

**STILL, THE EMPTINESS: MICRO-DOCUMENTARY AND RESEARCH ON MISSING
PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES**

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts

By
CATHERINE ANNIE RICE
Jackie Bell, Project Supervisor
MAY 2018

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DEDICATION

To all my friends and family who have heard me talk about this project for the past year, thank you. Thanks for keeping me sane through this whole process. To my Poppa, thanks for giving me my first camera and always pushing me to pursue photography. This project started with you.

This would not have been possible without Yvonne Erwin-Bowen, Marianne Asher-Chapman and Don and Donna Ross. They let me tell their stories and film their lives. It was an honor and a privilege.

This documentary is dedicated to Angie Yarnell, Donnie Erwin, Jesse Ross and the thousands of missing persons in Missouri. I hope I told your story well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Jackie Bell, Brian Kratzer and Keith Greenwood for their support and guidance through this project and my time here at the University. You made the photojournalism department my home, so I am grateful for that. Thank you to Aaron Phillips for the drone footage.

Thank you to the C. Zoe Smith Photojournalism Scholarship for believing in my project and providing financial support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Even before going to the University of Missouri, I was a talker. I inherited my gift of gab from my mother. She was always the woman in the Starbucks line that started a conversation with the person ahead of her and naturally found out that she knows their nephew's second grade teacher. I was taught to care about others and to treat creativity as a sought-after skill. My grandfather, who I lovingly call "Poppa," gave me my first camera when I was 10 years old. He encouraged me to pursue my love for photography and attend college for photojournalism.

I worked as a part-time photographer for the *Jefferson City News Tribune* in Jefferson City, Missouri. I worked all the time, desperate for any staff experience, and I found the importance of covering a small community. I drove around town hunting for features and talking to everyone that I met, including members of the missing community who inspired and compelled me to tell their stories. This is what inspired to do my micro-documentary.

I met one of my sources, Marianne, while covering a Day of Remembrance for missing people and victims of violent crime. I heard her story about her daughter, Angie, and was compelled to do a project on her. I previously did a video and article on her called "The Endless Search", in which I filmed her digging for her daughter's remains in the Ozarks while she read a letter she had written to Angie. It was an intense story, but I felt like Marianne's experiences echoed the trauma and hopelessness that families with missing loved ones feel every day. Through her, I met Yvonne, Don and Donna. They all know each other through Marianne's nonprofit, Missouri Missing, which is an organization that provides support for

families with missing loved ones. I wanted to tell their stories through a larger project, which became my master's thesis.

Yvonne calls her situation "the world of the missing." It's a world that only people with missing loved ones can truly understand. It's a nonstop cycle of grief without closure for most families. All of my sources discussed how there is never any closure when you have a loved one missing. My sources also said they felt underrepresented in news media and were not taken seriously by law enforcement.

My professional analysis is a textual analysis on victim portrayal of missing women in the *Houston Chronicle* from their 2016 archives. I looked at the word choice used to describe the missing and how many total articles were written about missing women in 2016. I chose this as my research component because I wanted to see if Yvonne, Marianne, Don and Donna's experiences of being underrepresented were reflective outside of Missouri. It was an informative process that taught me that the general population does not think about missing people and that their stories need to be told.

Chapter 2: Weekly Field Notes

January 4, 2018

I am just on the cusp of starting this project. Part of me is excited because I have been wanting to do this idea for a while, but as Keith put “congrats, but my condolences because now the real work begins.”

So...here we go.

Documentary

Before break, I called Tonia Reed Light, who’s sister-in-law [Michelle Fennell](#) has been missing since Nov. 11, 2017. We agreed to meet after the new year and that I can call her number to confirm. On Jan. 3, 2018, I called to confirm a day/time. I instead get an automated voice saying, “Number no longer in service.”

I then texted Marianne, my fixer and former source, and she says she will try to contact her to see what is happening. Until then, it is back to the drawing board. My hope is that Tonia just had a weird phone issue and that I can start filming her by the end of the month. I am also going to ask Marianne if I can meet up with a source in Kansas City, Missouri, that has had her father missing for ten years. My goal is to get started filming by the end of the month.

Research

I am contacting the police departments of all these cities:

- Atlanta
- Chicago
- St. Louis
- Houston
- Miami
- Los Angeles
- New York
- Dallas
- New Orleans
- Baltimore
- Philadelphia

This is my first, rough list of cities based on general population and diversity numbers.

January 16, 2018

Project

I am still trying to reach Toni. I’m having not the best luck, but still trying to be persistent. I also am calling a woman named Yvonne who’s brother has been missing for quite some time.

I have gotten in contact with Yvonne Erwin. Her brother Donnie has been missing from Camdenton since 2013. Her brother is a disabled veteran and she feels like he wasn’t covered or attempted to be found because of his age and gender. She currently lives in Kansas City, and I interviewed her today.

She was a great source. Our actual interview lasted an hour and a half. She was very open and said some really profound quotes about her missing her brother and the

stages of grief. She works at a plant nursery. She views working with plants therapy for her. So, because of that I was not able to get a ton of b-roll of her. However, I plan to also interview a family that is in Kansas City and will try to get b-roll of her. But, overall it was a successful trip and I was able to officially start this project.

Research

I am slowly learning that every state is different about information requests. Apparently, you have to pay \$200 to access Miami Police Department's requests, which is new and annoying.

When I called Houston Police Department they said that I was the first person to ever request missing person's data. In 2018. Let that sink in. So, hopefully they will have accessible data for me.

Philly emailed back. According to their department, 2,479 women were reported missing.

So this is exciting! I asked for a list of names and the department said that they can not release names (for missing persons?? doesn't make much sense) but they have a [twitter account dedicated to missing people in Philadelphia](#), so I will check that out. It is interesting that Philadelphia Police Department is the only police

Self-Care

I have started meditating once a day with the app, Headspace. Hopefully this will help lay a mental foundation to prepare for this project. I think because I am also not in any classes, I have taken a deserved mental break.

Also, scheduling my therapy appointments.

January 23, 2018

Project

I am still slowly transcribing Yvonne's interviews. It's my least favorite part, but completely necessary to get organized from the get-go.

I am interviewing Donald and Donna Ross this coming Sunday. Their son, Jesse, went to a Model UN conference in Chicago and has never been seen again. He has been missing for over 10 years, and his parents go to Chicago every now and then to try to find him. They are very sweet and I'm excited to chat with them again.

I also heard back from Goldia Coldon. Her daughter, Phoenix, has been missing since 2011. Goldia is very angry and upset that no one is looking for her daughter. She feels like her daughter's case is treated differently because she is black. She is on vacation and says she will call me at the end of the month. She is in St. Louis, so it should be an easy interview to do.

But sources are starting to get back to me, so I'm excited to see this slowly coming together.

Research

I have compiled a list of TV stations from Philadelphia. I will start contacting them this week to find their archives.

Self-Care

Still mediating. Still going to therapy. Try to be more active and get healthier.

January 31, 2018

Project

On Sunday, I spent the day with Don and Donna Ross. Their son, Jesse, went missing on a college school trip in Chicago 11 years ago. I went to their house in Kansas City and talked for hours. It was really sad (Mom saying that she's hopeful that he is safe and happy in heaven and that she can't wait to meet him in heaven), but very meaningful stuff. Jesse's birthday is February 18, and they typically celebrate it by doing something special. This year they are going to a concert and dinner. They will likely have family members, including their oldest son Adam, call and console them. He would have been 31 years old. They seem to really like and trust me. Could be a good longer-term source for the doc.

Goldia Coldon, who's daughter Phoenix was seemingly abducted seven years ago, has gotten back to me. She is asking the producers of another show she is a part of if she can also be featured in my doc. If she can't be interviewed, I'm going to ask her to fix me with other minority family members who are in a similar situation.

The *Missourian* got an email about Will Bozeman. His daughter, Lilliana Pagano, was kidnapped by his ex-wife. Four years later, they have still not located the wife or the child. Will is originally from Columbia, but now lives in Macon. I am planning to send him a message and try to see if he would want to talk to me.

Research

I am still waiting for TV stations in Philly to get back to me. The NBC affiliate said that they "We can't give you access to our archives. But I'm happy to help with your project if I can." So I don't know how to reply back. What should I do?

Is it worth to start looking at print publications just in case?

Self-Care

I am really happy with my schedule this semester. I am able to just essentially work nights and weekends, but I have time to get stuff together in the mornings. This is really helping aid my stress levels.

Still doing therapy. Still trying to meditate when I can.

February 15, 2018

Project

So I interviewed William Bozeman. His daughter, Lily, was kidnapped by his ex-girlfriend a month after she was born. Mom nor baby haven't been seen since. He has been to court about 12 times and now has full custody of Lily, they just need to find her and the mom. I did a two-camera interview with him, and it went really well. I'm hoping to film him at work (because he says that he buries himself in work to try to take his mind off of Lily), him talking to his lawyer and some home stuff. He is in Hannibal.

I am also trying to film Yvonne (missing brother) at home and with her new grandchildren. She says that she surrounds herself with family to try to move on from her brother being missing. She does this in the morning so it could be a good opener.

Don and Donna Ross (missing son, Jesse) are celebrating their son's birthday this weekend, but emailed to say that they don't feel comfortable me filming them around family (?) so I am calling them tomorrow to discuss. It's super weird because it felt like I had a good relationship with them, so I don't know why the sudden cold feet.

I am also still trying to find a minority missing family. I hate that I am only looking for a specific source, but I think it is really important to diversify these voices. I am also going to be gone next week to New York for the magazine trip, but I am looking to film a ton when I get back. I really need some b-roll.

Research

Houston got back with me with a list:

It also has black women missing at a higher rate than white women. I reached out to local TV stations and haven't gotten a response. Again, I'm starting to be more inclined to do papers because of all the road blocks I'm facing with TV. Thoughts????

Also, got Dallas' data set:

Houston has higher numbers, but maybe because Dallas' numbers are smaller that it will be easier to find missing names in reports? Thoughts?

Self-Care

Honestly, I was in a Title Xi case involving a professor and him sexually harassing me. It took a year and he was found guilty of the University's policies. That verdict was determined in the summer. Two weeks ago, he was promoted at Mizzou to the head of a department. So it's been a really difficult couple of weeks and I am trying to be consistent in therapy, but it's just really hard. I'm still determined to do this project, but last weekend I had a mini vacay with my boyfriend to get away. I feel ok, but every now and then it just re-traumatizing what I went through. I just wanted to let y'all know that.

March 6, 2018

Project

Last week, I filmed Yvonne (missing brother) at her home and at work. She actually brought up The Endless Search and how it was evident that I care about this topic. It for sure helped secure access with her and now she is pretty open to letting me come whenever. A big win.

I also (finally) figured out how I'm going to tell this doc. Because William (missing infant daughter) has the most hope and chance out of anyone, I want him to be the main storyline. I will then sprinkle Yvonne, Marianne and the Ross' poems and letters to their missing loved ones through William's story. They are kinda the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future for him. Also, Yvonne and Don Ross write poems for coping and as we know Marianne write letters to Angie all the time. I can get a sample of them reading their letters from different time periods (anger, depression, bargaining, etc.) and have the b-roll be Marianne in the woods, Yvonne passing out flyers at a festival, Don vacationing in the Ozarks to get away, etc. I messaged William asking if it was ok for me to come this week and I should find out by tomorrow if I can film him. That and this structure is very true to how I do video.

Research

I have started going through the *Houston Chronicle's* website and coding all the articles I have found. I have a spreadsheet that has...

