one, you did your job.
I don't like that. I want to save them all.

NATURAL SOUND: Again, again, again, again...



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A Special Piece of History

In this old railroad town...But there's a big turnout Tuesday morning to watch...the movers. The original homeowners are long gone. But neighbors line the sidewalks. This historic home built in the 1880's...will have a new address. It is being moved...from Main St. to Oklahoma Ave. Spectators stake out the best vantage points while movers admit they've hit a road block. While repairs are made...the tension escalates. Finally...with everything secure...the movers begin the dangerous journey. Spectators hold their breath. It's a one truck parade. It's a small slice of America's past. Now preserved for the future.

In Sikesville...Kathleen Carons, FOX 45, News at ten.

**Broadcast Story Script Autopsy:
"A Special Piece of History"
<https://vimeo.com/9826357>**

Time Code	Reporter's VO Script	NAT SOUND/ C-Roll	Formal Interview
00:04:07		It doesn't happen everyday in this little town.	
00:07:09	In this old railroad town...		
00:11:14		The town is called Sikesville. Nothing's unusual, it's always quiet here	
00:14:17	But there's a big turnout Tuesday morning to watch...		
00:16:18		[inaudible] I seen it done a couple of times	
00:18:19	...the movers.		
00:19:21		It's going to be an interesting move.	
00:22:23	The original homeowners are long gone.		
00:24:26		I don't think anybody lives in here.	
00:26:28		Woah, what was that?	
00:29:31	But neighbors line the sidewalks.		
00:32:33		It has a screen, it has a screen.	
00:33:35	This historic home built in the 1880's...		
00:35:37		It has lots and lots of windows.	
00:37:40		Think about it. A hundred and thirty years is a long time.	
00:40:42	...will have a new address.		
00:42:44		Is that truck named Mack?	
00:44:45		We chose to actually save the building.	
00:46:47	It is being moved...		
00:44:45		All the way up against this one. Right there.	
00:48:51	...from Main St. to Oklahoma Ave.		
00:51:53		They are going to drive it right down there and put it on the end...	
00:53:55		I like this old house.	
00:51:53		They must have built the house pretty good, right You'd think it would	

time	Reporter's VO Script	NAT SOUND/ C-Roll	Formal Interview
01:00:06	Spectators stake out the best vantage points while movers admit they've hit a road block.		
01:07:09		The end of the house, when they lifted it up, fell off.	
01:09:11	While repairs are made...		
01:11:12		That one got her.	
01:12:14	...the tension escalates.		
01:14:15		Look up there. See where the trim	
01:15:16	Finally...		
01:16:18		It's not everyday we move a house.	
01:19:26	...with everything secure...the movers begin the dangerous journey.		
01:26:27		That's gonna be tricky.	
01:27:29		What if it falls down?	
01:29:30		Ew, tricky part.	
01:30:33	Spectators hold their breath.		
01:32:32		Ew...	
01:33:36		Do you think that house is going to fall off that truck? Mmm hmm.	
01:42:46	over	I think they are going to back it the top of it and lower it	
01:46:49	It's a one truck parade.		
01:51:55		I think it's great. I think old structures like that should be preserved if they can be.	
01:55:57		There goes some more.	
01:57:59	It's a small slice of America's past.		
02:00:03		The house survived. So everything is fine.	
02:03:06	Now preserved for the future.		
02:06:09		Oh and they have those little shutter things.	
02:09:10	In Sikesville...		
02:10:12		It's a special piece of history.	
02:12:13		It's true.	
02:09:10	...Kathleen Carons, FOX 45, News at ten.		

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