Age

Race

Name of Missing

Area in Houston missing (like if they say which suburb, can maybe indicate socioeconomic or if the Chronicle only names certain missing people from specific areas of town)

Photo in story?

Selfie?

Mugshot?

Family photo?

School photo?

Professional headshot?

Photo courtesy of...

date of article

how long article is

article link

follow up articles?

I spent the whole day doing this and so far, white women are covered more extensively than women of color. And, usually women of color aren't written about unless they are found. Also, there are two "huge" news stories about missing women and they are both white. Very interesting how people were captivated by the mother motif.

Self-care

Still seeing a therapist. Had a really good trip in New York. Met up with Leslye Davis from the *New York Times* and she said that she already saw my piece on the Endless Search on the *Missourian*. WHAT. THE. HELL. Also, made a lot of contacts there and hopefully am able to milk a job/internship out of it.

Also, the *Missourian* and Mizzou Athletics are starting to stack up and I am trying to balance everything to get this project done. I feel still on track, but of course I want to be further along than where I am.

March 13, 2018

An email exchange with Keith and Jackie:

Hi Keith,

I'm almost done coding my research. Any tips or format things I need to know before I start writing? Are there any previous examples you can show me?

Annie

Hi Annie,

I just glanced at the coding document. My first question is: What do you make of it? What are your first, gut reactions?

Jackie

Hi Jackie,

Pretty much what I predicted to happen when pre-researching was true. There was more coverage of white woman than women of color and the stories were longer and most likely had photographs. Certain white women had four or more stories written about their situation whereas women of color were only written about if their remains were found/were found.

Does that help?

Annie

Annie-

OK, you've got 33 missing persons cases that were covered in the Houston paper. Some have followup articles, but I see a lot of question marks in that column. Does that mean you're still searching to make sure whether there was a followup?

I also see under key words an n/a for one case. In a four graf story there were no indicators of woman, age, situation? You'll have a hard time considering that case without some description, at least in the text part of the analysis.

You can adapt the language from your proposal from broadcast to newspaper pretty easily, so you're looking at frequency but then also qualitative differences. So you'll have to group the cases for comparison and then look for patterns in word usage, type of photograph. I don't see any coding for semiotic sorts of visual elements (camera angle, etc.), but if they're all mugshot/selfie type pictures that probably wouldn't have much variance anyway. From the looks of the spreadsheet there's just one photo/case, right?

You might also group by age and see if there are characteristics that relate to that more than race. Are the three 65+ women treated similarly despite the difference in race? Maybe age is a mitigating factor... something to add a new wrinkle to the missing white woman theory.

This is professional analysis, right? Not an academic-type research article? You'll want to remember to write in a narrative style that communicates the ideas in a way that a general audience can understand them. Your article shouldn't have inline citations. It probably shouldn't use the phrase "research question", etc. It's a long feature-type article where you describe the problem and your analysis of your research. If I'm wrong and you're writing a research article, you have plenty of examples of that from your coursework and the examples of studies using similar methods you would have found as part of your proposal.

There are formatting documents for the overall project report. You should have received those from Kaitlin this afternoon. I'm not sure about previous examples off

the top of my head. Most projects are accessible through the journalism library. They should indicate the research method used.

Keith

Hi Keith,

The question marks mean that I have not seen a follow up article. It is also a question mark because often times the Chronicle will write a "follow up article" (like body found, etc) but not an original article.

Is it worth mentioning in my analysis when the paper does NOT write anything about the women? Just the fact that they are missing or should I only analysis articles that go into detail about the missing women?

Yeah, from my findings it just came down to if the women had a photo or not in their articles. Some photos were "nicer" and not a mug shot or driver's license image.

I also definitely saw that age was a factor, but I think race and age's intersection are at play here. Is it worth mentioning both or just sticking to one?

Yes, this is a professional analysis.

Thanks for all the help!

Annie

Hi Annie,

I guess who're asking about the question in the second paragraph? You're asking about articles that simply report someone is missing vs articles that also add some detail beyond those articles? Wouldn't that be something you coded and could distinguish? Especially if you can identify some characteristic that makes it more likely to have the extra detail?

I also definitely saw that age was a factor, but I think race and age's intersection are at play here. Is it worth mentioning both or just sticking to one?

If you see it in the data it should probably somehow be in the analysis. If it's a conclusion based on the analysis, it should probably be mentioned in the discussion. Those won't be actual terms in your article, but you will have sections that fulfill the same function.

Keith

Thank you, Keith.

Annie, I agree that it's relevant to include brief articles that only mention the fact that a woman is missing. Why are some brief, while others have great detail? It's interesting.

I've been looking at the videos in dropbox. It definitely helps to have an idea of where you're headed, even if we can't see everything. I do have a couple questions/comments.

-You say you want to use William as the central character, mainly because his loss is most recent (young daughter). You showed us one short clip of his interview. I liked the last moments, when he starts to bite his lips. But, I'm hoping you have a lot more of William at this point. What else do you have so far – particularly B-roll?

-Yvonne: I was happy to see additional clips that weren't interview (sunset out the window, ashtray, walking out the hallway, family photos on wall). With all of these subjects, I think you need to keep searching for B-roll. I know this probably sounds like what I kept saying during Marianne's story, but it humanizes your subjects and gives you more material to work with.

-Poetry about Jesse: How are you going to use these? They are a more difficult to decipher than the letters from Marianne, which were written directly to her daughter. The poems are more abstract. Maybe we can talk about this in person?

Annie, I'm curious how much blending of interview, readings and ambient audio you plan to do. Again, let's talk about this. I want to make sure you don't repeat yourself, using readings for the majority of the audio. You've done that well already :)

Thank you for the videos – very helpful. More than anything, it gives us something to talk about. Now we need to look at your timeline so you can start putting together your material.

Yes, let's meet this week to talk in person. 2:30 Tuesday or 10:30 Thursday?

Jackie

Hi Jackie,

Let's do 2:30 on Tuesday!

Annie

Hi Annie,

Works for me.

Please have a revised timeline ready – if you need to revise. I want to know when you're turning in each part (project, field notes, intro, eval, analysis, abstract...). This is more for you to have goals, but also so we make sure you're on time. Also remember I want to read it all first, and then have you do any re-writes, before handing it to the committee a week before the meeting.

Wow! That's where we're at!
Jackie

March 21, 2018

Project

I have uploaded a dropbox link. There y'all can see some of my video footage (b-roll, interviews, poems from the Ross'). This can give y'all a better understanding of what is happening.

I feel a lot better because I am starting to get a lot more b-roll footage. I feel like I have a solid amount of interviews, so it is starting to piece together. I am gone for a week for the NCAA men's tournament, but I am planning on filming Yvonne saying poems in her home when I come back.

Still having a hard time reaching William. I feel like he is starting to fall off of the project. I mean I had a great interview with him, but it's been very difficult getting any footage from him. I would much rather focus on Marianne again and continue with the Rosses and Yvonne.

Research

I have coded everything and am ready to start outlining the analysis. I will email you, Keith, for some specific, additional questions.

It's going pretty well. There seems to be under 50 reported cases with the Chronicle and it will be a lot easier to analyze them.

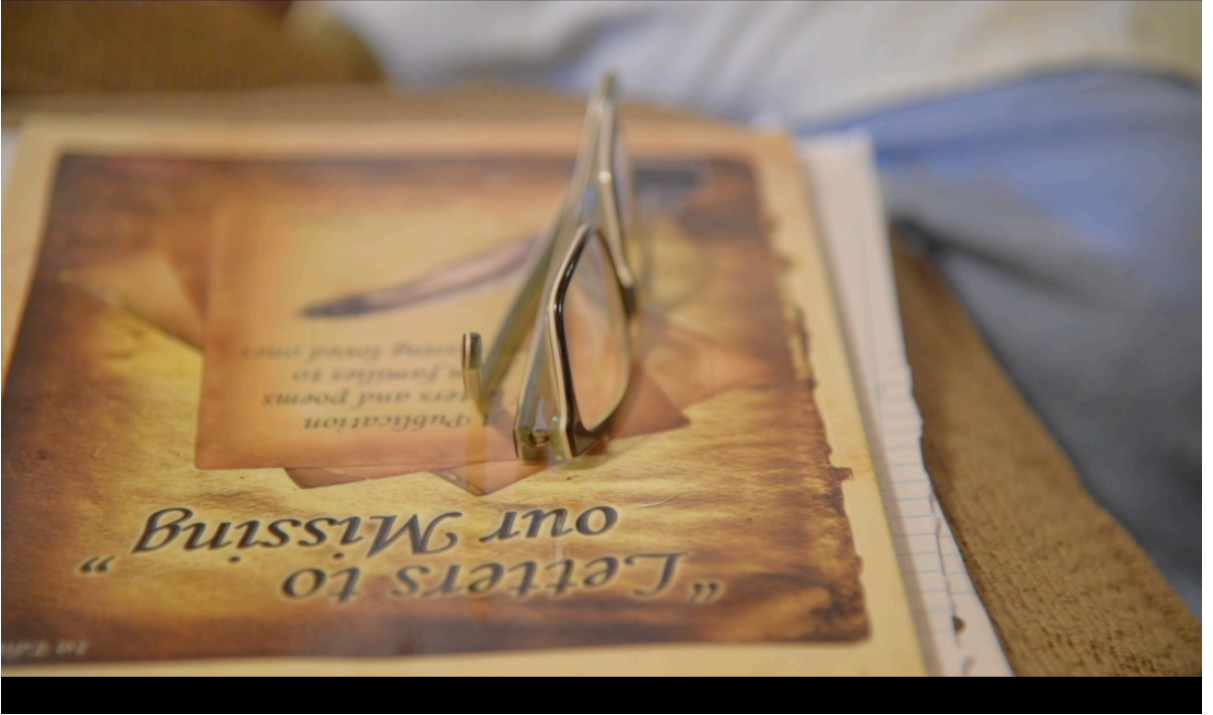
Self-Care

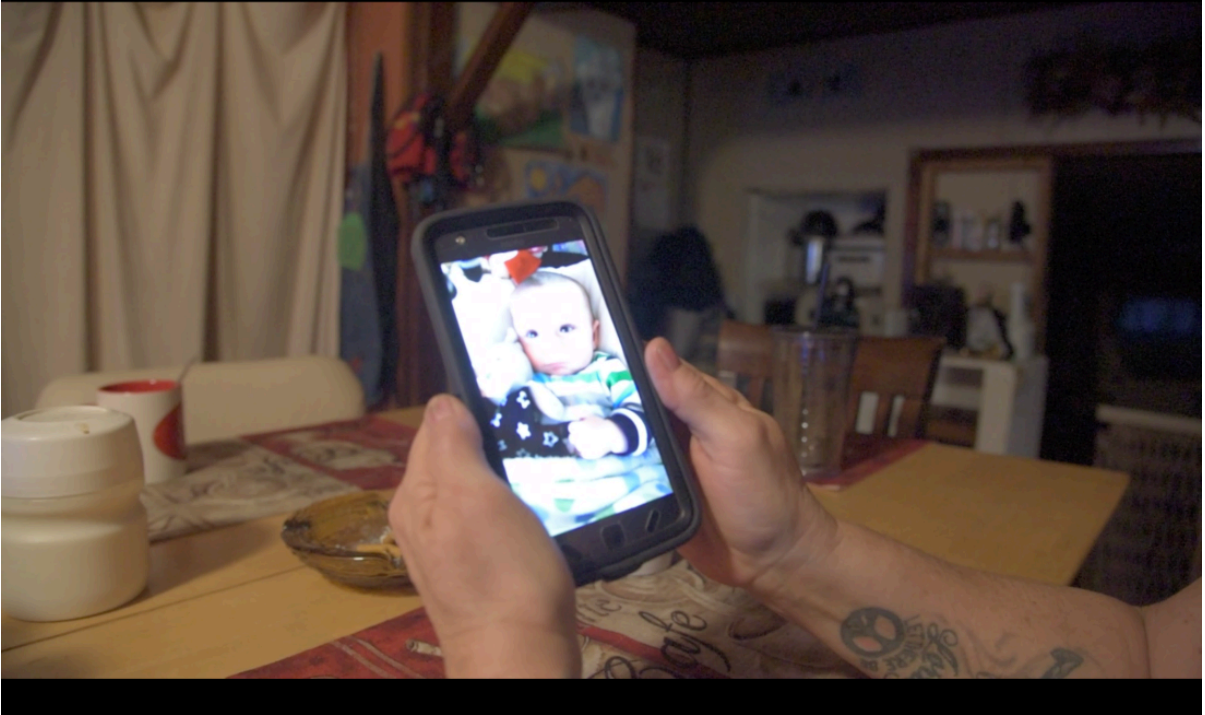
Still seeing a therapist. Still working out and trying to be physically healthier. Need to meditate more.

March 21, 2018

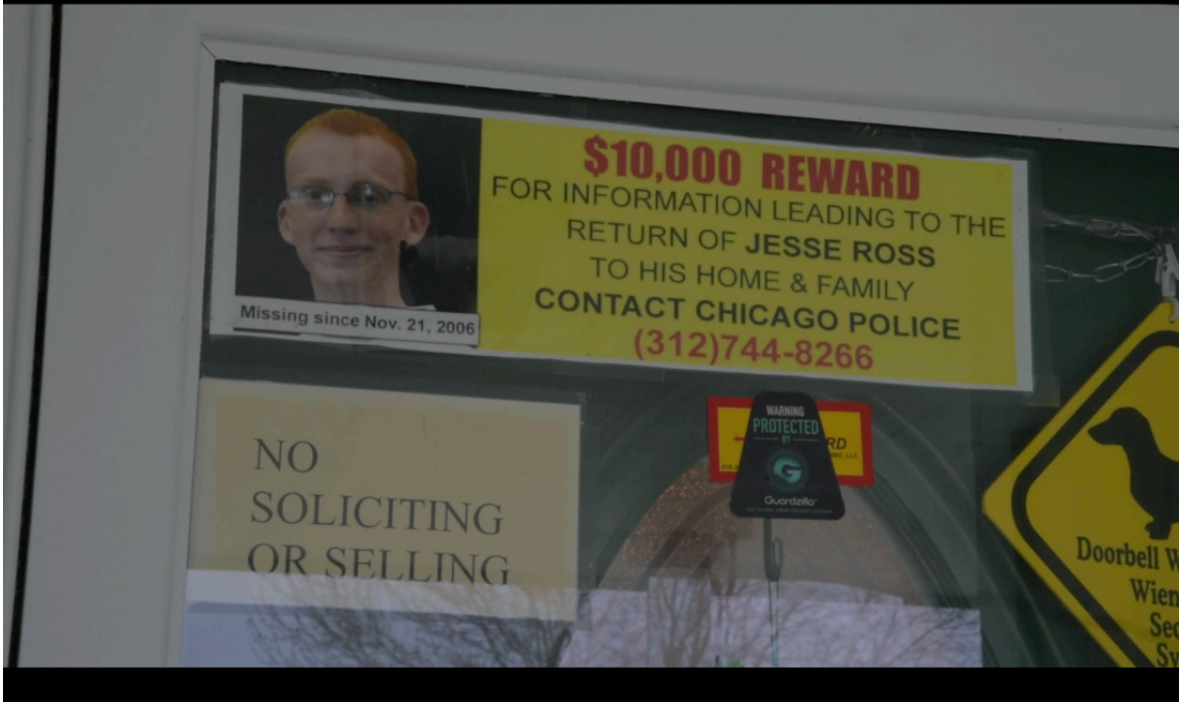
Some screenshots of my footage!

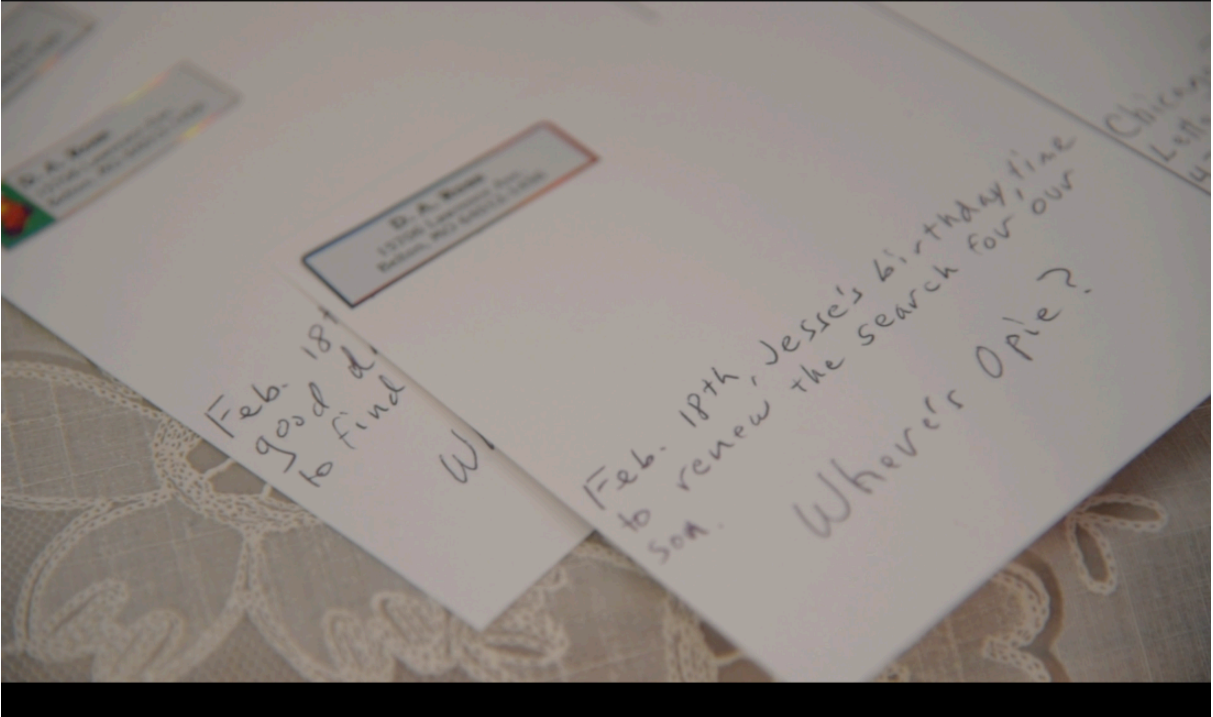












March 29, 2018

Project

Before I left for Spring Break, I met up with Jackie and sat down with detailed list of deadlines to complete the project. It will be some work, but I am confident that I will finish everything on time and with quality work.

I filmed Yvonne (missing brother) at her home while she read some poems. They were very moving and also gave me opportunity to get "home b-roll." I should be able to spend two days in Kansas City to film her at work and some more home life things. On Sunday, I will visit Marianne again and film her at her home.

The Ross' (missing son) are permanently moving to their property in the Ozarks, so I am going to film them on April 8th and 9th of them packing and heading down there. That will probably be my last thing to film before editing this doc all together. I am storyboarding today and tomorrow to start getting an idea about where I want things. Also, Aaron Phillips and I are going to go down to the Ozarks this coming Monday to film some drone footage as well as some scenery stuff. The Ozarks are becoming a fourth character and the footage can be good introductory things as well as for transitions.

Research

Almost done with the first draft. Will send to Jackie for edits.

Self-Care

Was in Mexico for a couple days with my boyfriend and his family. The beach is my happy place so it was nice to get away and be near the ocean. I also worked a little on my research while over there, so I didn't feel guilty about taking a couple days off.

March 31, 2018

An email exchange between Keith and Jackie

Hi Keith and Jackie,

Hope that y'all are having a wonderful spring break. Here's a draft of my analysis for you to read, Keith. Let me know what changes I should make!

Annie

Annie, I chatted with Keith on the side. He says he'll try to finish it by mid-week.

In the meantime, start working on the other parts!

- finish shooting
- write the introduction as soon as possible
- do another field note or two
- start editing seriously and put together video
- then do evaluation, field notes, abstract, contents

right?

Jackie

Hi Jackie,

No worries. I was editing the video all day today. I'm filming tomorrow and a couple things next week. My storyboard is done so I know how I wanna tell the story.

I can start doing the intro and all the other things!

Sound good?

Annie

Yep. Sounds like a plan. The one at a time thing will work best for me, as I can do each part when I get a chance this week. As you know I'm nuts this week, but if it's just one thing at a time it isn't overwhelming and I get to it immediately ☺

Good luck.

Chapter 3: Evaluation

When I first started working on this story, I was so in love with it and couldn't wait to begin. I felt excited about its importance and about finally fulfilling my dream of producing a documentary. I met Marianne Asher-Chapman almost two years ago and knew that I wanted to do an in-depth story about missing persons after hearing her story about her daughter Angie. I felt compelled by her experiences and how it was reflective in other families of the missing.

I kept in touch with Marianne. I would reach out and ask how she was doing and if her organization, Missouri Missing, was hosting any events. Every time I attended an event, I met other people with missing loved ones and heard their story. They often talked about how they didn't feel represented by news media or taken seriously by their local law enforcement. I didn't know it yet, but I felt my project developing.

In my final semester of coursework, I made a short video and article about Marianne's experiences and received praise for the work. People were listening and empathizing with her story, and it assured me that a potential micro-documentary on this topic would be of public interest. Marianne was happy with the story and helped put me in contact with other families of the missing. This is how I got to know Yvonne Erwin-Bowen, Don Ross and Donna Ross.

At first, it was obvious that these families appreciated the media attention and were happy to tell their stories about their missing loved ones. They would give powerful, emotional interviews. It honestly took everything not to cry when Donna told me that she looks forward to dying because that means she will be reunited

with her missing son Jesse. They were passionate interviews. They were moving and gave me such insight to grief and loss. However, the families wanted to give their interviews but didn't understand my need to come over for background footage. I also had another source that dropped off halfway through the project. William Bozeman, again, was willing to talk to me extensively about his missing daughter, Lily, but he did not want me to come home to film his family. It was disappointing because his story was important and interesting, but I had to understand that he didn't want to be a part of the documentary. And that was ok.

Marianne found it particularly hard to understand the filming process. She wanted me to tell her what I wanted, and I would constantly remind her about journalism ethics. Yvonne also was very skeptical of me filming her work and home life, which was strange because she would sit with me for hours talking about her missing brother Donnie. Yet, she didn't like the idea of me filming her going to work until she saw my video on Marianne called "The Endless Search." She then saw that I cared deeply about missing people and it allowed me access to her home, family and work. Empathy was the best thing I could have had during this project because these families can immediately sense if a journalist is there for just the story. If any future journalists want to work on a similar project or just an intense topic, I would suggest to only produce the content if they truly cared about the topic, had empathy and built trust with your sources.

Trust became a huge part of the source-filmmaker relationship throughout this documentary. Many families with missing loved ones are scammed by psychics and private investigators. I had to spend a lot of time developing trust between

Yvonne and the Rosses. In the middle of the filming process, my sources became a little distant with me. It was difficult because there would be two weeks where no one would let me film. It put production time back and later made for a very fast editing process.

Because of the subject matter, I found myself not wanting to listen to audio from my subjects. It was difficult to go back through the footage, and it took a while to feel emotionally ready to edit. This was the same for the analysis. Through my preliminary research, I had a feeling that missing women of color would not be reported the same as white women, and that was something that upset me. I originally planned to have my research cover TV stations as opposed to newspapers. Unfortunately, I ran into archival issues for television stations where the *Houston Chronicle* had all of their archives available online. To my dismay, I spent a couple weeks trying to get TV stations to cooperate with me and decided it was more efficient and successful to pursue a newspaper. In the end, I feel like the information I found through the paper was informative and still representative of how the news media covers missing individuals. It wasn't the original plan, but I think it was still successful.

This is the longest project I have ever done. I typically do three-minute video pieces of subjects reading a poem, letter or playing a voicemail. I have never done a true documentary piece. I think I still need to work on getting traditional documentary footage as opposed to an audio track, and then putting video on top. This project really pushed my video experience. It made me appreciate any filmmaker that does a video longer than 30 minutes.

I am happy with the project, but I feel like there are more things I could have accomplished. I could have improved the audio. I could have obtained more background footage. I could have shot more traditional documentary footage. I wish that I had more footage of the Rosses and had better audio of their interviews. That seems to be the hardest obstacle in the editing process. Also, I wish I knew that William would not have worked out and focused more on the other families.

I also believe that I could not have done this project without my previous training and work on “The Endless Search.” I would not have been emotionally ready to do this video if I hadn’t spent previous time with Marianne. I needed that emotional preparation to do this in-depth piece. I also needed more video experience to feel fully comfortable doing everything for this micro-documentary.

I am a person that never is 100 percent happy with their work. Even in my most successful videos, I still get hooked on their flaws. *Still, The Emptiness* will fall victim to that. I always feel like I should have gotten more footage and will get hooked on a transition that isn’t perfect. For this project, I am hoping to have it published to a national media organization, like *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. After all this time, I really want it to be published. It seems like a final step that will somehow validate all this work that I have done over the past couple years.

Chapter 4: Physical Evidence

Still, The Emptiness is a micro-documentary telling the stories of families with missing loved ones. This project can be found in the multimedia folder and also on Vimeo.

Chapter 5: Analysis

There are an average of 90,000 people actively missing in the United States at any given time, according to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. Of this number, 56 percent of missing people in the United States are white women and 33 percent are African American. However, African Americans make up just 13 percent of the United States' population. Yet, there is an abundance of coverage of missing, white women. Thousands of women go missing every year, but the news media doesn't cover many of those stories.

“Missing White Women Syndrome” is a term accepted with researchers to describe the excessive coverage of missing person's cases involving young, upper class and attractive, white women. There are five attributes taken into account when talking about missing white women syndrome: sex, age, race, socioeconomic status and the attractiveness of the missing person. The theory describes why certain white woman are covered disproportionately to others and become well known and even famous, such as the Elizabeth Smart and Natalie Holloway cases. Even though missing white women need to be covered in the news media, ignoring missing women of color has negative effects, such as an incorrect view of the actual missing population and potential stereotyping.

Missing people affect all communities and regions across the country. Major cities have a missing population. Houston, Texas, is one of the largest and most diverse cities in the United States. While gathering information about the city's missing population from the Houston Police Department and *Houston Chronicle*, it was made evident that there is a lack of reporting and overall understanding of missing people in the United States. I called the Houston Police Department to request their cities' missing women population data and its racial breakdown and I was told I was the first person to ever request such data.

Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States with over 2 million people, with a historic diverse population. The *Houston Chronicle* wrote about 33 missing women during 2016. However, according to the Houston Police Department there were 3,435 women missing that same year. There is an obvious disconnect of overall coverage of missing women in Houston, one of the largest cities in the US, seeing how over three thousand women were not reported by the city's main newspaper.

Of the missing 3,435 women, 57 percent were white, 40 percent black, 2 percent Pacific Islander, 1 percent Asian and 0.1 percent American Indian. Houston's population in 2016 was 2.3 million people with 50.5 percent white, 23.7 percent black or African American, 0.7 percent American Indian, 6 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Pacific Islander, 43.8 percent Hispanic of any race, 3.3 percent two or more races, and 15.2 percent other, according to the United States Census.

Black or African American women were missing at a higher rate compared to their proportion of the population than white women. Black women are only 23.7

percent of Houston's population. In 2016, black and African American women made about 40 percent of Houston's missing female population. There were 57 articles about 33 missing women cases *the Houston Chronicle* published in 2016. Three of those cases did not mention the missing women's race. Of the cases, nine black women, seven Latina women and 14 white women were covered. There were no stories about missing Asian or Native American women. Those nine articles out of 1,370 missing black women often averaged about five paragraphs per story. None of the missing black women had more than one article per case. Six of the nine stories were either written after the missing women was found or a week after their disappearance, signifying an afterthought.

Journalists have an ethical responsibility to be inclusive and accurate in their coverage. According to the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, it states that journalists should "boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear." Information should be covered fairly, accurately and thoroughly on all media content, especially when covering missing persons. People go missing from every age group, race and gender and the coverage should reflect that diversity. The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics was created to "encourage all who engage in journalism to take responsibility for the information they provide, regardless of medium." According to the code, journalists have responsibility for the information they provide, or in this case the lack of information, about missing people.

Language matters in overall coverage of women and minorities in the news media. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson established the National Advisory

Commission on Civil Disorders as a result of racially charged riots that occurred in the United States. The commission, informally known as the Kerner Commission, examined how to prevent future riots from happening and found that one of the causes was the mostly white news media's coverage of black Americans. The 11-member group determined that the media should "recognize the existence and activities of Negroes as a group within the community and as part of a larger community." The commission found that racial representation is important throughout news media and their characterization of people of color. How a person is characterized can influence the audience's overall perception of that gender, race and age demographic. The articles written about missing black or African American women used word choices, such as "child," "in danger," and "woman" and didn't go into detail about their case. All the reports included a photograph of the missing woman. Although the articles did include photographs of the women, they didn't go into detail other than simply stating that they are missing and who to contact if the reader has any information. Very few of the articles had quotes from family or friends. These articles were written by the *Chronicle* would be considered "briefs" within the journalism profession because of their length and brevity.

The overall lack of representation of this missing group of women is detrimental. Audiences, without knowing the full data set provided by the Houston Police Department, only know if people are missing if they are informed by journalists, police officers or people who experience that trauma personally. This is also data that has to be formally requested with the Houston Police Department and is not readily available online. A *Chronicle* reader, who reads the publication every

single day, would only be aware of those 30 cases and would have no idea about the other 3,000.

There were only seven missing Latina women written about by the *Chronicle*. The shortest article was three sentences and the longest was six paragraphs. Two of the articles about a missing, Latina woman were also combined with a story about a missing white woman. They were not connected in any way except for the fact that they went missing in the same week and were from the same area in Houston. They were not connected by the same suspect or by the same possible leads. Missing Latina women faced similar treatment to missing black and African American women coverage in the *Chronicle*.

Underrepresentation of missing women can negatively affect how they are perceived in society. Women of color have a history of being misrepresented in news media that often leads to negative stereotyping and racism. The Kerner Commission also found that “by and large, news organizations have failed to communicate to both their black and white audiences a sense of the problems America faces and the sources of potential solutions. The media report and write from the standpoint of the white man’s world.” In cases of missing women of color, there is a lack of reporting which can insinuate a lack of caring or a lack of newsworthiness about people of color being missing.

Missing white women in Houston were written about extensively, compared to missing women of color. Donna Kay Cloud went missing in the Houston area on Oct. 25, 2016, and the *Chronicle* published its first story about her on Nov. 1, 2016. Compared to articles about missing women of color, Cloud’s first story was nine

paragraphs long and included a large photo of her within the story's body. None of the missing black or African American women's stories were longer than six paragraphs. Cloud's first article then discusses that she went on a date with a man that she presumably met online, either signifying blame or hint of foul play. The article then describes her tattoos and who to contact if they have any further information. The majority of articles written about women of color are very brief, often only writing about specifically where and when they went missing and possibly their physical description.

Anne-Christine Johnson's case was written about 11 times. She is a missing white woman from the League City area and was often named a "mother" in the *Chronicle's* headlines as well as a "victim of domestic abuse" and a "waitress" in the story paragraphs. The use of the word "mother" characterizes her as nurturing and loving, allowing audiences to identify with her. She also was not discussed in the story as just a missing woman, but a victim and waitress. She was also 30 years old.

The first article written about her included quotes from her family members and friends stating that they suspected foul play, "this isn't like her," etc. This characterizes her as innocent and provides the reader with Anne-Christine's personality. This article was written two days after she disappeared. A lot of the missing women's articles were written up to a week from their missing date, whereas Anne-Christine was written about shortly after she went missing. This was not seen with the missing women of color's articles. Anne-Christine's coverage provides an indication of a mystery, comparable to the popular true-crime shows like 48 Hours Mystery and Dateline. There was no indication of her being a runaway

but that there was foul play. Some of the women of color's articles indicated being a runaway. Not to say that that isn't why these women went missing, but the blame is placed on the victim as opposed to the circulating circumstances. Some of the women of color were characterized as running away from home, but that was not seen with the white women coverage.

The *Houston Chronicle* continued to write 10 more stories about Anne-Christine. The stories were mainly about authorities asking the public for help to locate her as well as a public reminder that she was still missing. There were also stories about her vigil once her remains were found, then there were a series of stories about her boyfriend being charged with the murder, sentenced, and imprisonment. It is important that Anne-Christine received coverage throughout her case, however, none of the articles of missing black or African American woman detailed their cases and their aftermaths.

Only one woman of color was written in length. Adriana Coronado had four stories written about her. It was not nearly as much as Donna Kay Cloud or Anne-Christine Johnson, but the most of any women of color. The first article was only four paragraphs long and didn't include an image. However, Adriana was written as a missing girl with a "sweet smile" and had a quote from one of her classmates. The second article had six sentences and included a school photograph of the 13-year-old. The second article talked about a person of interest named in the case. The third article talks about how Adriana's father was also found dead. This is similar to the true-crime narrative from Anne-Christine's case. This article also featured four photographs. The fact that she was 13 years old was a factor to her overall coverage.

For both missing white women and women of color, age was important in overall coverage. There were only five articles written about women over the age of 40. The average age of the written missing woman articles is 24.8 years old. The *Chronicle* predominately wrote about missing teenagers, across all races, leaving out coverage of women over the age of 40. It plays into the idea of society only caring about young missing women as opposed to older women and elderly citizens. It is important for journalists to also include these women in their coverage because it creates a more accurate representation of Houston's missing population.

The Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics preamble states "public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy." In-depth coverage of missing women will create a more informed society. If the statistics indicate there are thousands of missing people in the Houston area, then the public needs be more informed because it is an issue that affects the community. It is a public issue that needs to be regarded with the same seriousness as other public concerns like assault, battery and arson. Journalists' loaded word choices can lead to misrepresentation of the missing. Loaded words, such as "runaway," "mother," "child," etc., all have meaning. None of the articles mentioned professions or socioeconomic status.

Journalists also need to be consistent about having quotes from the missing's friends and family in their stories. Not all families and friends will want to comment. However, the articles need to state that there was an attempt to contact the missing's family. Marianne-Asher Chapman is the founder and director of Missouri Missing, a nonprofit that aids families with missing loved ones in Missouri. She

discussed that she would feel that there would be more empathy for their cases if people knew the number of missing people in the United States. Based on the *Houston Chronicle's* coverage, only 30 missing women were covered. Therefore, the audience would only believe that 30 women were missing in 2016 as opposed to 3,435. There is a responsibility for police officers to give the information to the public as well as for journalists to cover all missing cases. The public needs to care about this issue and a way for them to care if for them to have the information at hand. According to the Journalist's Creed from the Missouri School of Journalism, "accuracy and fairness are fundamental to good journalism." It is journalists' responsibility to accurately cover missing people because accuracy is on the foundation of good journalism.

Overall, it's an issue in the United States that needs to be addressed by law enforcement, journalists and citizens. People go missing by the thousands every year and are rarely talked about in news media, unless the missing is a young, attractive, educated, wealthy white woman.

Appendix

STILL, THE EMPTINESS : MICRO-DOCUMENTARY AND RESEARCH ON MISSING PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements of the Degree

Master of Arts

By

ANNIE RICE

Jackie Bell, Project Supervisor

MAY 2018

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Thank you to Professors Jackie Bell, Brian Kratzer and Keith Greenwood for all the help and support for the start of this project.

Professional Project Proposal

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I. Introduction

Even before going to the University of Missouri, I was always a talker. I inherited my gift of gab from my mother. She was always the woman in the Starbucks line that started a conversation with the person ahead of her and naturally found out that she knows their nephew's second grade teacher. I was always taught to care about others and to treat creativity as a sought-after skill. My grandfather, who I lovingly call "Poppa," gave me my first camera when I was 10 years old. He encouraged me to pursue my love for photography and attend college for photojournalism.

I attended the University of Missouri for both my undergrad and master's programs. My undergrad was in convergence photojournalism. There I worked in multiple newsrooms for my convergence reporting class, such as KOMU 8 News, the Columbia Missourian, KBIA and Newsy. I received a diverse newsroom experience and had the opportunity to try different professional techniques, such as video shooting and production. I spent my last semester in the staff photography class in the photojournalism department. There, I took all the technical skills that I learned in convergence and applied them to visual storytelling in photojournalism. I did daily photojournalism work, photo stories and in-depth video work.

While working as a staff photographer at the Columbia Missourian, I became introduced to Denny Cox, the main caregiver to his wife Cindy Fox who suffers from Alzheimer's and Aphasia. I was embedded in their lives, determined to tell their story about the difficulties of having a loved one that was, essentially, mentally gone

but physically present. It was an emotionally difficult story, but one that I am pleased with and that has received the most recognition, including top ten in the multimedia Hearst Awards and a Missouri Press Association award for “Best Video.” But more importantly, it was a story that portrayed this unique living situation of a husband turning into a caregiver. This story and my experiences during the staff class helped emotionally prepare me for my master’s project on documenting families who have missing loved ones.

I evolved as a photographer during that semester to having a more refined visual storytelling skillset. Post graduation, I then worked as a part-time photographer for the Jefferson City News Tribune in Jefferson City, Missouri. I worked all the time, desperate for any staff experience, but I found the importance of covering a small community. I would drive around town hunting for features and talking to everyone that I met, including members of the missing community who inspired and compelled me to tell their stories. This is what inspired to do a micro-documentary for my master’s. The News Tribune gave me an appreciation for community work and local coverage, but unfortunately was not helping me further my career. I worked there for seven months and decided to go to graduate school at the University of Missouri in visual editing in photojournalism. I received a lot of editorial skills in undergrad, but needed to refine my skills.

My first semester was filled with 15-page papers, research methods and a rebirth of passion for this industry. I then applied and was accepted as the photo-editing intern for CNN in Atlanta, Georgia. My summer was filled with trials, breaking news, politics and obituary prep for various celebrities. I now know more

about Hugh Hefner than I ever thought I would. I also now know more about news judgment, working with a team and remaining calm and collected during breaking news. I loved working there this summer. It was an experience that I will never forget.

Since my internship, I am one of the Assistant Directors of Photography for the Columbia Missourian. There I experience what it means to be a visual leader in the newsroom. I coach young photographers, challenge photo editors and become the bridge between the Missourian's photo department and the rest of the newsroom. I am often challenged with people management and the day-to-day routine. At this job, I have grown more as a visual leader and overall editor. I have spent the entire semester editing other people's work and coaching them on how to be better photojournalists.

My life and professional experiences demonstrate advanced news judgment and experience in news production and editorial decisions, such as the ability of a micro-documentary on how families cope with missing loved-ones. I cover stories that are people-focused and show insight into unique situations, whether it's a husband turned caregiver or a person looking for their family member.

My professional analysis is to perform a textual analysis on victim portrayal of missing white and women of color in news media. I plan to write an article describing better techniques that broadcasts newsrooms can adapt when covering missing people. I will be looking at the word choice used to describe missing women, visuals used in the broadcast, and what the tone is when describing the victims. I plan to use theories from research in gender and media, gender theory and

race theory to write an article suggesting better practices for journalists covering this topic. This will be accompanied by a 20-minute micro-documentary following families of a missing people. I plan to find families at different stages of the time they have been missing. For instance, I plan to talk to someone who recently had a missing loved one, then five years missing, twenty years missing, and so on. This micro-documentary and research are important for audiences to understand the mental space families go through when they have a missing loved one as well as the potential detriments of portraying missing people in a certain way.

II. Professional Skills Component

I met Marianne Asher-Chapman about a year ago while covering a story for a daily paper in Jefferson City, Missouri. I began talking to her at an event where she was holding a day of remembrance for missing people in Missouri. She talked about how her daughter, Angie Yarnell, has been missing for 14 years. Angie's husband, Mike, admitted to killing her, but no one has ever found the body. I talked to Marianne in-depth about this topic and her experiences, as well as did a feature video of her for the photo story class, including how she goes to the house where Angie was supposedly murdered. She goes on a "dig" about four times a year to see if she can find any clue as to what really happened to her daughter.

In Marianne's case, her daughter's disappearance has completely changed her life. She now has a nonprofit called Missouri Missing, which provides aid and advocacy to missing people's families across Missouri. Marianne talks about how this community is underrepresented in media coverage. Because of this, I want to do

a micro-documentary about families and what they go through when a loved one goes missing.

I intend to use Marianne as a “fixer” to try to find another family to film for the micro-documentary and see what their experiences are without their missing loved one. Because Angie has been missing for 14 years, I am interested in also including Marianne’s experiences in the micro-documentary. This unique experience takes over families’ lives. I have gotten to know this community over the past couple months and their stories are heartbreaking. These stories need to be told. This documentary is proposed to be around 20 minutes. It is a story about this vanishing people and whom those left behind deal with this unique trauma. I want to look into their headspace and film how people behave under these circumstances.

I plan to start this current project on December 16, 2017, and work until mid-April, when I will show my product to my committee. Below is my planned back-out schedule. I also plan to constantly consult my committee and chair about my sourcing and editorial choices via weekly field notes and Dropbox. I plan to be based in Columbia, Missouri, so I can also have the opportunity to meet in person with my committee and chair. I have already spoken to my committee members about my intended ideas for the micro-documentary.

I plan to have the micro-documentary with the Cinéma vérité approach, where the filmmaker silently follows the subjects and documents their lives as if the filmmaker isn’t there. I want to follow multiple families to get a variety of experiences. I want to film people who’s missing loved ones have been missing for a variety of years, such as under a year, five years, ten years, and so on. This will

include a variety of interviews to have so I don't put all of my effort to one family that could back out. I hope to interview at least three families and potentially expand if access is granted. In my experiences covering the missing community, every experience is different and time is a huge factor in processing what happened. People tend to experience the five stages of grief: sadness, anger, bargaining, acceptance and denial.

Back-out Schedule

- Dec. 16 to Jan. 1- General project and initial sourcing
- Jan. 1 to end of March- footage gathering
- End of March to early-April- production and video editing
- Second week of April- present first edit to committee
- Third week of April- second round of edits to committee
- April 26- last day to defend project
- May 4- final submission
- Revise whatever is necessary
- Will also create weekly field notes to the committee in a password-protected blog.

Equipment List

Stuff I have

- Nikon D4S
- Nikon D750
- 70-200mm f2.8 lens
- 24-120mm f4 lens

- 300mm f2.8 lens
- 50mm f1.8 lens
- Manfrotto tripods (2)
- Manfrotto monopod
- H4N Zoom
- Sennheiser wireless mic pack- however, needs fixing
- Memory cards
- External hard drives

Equipment I hope to acquire

- Sirui video monopod - \$160
- Rode Videomics - \$300
- Rode Rodelink Wireless Filmmaker Kit- \$400 (dream item)
- Nikon 85mm f1.8- \$475 (dream item)
- More memory cards- ~\$30 each

Other miscellaneous details

I am planning for my sourcing to be within mid-Missouri because I already know this community and hope to do stories within an hour of Columbia. I plan to apply for grants, such as Women Photograph, Zoe Smith Scholarship, NPPA scholarships, etc; mainly for my equipment list and maybe some mileage and hotels.

III. Background and Significance

There are an average of 90,000 people missing in the United States at any given time (Kepple Epstein Grisham 2014). Not only are their immediate families affected, but also their friends, neighbors, teachers, classmates, coworkers, etc. In “No News Today: talk of witnessing with families of missing people,” the article describes how the feeling when a loved one goes missing can be described as a traumatic event (Parr Stevenson 2014). The article describes the feelings of loss and hopelessness when someone they know goes missing (Parr Stevenson 2014). According to this article, it is easier to process death because of its “discursive narrative of the dead which pictures a life lived with an ending” (Parr Stevenson 2014) as opposed to a continuing narrative of a missing person and the ambiguous terms of how they went missing and what happened to them.

IV. Literature Review

Representation in the media is a relevant topic within society and journalism. What audiences view in media is what’s socially and culturally imprinted in how they perceive the world (Hall 1997). This includes race and gender. For instance, if a viewer sees a TV program with women only depicted as passive housewives then the viewer will believe that is the only professions for that gender. How media represents women in non-stereotypical roles is important for society and how it treats women (Collins 2011). In general, how media describes gender leaves a lasting impact that can affect women’s lives socially (Gill 2013). Fair representation is important to cover accurately, especially when covering people within the

community. This comes into play particularly with missing women because their representation by news media can affect how people view them if they are missing.

Misrepresentations of women can negatively affect not only how audiences view that gender, but negatively impact women's role within society. Women are often sexualized in the media and these stereotypes can imprint onto audiences and their perception of women, their roles and importance in society (Collin 2011).

Other misrepresentations of women are that they are passive and subordinate from the characterization of their facial expressions and body language (Collin 2011).

This can also lead to incorrect ideas of women, such as victim blaming, and when they are victims of crimes and missing. These shaped ideas that come from media consumption can affect how audiences view and create empathy for missing women in the United States, especially when gender and race are involved.

Intersectionality is another layer to the discussion of perception and representation of gender and other factors. Intersectionality is defined as the overlap of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality and socioeconomic class (Crenshaw 1989). It isn't just discrimination of a person of color, but they are more likely to be discriminated against if they are also a woman, who is a lesbian and living in poverty (Crenshaw 1989). This overlapping can be seen in news media coverage and motifs, such as the "Welfare Queen" where President Ronald Reagan coined the term when talked about Linda Taylor, a black woman who allegedly had 80 fake names, 30 fake addresses and 15 telephone numbers to collect welfare money (Levan 2013). The perception of Taylor left a stereotype of people on welfare, especially people of color, which can still be seen in

policy discussions about social welfare. Media has power and responsibility of gender socialization (Brooks Hebert 2006). Because there is power in media, the construction of repetitive stereotypes and portrayals, such as the welfare queen, lead to negative consequences and misrepresentation for people of color.

Missing women of color are covered in news media differently than missing white women. “Missing White Woman Syndrome” is a term that has been accepted to describe the excessive coverage of missing person’s cases involving young, upper class, attractive, white women (Conlin Davie 2015). This theory describes why certain women are covered disproportionately to others and become well-known and even famous, such as Elizabeth Smart. There are five attributes taken into account when talking about missing white women syndrome: sex, age, race, socioeconomic status, and the attractiveness of the missing person (Conlin Davie 2015). Fifty-six percent of missing people in the United States are white women, but African Americans make up 33 percent of missing people when they are just 13 percent of the United States’ population (Kepple Epstein Grisham 2014). This missing people study describes how the United States 24-hour news networks are “responsible for propagating missing white women syndrome” (Conlin Davie 2015). Even well known anchors, such as Nancy Grace, are known to continuing talking about a certain topic as opposed to covering all relevant news topics evenly (Conlin Davie 2015). Even though missing white women need to be covered in the news media, ignoring missing women of color has negative effects.

Racism within the media is a topic that is often discussed by of a lack of an accurate representation. Media, Racism and Public Health Psychology describes

institutional racism, which “refers to the way in which groups are differentially treated by institutions as a result of a set of organizational policies and procedures,” as a detrimental to overall public health (Nairn, Pega, Rankine, McCreanor, Barnes 2006). Nairn, Pega, Rankine and McCreanor pull from colonization as the genesis of a racist society and the similar cultural, social and institutional aspects are still present in modern-day society (Nairn, Pega, Rankine, McCreanor, Barnes 2006). Institutional racism “refers to the way in which groups are differently treated by institutions as a result of a set of organizational policies and procedures” (Nairn, Pega, Rankine, McCreanor, Barnes 2006). Institutional racism can be seen within media from a lack of coverage of topics and stereotypes for people of color. For instance, racism can be seen when members of the news media only cover an area when there is crime, but not covering positive aspects of those communities. Overall, racism within the media, which includes misrepresentation and lack of covering topics within that community, can have negative effects on health and overall wellbeing (Nairn, Pega, Rankine, McCreanor, Barnes 2006). Racism can be seen when news media excessively covers a missing young, wealthy white woman but doesn’t allow the same amount of emotion or space for missing women of color.

Audiences called for fairer reporting of missing women of color on social media after twelve black girls were missing in Washington D.C. Celebrities, such as Viola Davis, Taraji Henson and Ludacris, tweeted and commented on the matter (Stolberg 2017). Even the national average of missing persons has decreased in the past two years; the deeper problem is news media and public officials ignore missing people of color (Stolberg 2017). This goes back into the issue of a

misrepresentation and the idea that not covering something indicates that it doesn't have enough news value. Therefore, no coverage equals no value. Nationally, about 35 percent of missing children are black and roughly 20 percent are Latino (Stolberg 2017). This instance in Washington D.C. is not out of the statistics, but news media not covering the missing black girls gives an indication of a disproportion of coverage.

Research Question: How do broadcast media report on missing white women compared to missing people of color through word choice and visual pairings?

V. Research Design

I plan to do a textual and visual analysis of television's word choice and images of missing white women compared to missing women of color in a major city, such as Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Miami, Atlanta, etc. When a viewer picks up a newspaper, they can put their own opinions and biases to the content, however, with broadcast there is a person telling you the content and having tone of voice and body language potentially describing their opinions and biases. I am picking broadcast because of this reason. I will pick one of the major cities and research their data and police statistics on missing people for 2016 and the race and gender breakdown of those people. I will pick the city with a diverse population so there is a higher chance of a diversity of missing people. There needs to be a substantial missing people of color data, that way I can compare it to how the missing white women population is covered. From there, I want to focus on how

broadcast stations in that market cover the missing women in their first month from their disappearance date. I want to look at all the missing people in that city from 2016. The FBI has published Datasets of missing people, so I will pull data from there as well as data from the city's State Department. I also plan to call the city's police department to find the data sets via race.

Textual and Visual Analysis

I will be looking at the images used of the women as well how they are described in the broadcast. I also intend to listen to what anchors and reporters use while talking about the women and discuss the connotation of each and apply previous mentioned theories. I am also looking to see if they women are described by their profession or the number of children they have. I will look at each instance of the story airing in the newscast, focusing on the evening content. If they are covered in all broadcasts I will count that as one instance. If the missing person is mentioned in all three shows, I will see if it reflects Missing White Women Syndrome and note what words the broadcasters use and have a coding sheet to write notes about what is said of the victims and what images are being use to describe them.

I will also look into what images are used when talking about the missing women. I will take note if they station uses images or doesn't have any visual aid when describing the missing person. I will also look, if applicable at how frequently the station uses the image photo when talking about the women. I will then compare what images are used with missing white women, using "Missing White Women"

Syndrome (Conlin Davie 2015), to how missing women of color are visual portrayed with the use of images.

The framework of my analysis will include looking for mentions of the age, sex, race, education level, occupation, family life, marital status, where they live, etc; of the victim. I will then compare how women of color are portrayed. The framework for the visuals used by the stations will be if they used a mug shot to visually describe the victim, a yearbook photo of the victim, what the victim's facial expressions are in the imagery, body language of the victim, footage of the victim's loved ones talking about the victim, etc. I will note these images and compare then to how the women of color are portrayed.

Back-out Schedule

- Dec. 16 to Jan. 1- Finding data sets for eligible cities
- Jan. 1 to end of March- pick city, reach out to broadcast news organizations for archival footage
- End of March to early-April- research gathering
- Second week of April- present first edit to committee
- Third week of April- second round of edits to committee
- April 26- last day to defend project
- May 4- final submission
- Revise whatever is necessary

VI. Preliminary Suppositions and Implications

The research will add more depth to the topic about missing people and women. The documentary will give insight to people's experiences by showing what people emotionally go through. The research will provide more in-depth insight into a potential systemic problem in news media. This article can be published in the Broadcasting and Cable Weekly magazine so that other broadcast journalists can be aware of how word choice pairs with visuals, especially if my research finds that there is a negative effect of coverage of missing women of color versus white missing women. Potential outcomes could include a different theoretical framework within newsrooms to check how they choose word choice, time on air and visuals paired with the story. I want to base my research more on content than delivery. The intention is to have newsroom aware of their word choices when talking about missing women. If women of color are absent from these broadcasts, then I ended to shift my research to include that. Also, if there is not enough archival footage from these TV stations, then I plan to do the same analysis with newspapers from city I pick.

VII. Conclusion

This project covers important topics for viewers to understand the experiences and emotions of people who have missing loved ones. The visuals of people talking about what it is like to wake up every day without your loved one are an emotional appeal that I am interested in covering. It is an important story that needs to be told about this community, especially because some of them feel wronged by the criminal justice system, society and news media. I already have

access with this community and have established relationships with people, such as Marianne. A micro-documentary is the best choice for this because the viewer needs to both hear audio of people's experiences as well as see a long-term project on what people go through in these situations.

For my professional analysis component, the subject matter is necessary and relevant for the current social climate and how people of color are represented in news media. Having a textual analysis comparing how missing white women versus compared to missing people of color are depicted is important to understand how journalists can do better when covering this specific traumatic event. It can be used as an aid for journalists to be more conscious when covering such stories. It is also important research that can be used as an aid for newsrooms to better understand their audiences. A textual analysis is the best way to do this research because it can compare and contrast what certain newsrooms say and show about missing women.

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STILL, THE EMPTINESS

Annie Rice

Jackie Bell, Project Supervisor

TRANSCRIPTIONS

Yvonne Erwin-Bowen

:41- Sure, I'm Yvonne. I'm an Erwin by maiden name but I'm recently married so my last name is Bowen. I've lived in this house all my life. Literally grew up here since 1964, a few years off because I got married and moved away. Yeah so this is where I grew up and where my brother grew up.

And can you put that in your lap? Sorry...

Yep.

Ok. Can you talk to me about your brother?

1:12- Which would you like to know?

Just anything you want to tell.

Do you wanna know about him or what happened to him?

Eventually both, but whatever you wanna start with first.

1:24- Well, he was my best friend. My brother and I...we're very close. I uh was the youngest of a family of six. Four boys and two girls. And Donnie and I were the closest in age outta all of them. He was seven years older than me. By the time I came around, all the other ones were grown and moved out and kinda left me and Donnie, you know? So when he moved...well not moved...but he went away to Bootcamp, he joined the Navy, and uh..that was hard...when he did that. But he came home and uh he was my best friend. We talked every day. Every day. I mean, after

my mom died Donnie called me every single day. Every morning at 5 a.m. before work. You know he always asked me if he woke me. You know, "good morning, sis. Did I wake you?" Every day. We talked every single day. It's kinda, lonely. I got my family but uh out of all of us we were the very closest of the two. It's like we could have been twins. You know, he'd have a down moment and he would call me. I'd have a down moment and I would call him. So...wonderful person. Good guy. Loved everybody.

2:50- And so, what was like...so how was like your siblings' relationship to him? Everybody loved Donnie. Growing up in life Donnie had the hardest out of all of us. He had physical disabilities. He was born with something called Lake Perthys Disease (SPELLING!). And I can remember my mom taking him down to Texas to the Shriner's Hospital. And that's where he would get treated. And back then, to deal with [DISEASE CHECK SPELLING], it's a bone disease that would hit you in your hips. And he would have to wear braces, and he always got picked on and he, you know, back then in the 50s and 60s braces were you know ugly. They weren't the apparatuses that we use for today. So, you know he went through a hard time, but you know he never gave up. He went into the Navy, obviously, he got over that and went into the Navy. And did his four years in the Navy and during that time in Vietnam and um came home. Everybody...we all loved Donnie. He was the one sibling, you know everybody has that one sibling that everyone clings to. And that was Donnie. Nobody had anything bad to say about Donnie. No one could ever say anything bad about Donnie. No one ever got mad at my brother Donnie. You just

couldn't. You just couldn't. It was just his personality. He wouldn't lie or give you a reason to be mad at him. So everybody loved him. We all loved him. (4:22)

So can you tell me then like what happened?

Umm...Donnie used to be...ok we'll go like this. Donnie used to be like...he's very smart and intelligent...maybe had some physical disabilities but the brain was so sharp. He used to work for Mitsubishi and lived in Atlanta, Georgia, and made a great income. Took care of his family, which is his wife and my nephew, and they had one child. But as he got older, his hips started to deteriorate more and he had several hip replacements and he became disabled and um became a risk to the companys and they could not longer employ him anymore. And um, moved back to Missouri. My nephew, his son, stayed in Georgia and uh his health went down rapidly. And my sister-in-law wasn't able to...didn't seem able to take care of him. Mentally and or physically. I'm kinda just staring at the wall. But um they moved out to Bates City, they got a mobile home and purchased and moved out to Bates City. Then my brother's mother-in-law um moved him out to the Lake of the Ozarks in Camdenton, Missouri, which is a very small town rural trailer park. It really was just five or six mobile homes in a trailer park situation and in the middle of the woods. Nice little place. And you know that's always been my brother's dream is to live in the Ozarks and be able to go fishing and this and that. I would take down my dad's tackle box and, because I did not like to fish but he loved it, you know he had his dreams and hopes set up and what he was going to do and he became very sick and um he ended up getting a blood disorder where his blood clotted up and he ended up having to lose his leg from just below the knee, or just above the knee. And you

know...life changed (6:52) at that point for him and he became very depressed. Which, hey, I couldn't say that I wouldn't either, you know? But everyone tried to tell him that life can go on. You still got one leg so you can still get around, like with a scooter you know. I gave him my dad's tacklebox you know and um during a family reunion down there and um again, we talk every day and um....You know he would call me when he was discouraged and depressed but he never talked about suicide or "I don't want to live anymore" or anything like that. Like, he would call me on Christmas the year he went missing and was like "you know I don't get it. I don't understand why she won't let me one shoe." You know, he would make jokes. "You know I want a pair of grey loafers. And I only want one. Why can't they just give me one." He would say how he wants two of the same shoe so when one wears out I have the other shoe or a brandnew one instead of one of each because this one is never going to be worn you know. Just stuff like that, you know? He was excited about it, you know, and life was good. As far as I knew, life is good. The 28th of December my husband and I were in an extreme sports place or something like that or watching MMA fights. And I got a phone call at 8:30 at night and it was really odd because it was Donnie and he said that he was checking his phones to make sure that they worked because they had in that trailer he would like the metal or something would cut the signal. So he had his son, my nephew, by them new phones. And he wanted to make sure they were working ok. And I was like "yeah they are working fine right now," you know? He asked me what I was doing and I told him and he said, "well I was just checking on the phone," and that was it. The call went dead and that was the last time I ever heard my brother's voice. And I hate myself

sometimes because I should have called him back, you know? I should have called him back because it was odd for him to call me at 8:30 at night. Usually he was fast asleep. But I didn't. And the next day I got the phone call and I just came home from the store, I was carrying groceries, and my husband said, "Karen is on the phone." And I took the phone and she said, "your brother is missing." And that's when life changed. (9:42) He apparently got up and told my sister-in-law that he was going to go to town and get cigarettes and uh it was cold, it was winter obviously, and asked her for the gift card. They had a 1-12 gift card that they had gotten for Christmas. The one-12 gift card, it might have been 15, but it wasn't very much. And she gave it to him, apparently, this is her story, and he left. He didn't use a prosthetic, he used crutches. He apparently got to his car and apparently he saw his neighbor and said hi to his neighbor. He told him that he was going to be right back and that he was going to go get some cigarettes and that he was going to be right back. And I haven't seen or heard from him since. Nothing. No car. No phone calls. No pieces of clothing. It's like someone poofed him up and he was gone. That's what I know. I know there's a lot to this story. You know, there's a lot of suspicions and people that should have people that know what has happened a lot of them are already dead. His wife has died. His mother-in-law has died and his best friend is dying. (11:15). We had a bad law enforcement going on in that area at the time. My brother's case seemed to get picked up and swept under the rug, so to speak. They didn't treat him like he was important, you know. My sister-in-law told them that they got into an argument, but that she thought that when they went to bed the night before that everything was fine. And because of that statement, law enforcement no matter what I said or any

family members said they figured that he left on his own free will. And they didn't look into it. Like it took seven days, Annie, for anyone to go look for my brother. Seven days. (12:06) And this is a man who had to take blood thinners, COPD medication, antidepressants and pain pills just to survive. His stump...when they amputated his leg they did not um like burn the ends of the nerves so that he didn't feel the pain. So he had live nerve endings that had strawberried out, so that's why he was constantly in feeling pain. Even though they were telling him he shouldn't be feeling any pain. That went on for a few years before they figured out "oops he is really feeling pain." So my brother made a lot of trips to the hospital because he was in excruciating pain. And everyone thought that he was a drug addict because he was taking pain medication. God, how much of this do you wanna know??

As much as you wanna tell me (13:10)

Had law enforcement listened to past history, situations, the life of my brother. If they would have taken him seriously and not just looked at him and thought "another dope-head," because I know that's what they thought of him. Because they would get calls to take him out to the hospital because he would be out of pain meds and he got them through the VA. And VA's they regulate you. They know if you are taking three a day or whatever you need in 30-day, 31-day or 28-day or whatever time span. My sister-in-law also liked to take pain meds. And drink. So like the day he went missing, that phone call she told me they got into an argument and I asked if she was drunk. Because I would get those phone calls from my brother. I would get phone calls of abuse. I turned her in multiple times and the state. Nobody investigated. From the time they were in Bates City to when they were in

Camdenton I turned in this situation. And nobody would investigate it. Nobody would get back to me, nobody would call me about why I had my suspicions about my brother being abused. When he went missing, when they finally had this search, and um what's it called Civilair Patrol (SPELLING) came in. We had to beg them. I can give you document...paperwork and show you. It took us seven days to get that county to call Civilair Patrol and say that they had a missing person to look for him. Seven days. Had I had money in my pocket, I could have gone and went to the Civilair Patrol and gave them the money to go. But everything has to go through the authorities and the proper channels to be free. I don't have a lot of money. It took them seven days to finally look for him and when they did they brought in all these different type of detectives and majors and this and that. And they were questioning all of us and when my other brother and I proceeded to tell them Donnie's life history: what we knew and what we were afraid of, what are suspicions were. We got told that if we didn't stop that this investigation was going to go in another direction and there wouldn't be a need to go out and look for him at that point (16:02). I am not kidding you. Those is what was said to me. So nobody ever listened. Nobody ever paid attention to my brother's concerns. Nobody would pay attention to the different things I would tell them you know about phone calls that I would receive or the fact that he doesn't like the fact that these people are coming to his house after he goes to bed and nobody would listen to me. That there's something not right. There's something wrong with this whole scenario. And as time went on and I talked to a bunch of people about this case and detectives on this case, I got phone calls from Lieutenants cussing me out. Literally cussing me out, telling

me that I was making the Camdenton Sheriff's Department look like they weren't doing my job and that I needed to shut my mouth. You know, I would ask for cadaver dogs and I was told "oh we don't have any cadaver dogs. That costs too much money, and if we had to bring them in it's too cold. It's winter and their noses don't work." And while this whole conversation is going on, I'm sitting at my job in winter with snow on the ground watching the highway patrol with their dogs that aren't supposed to work in the winter because their noses don't work, sniffing out a car. And I'm laughing going "why are you telling me this?" You know, and they won't do it. Two months later a lady goes missing and they advertise that they used their canine unit to locate this woman. They didn't give my brother that option. When I asked if he could be on the Silver Alert, he was six months shy of being old enough to be on the Silver Alert. "He wasn't old enough. He was 59. So we can't put him on the Silver Alert." I tried getting billboards. You know, in that immediate area. "Look for this man's face," you know? My family and I handed out thousands upon thousands of flyers standing in the middle of intersections in Camdenton, Missouri, going to Lebanon, Missouri, going as far as Gravelier, Tipton, Stover, handing out flyers for months. I gave up my life for two months (18:35) to look for my brother and let people know that he is missing from your community. And if it wasn't for handing out those flyers at a Big Bass bash at a 4 o'clock in the morning before anglers go out and catch bass. Me and two of my friends went out and handed out flyers because these guys have big radar. They have super-duper radar that they can literally see a car, not an image but an outline of a vehicle, I thought, "why not? Maybe they can see something." And um it just goes on and on like that. They wouldn't put him on

an angered person's report, which is anybody who is considered...well a maybe a week ago a man at Red bridge right here in Kansas City ten blocks from here 31 years old the same day he went missing he was put on the report and on TV because he had life needing medication and he was on life-altering medication...and these kinds of situations make me go "why wasn't my brother given that?" Why wasn't he given that opportunity? And someone will go...and I promise you that one day of no meds within two at the most he was dead. I have no doubt because he can not be without it because he is a vet. Meds come through the VA. You know, there's so much to this whole story that he doesn't deserve this. And I feel like the people that know what happened to him aren't here to tell anymore. There's only one left and that's his son and he has nothing to do with me. And he never lived to go and look for his father. Not once. (20:49) His wife begged me to stop looking for him because she was trying to have him declared legally dead seven months after going missing. And I know this for a fact because the Columbia VA hospital contacted me and told me that she contacted them and I said why are they telling me this and they said because your brother has you as his next of kin, not even his wife. Which I found out was the same thing with the VA hospital here in Kansas City. Uh he didn't have my sister-in-law listed as the next of kin. So they called to tell me that she was wanting him declared legally dead at seven months. And when I refused to stop looking for him...I have messages of her texting me stuff saying "you know your brother thought you didn't love him anymore. How does that make you feel?" ...and I told the police all of this. I'm telling them all this, I'm telling them "don't you find it odd that she moves away two weeks after my brother went missing. A four year marriage? You

just pack up your shit and move? She moves back...she goes back three months after that. So January, the month of January, February, the beginning of March she goes back home and she packs her home throws my mother's belongs away and moves to Kansas City. And declares me her nemi..nemi..how do you say that?

Nemesis. (22:34)

Nemesis. Yep. For life. And uh when I got a phone call from another brother who told me that she was in the hospital and that she was dying. And this was about a year and a half after Donnie went missing. And uh she had some kind of weird cancer all of a sudden take over her body. And he said that you need to go down there and talk to her because people are saying that she is saying some pretty crazy stuff. And so we thought that she was delusional and speaking about what had happened. But because she had cut me out of her life, she cut me out of my nephew's life. And I wasn't allowed to go and have anything to do with her. Then she passed away and I was forbidden to go to her funeral. Then I find out six or seven months after that that her mom had told me that she would make sure that I would never see my brother again and kick me out of the Columbia VA hospital. She died. (23:48)

So like the two people that I feel know what happened are gone. You know, so it's just a matter of...she would call me and say "I think your brother killed himself. I think he took a bunch of blood thinners." I would say, "really?" She would do everything she could do to make me not look for him. She wanted me to believe that he killed himself. One of my other brothers said, "well Donnie called me one time saying 'I'd know what to do if I wanted to end my life and nobody could ever find me.'" And I was like do you really think that's what he would do? Call you and tell

you? Have you ever had that thought? I don't know many people who haven't ever said "God if one more thing happens I'm just going to go and kill myself." Everybody seems to go through some phrase of shutting down when life gets to hard. I don't believe that my brother killed himself. I believe there was foul play. And I have made it known. I made it known to the prior law enforcement that I don't know if my sister-in-law had anything to do with it. But, I do know that she had a inkling of what happened. You don't just pack up your life in two weeks and runaway if you really thought he might come back. She knew he wasn't coming back. Why else would you pack up your life and through away the things of your man if you know he wasn't coming back? She knew he wasn't going to be found. And I found out that that law enforcement who never called me back for two years um this is the fourth year Donnie has been missing. After the first year, I never had anyone return my calls about him. I left so many voice messages. Every morning before I would go to work I would leave a voice message hoping that I would catch them in the office at 8 o'clock in the morning. No one would ever call me back. It's like I think they knew my number on their caller ID, you know, and go "oh crap it's her we don't wanna talk to her. Let it go to voicemail." They would never call me back. Last year, they got a new sheriff in town. And during the last six months of that year they got the new sheriff. I think this is I think 2016, maybe. Surprisingly, all the computers died. And when the sheriff took office, all the hard drives went missing outta the computers. (26:38)

Things that were told...I actually have made it past the lobby doors...um and been in the new sheriff's office. And the new guy, who's a major. They reopened my brother's case. They reopened it. They reopened three cases, my brother's being one

of them. They are active with it. But um I'd never make it past the lobby. For the first time in June of last year...same day as the Missouri Missing thing...I made it past the lobby doors and sat down with the sheriff who handed me a copy of my brother's file and wanted to go over it. (27:27). And we went over it together. And it's about this thick for about three years and mine is about this thick. Half the stuff I told them, the prior department who nobody was left from the time that my brother went missing, policemen everybody, they kinda like cleaned house changed the whole guard rack. And there's some questions in his papers. Like, my brother's car had a GPS on it and what do you call it a low-jack. And they found out that the low-jack was disconnected four days prior to my brother going missing in Lebanon, Missouri, which is south of where my brother lived. And in a residential area, somehow that got disconnected. Which means that the car was still there the day that he went missing. So somebody down there knows something. Someone down there disconnected it. My brother is disabled. Who couldn't do it. He couldn't get under a car and disconnect that. So this was all in this file that I didn't know. So we talk about once a month. I call him every now and then and ask him if they have any leads or anything new. They promised me that I would be contacted if anything comes up. They are still following new leads, which obviously aren't panning out. (29:08) But they also told me that you know there might be a time where it goes back to going a cold case. And um you know, they'll have to stop looking. The Ozarks is a big area. Lot of trees. You know it's going to be through the grace of God if my brother is ever found. Not by a designated search party or you know it's going to be by a hunter or a fisherman or a hiker. I miss him. A lot. It's why I have a hard

time...this is the one place that's left that he knows. And what if...what if he really has just lost his memory and is confused and messed up somewhere and somebody has taken the kindness and take him in and one day he'll find his way home. You know? If I sell this house, he'll not be able to find me.....I'm sorry. (30:27) (blows nose) He was my best friend. And a part of me is lost with him. And it will always be that way. Because there will never be a completion or closure because I'll never understand why this had to happen. And there's an emptiness that stays with you. And it's not the same as when somebody passes away or you lose them through natural causes or an extreme accident. I mean, you know what happened. When there's somebody missing, even for Marianne, it was such a blessing when Jessica Ronions and Carla Capenski were found, but they'll never have complete closure because they will never understand why. "Why did this have to happen?" That's a question that stays with anybody who has to deal with this loss of a family member lost to a violent act. Or a strange thing. Like just vanishing. There's never closure. (32:05) I uh I want to go to a concert, James Taylor. When Donnie went off to Vietnam, he left me in charge of his stereo and his LPs and I was 13 years old and it was the coolest thing in the world that my older brother trusted me with his, what was his prize possessions. So I grew up listening to 60s bands and cream in your rye heap and yes and James Taylor and there was a time if you ever look at the Sweet Baby James album cover was a little girl at 13. I always looked at that and went "aw he's so cute that's my brother." JT looked like my brother, Donnie. So we always bonded pretty tight over James Taylor music. I remember when I moved to Northern Missouri raising kids on my own and we would call each other and go "aw

there's a concert in Kansas City and it's James Taylor and all you gotta do is listen to the songs off of the Sweet Baby James album," you know? And um he would try to get in on that contest and get tickets to James Taylor, and we never won. But James Taylor is coming to Kansas City and come hell or high water, I'm going to that concert in honor of my brother. (33:40) I know if he was alive and if he knew what was going on in his life....if he was alive....the only way for him to be alive and not call me was if he didn't know who he was. I know that. I'm positive in my heart that he's at peace somewhere. I just want to bring him home. (34:20). He came to me one time in my sleep. Woke me up. Freaked me out so bad. He was standing over my bed and told me that he loved me. And he was so real. And I was trying to reach out and as I reached out that's when I knew that this was only in my mind. And he was gone. I went on my knees as an adult...the first time as an adult...and prayed to God. You know. That's my story. I continue to look everyday. Not just for my brother but anybody who has to go through this torment. For anyone who is missing and it's all around us. It's black. It's white. It's young. It's old. It's boy. It's girl. It doesn't matter. And I wish that someday they would treat all missing people with the importance that they need to be given. You know, my brother should have been looked more that day. Knowing that he was on blood thinners and breathing medication and medication and they should have been looking for him that day like they did this young man. And you'll see that the more you start going through this is that there's this crazy line of the billboard company, Lamar, I can show you where I have letters where they said "I'll talk to Lamar they're willing to do this." And they stop me, you know. And I call them and they are like "oh no we can't do that. If we did that for

every person who was missing none of our billboards would be anything but missing people signs.” I mean, and you know I’m like....ah....uh.....I have an organization that contacted me and I got that information, too. They are actually called Texas Equu Search and um they contacted me and said “we can help you we know that we can find your brother. We have gone in after local counties and sheriff’s departments looked and didn’t find them, but we found them. This equipment and that equipment and we can go into shallow waters were their big patrol boats that blah blah blah I mean. I got letters and the county finally...it took them two weeks before finally answering a phone call from these people. Just like it did for seven days to contact Silver Life Patrol. And then Texas Equu Search calls and talks to me saying “well we’ve talked to Camdanton County and we’ve decided that we couldn’t go in there and do any better search than they did. Which I know is not true! I know it’s not true. Why they backed out, the only thing I can consider, and I have reports on this too, is that that year it was such a disruptive, dysfunctional sheriff’s department that they didn’t want to spend any of the money to the organization for them to come and search for my brother. And they didn’t want to take any money out of funds so to speak. But I have a voice from on my phone from a friend of mine to the meeting down there and straight up asking them why they won’t pay for my brother’s search and rescue. And of course they kinda white washed around the subject and it kinda goes something like out the door. But they had plenty of money to do it, but they didn’t. They swept him under the rug. They really did. Because he was a man and sister-in-law said “we got in an argument.” That’s all it took for them to say “he left on his own.” That’s all it took. He didn’t.

Where is his car? They didn't even search his house. They didn't even think of his house as a possible crime scene. They needed DNA. There's an organization called NamUs and they put all my missing brother's DNA or any missing person's information in a database and you know their blood type and this and that and they swabbed my nephew and this and that and we are doing all of this because I am waiting for Camdonton County to go over and get my brother's hairbrush or his dentures or his harmonica. You know all these different things just sitting in that house. But because she is not there nobody has gone over there to get them. You know to get his DNA as opposed to going over there and breaking in and getting them myself. Jeremy would have his side. They can pull Karen's outta the mix. It took them two weeks to go over to that trailer and get my brother's harmonica, his dentures and some paperwork and a CD they found. And then it took them, after they had them in custody, it took them another two weeks to get it to the crime lab in Kansas City to get his DNA into the NamUs database so that if there is any DNA ever found and they match up, which that's the other problem, not every city will use NamUs database when they find missing people. They don't think to do a DNA test and send it to the database. It has been a strange journey. Um when I met Moe she said, "welcome to the world of the missing. You'll never be the same again."

(41:35) And it's true. You never will.

Um...I was going to ask some specific questions. Also, I just wanted to let you know you have some mascara on your face. If you care or if you don't. I just felt like I had to tell you.

You know you said to me on the phone, "I'm going to ask questions that might make you cry." and as you can see it doesn't take much. Do you have a sister or a brother? Imagine not knowing. Just close your eyes and imagine what life would be when someone you love just vanishes. No word. No contact. No nothing. Just gone. And we are supposed to pick up our lives and move on. (42:38) You do because you have to. But there's always that part of you that stays behind and a part of you that just stays empty inside. Ok..(42:57)

So how have your other siblings...what are their reactions to Donnie being missing? Well when he first went missing, I had nieces and nephews and a brother that would in that first two months, everybody was still pretty tight. Nobody could believe that this could happen. And since that point, my sister she just doesn't talk about it at all. At all. We don't talk that much. I mean I love her, she's my sister but we were never bonded close so we aren't really bonded close. And I get a little offended by my siblings it's like the same thing. You know, and um I ask them every year for one day. Just give me one day. Out of 365 days a year, give me one day. Come down to Camdonton during the dogwood festival and help me hand out flyers for your brother. Your brother. He was your brother, too. (44:16). But it's always just me. So they've moved on. I have moved on, but part of me is still back here waiting and looking and wondering what to do next. If not to help Donnie, to help somebody else. Talking to you. Making people aware that this is an every day thing. And it happens and it's real. And we as human beings should not have to sweep it under the rug. Somebody we don't know went missing. (44:53) That person is loved by somebody. Everybody should care. It could be you next or someone you love. So

they don't deal with it like I do. They have forgotten it and moved on with their lives. They have accepted it, I shouldn't say moved on, they have accepted it. I haven't. And what do you think are the main reasons why you haven't accepted it? Maybe the bond between Donnie and I. Um maybe I knew things that others didn't, you know. Maybe my suspicions. There's a lot of reasons why I am handling it differently than others. I mean when you talk to somebody everyday. Every single day. And you hear about their problems and you hear about their frustrations and you hear about their homelife. And you know they aren't happy in their homelife. But because of loyalty, you stay. I heard it all. I think there's more to the story and I don't think anybody else believes it. I feel like people go and think "well there's nothing we could have done about that." And I would just hope that someone would do it for me. I'm not going to let people forget that he is missing. I will continue with his pages. I will continue with his flyers handing them out at least once a year. Yes, my life has gone on since he has been missing. Since he's been missing I have become a grandmother of three of my own biological. And I got married. (46:46) You know, um my life is good. There's that's part of me that's broken and missing. And until I can get him home that'll always be broken and missing. I really don't care anymore if I get answers. (47:03) I just want to put him to rest where he deserves. Does that make sense? So that's the sibling. Right now I have one sister and two brothers and they all live around thirty minutes away from me. And we never see each other. And we never talk. I don't know if they know that I'm going to talk about Donnie or if just grown apart. You know. Sometimes that happens when a specific

family member dies or moves on. It's like a core member is gone and everyone just kinda goes away.

You kind of mentioned about how traumatic events have some closure and how that's different for missing people. Can you talk a little more about that?

Well, you know like. Ok, this is the house Donnie and I grew up in. So I'm going to start with that and have it hopefully make more sense. I promised my parents that when they would old I would never put them in a home. I told them that I would take care of them. In their home, because they took care of me for 18 years of my life. So I was blessed with letting my mom and dad live here in their home and lay themselves to rest to the beds they were accustomed to. Even though I knew that they were dying, I was ok with it because they were comfortable.

With every day, we are closer to death. We are born to die (49:12)

Talks about shootings and accidents, that there's some emotional loss but you know they are dead (~49:57)

Never know when they are missing (~50:19)

All the emotions (~50:39)

Child who went missing (51:00) prayers it was quickly

Jesse Ross (~51:39)

Share one missing person's flyer a day (52:15)

Stages of grief (52:58)

Another day of no answers poem (53:53)

Night became my enemy because it felt like a wasted day (54:14)

Night made her feel like she had failed because she couldn't find him (54:26)

Talks about Addie (54:37)

Grieving (55:00)

“She just didn’t want me to try any more.” (55:37)

Grandchild (58)

Same time Donnie went missing

God (56:58) religious because of this

Dominic- (57:41)

All grandchildren are blessing and help her through this (58:01)

Pink Floyd “wish you were here” will come on (58:53)

Names songs that remind her of Donnie (59:04)

“Grief gets easier to handle, but it never goes away” (59:24)

It’s the same grief I had dec. 29, 2013. I have just learned to suppress it. The world doesn’t really care about my grief (59:56) It’s just as intense now. You just learn how to turn it town.

Therapy in gardening. (1:01:00) Planted a tree in honor of him.

The world of the missing is literally a world. And we all know how each other feels.

(1:01:53) POSSIBLE ENDER???:^^^

Tried finding a counselor who can understand what loved ones of the missing go through. Couldn’t find one. (1:04:19) same with preachers, ministers, etc.

Facebook is amazing. (1:05:50)

This pre-internet? (1:05:30)

Harmonica (1:08:23)

Space saved for a Donnie tattoo (1:08:40)

Prays to god (1:14:15)

Would having answers help or hurt? (1:15:10)

I've become a stronger person (1:17:26)

"Was a terrible child growing up. I was a runaway..." (1:18:12)

"Always tell the people you love you love them because you might not always have the chance to." (1:19:31)