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Angel Walking: A Documentary

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ANGEL WALKING:
A DOCUMENTARY

A Thesis

by

JESSE F. GARZA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF FINE ART

May 2010

Major Subject: English- Creative Writing

ANGEL WALKING:
A DOCUMENTARY

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by
JESSE F. GARZA

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May 2010

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ABSTRACT

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This creative thesis is divided into two parts: “The Critical Introduction” & “Angel Walking: A Documentary Screenplay.” In the “Critical Introduction to Angel Walking: A Documentary” I define the modes used and how similar documentaries and movies have helped me formulate a stronger story to showcase cerebral palsy from a 12 year old Latino’s perspective. I discuss how filming the documentary was an engaging process and led me to find a connection with the subject. This leads to how the development of writing the screenplay is somewhat of a “backward-process.” Therefore, the second half of this creative thesis is the transcribed footage in a screenplay format.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this creative thesis to Jesus Christ, Mary, Joseph, God, and every working spirit, and positive force that allowed me to bring this to life. This would not have been done without the encouragement of my parents, strong support of my family, and backbone of my grandma. I also dedicate this to a group of the friendliest and most outgoing Angels above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the very beginning, I knew that this was going to be a hard objective to pull off, but I wanted to leave a lasting mark at The University of Texas- Pan American. Finding the right committee members was a difficult task and I can say that I am grateful that they stood by this peculiar project of mine.

Therefore, I acknowledge Dr. Philip Zwerling, whose playwriting has forever motivated me to think in terms of story. David Carren, your compelling knowledge of industry standards in terms of cinema, will always be an attribute that I will take with me. Dr. David Anshen, I gratefully appreciate your help in understanding how passionate I was about this creative thesis.

The filming, editing, and musical elements of *Angel Walking: A Documentary* would not have been possible without the gracious and collaborative work of my colleagues Kayla Guerra, Mark Allen, and Brenda Rodriguez. The McAllen Chamber of Commerce and Texas Film Commission outdid themselves by allowing me a space to premiere the first 15 minutes of the documentary.

The Quintanilla family will undoubtedly hold a special place in my heart. I thank you a million times for allowing me to get an insight into your lives from an uncut and unaltered viewpoint. Thank you, Angel.

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INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGIN

Documentary Modes

Angel Walking was originally produced primarily for the purpose of questioning how parents are supposed to raise a child with cerebral palsy. What is the correct way? Does one even exist? Should parents try to raise a child with cerebral palsy like a child that doesn't have that condition?

The family that I chose to help answer this question gave me insight into their daily routine and how they parent a child with cerebral palsy. There is approximately one child with cerebral palsy in a pool of 303 children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The Quintanilla family acknowledges Angel's condition; they take him to treatments and believe he will soon walk. The manner in which they treat him is rather unconventional to some, if not most. Angel, regardless of his wheelchair, isn't "babied" or overly "pampered."

Almost immediately, my questioning of this family's ideology grew when I learned that Angel had a jewelry line and he also sang at local events. I learned that he was somewhat of a celebrity and I never ran across anybody that didn't show admiration for his perseverance in wanting to walk one day in the future. Of all the possible methods and theories conceivable about raising a child with cerebral palsy, was this family's

method ethical? I chose not to immerse myself in research methods and the latest technologies for cerebral palsy patients. Rather than taking a scientific approach, which I felt was conventional; I took a “dramatic story” approach to this documentary. I wanted this documentary to be different than the plethora of documentaries that question the origins of cerebral palsy, whether a cure for this disorder exists, and so forth. I do provide statistics based on The Centers for Disease Control website. The reasoning behind this is to illuminate the severity of Angel’s disorder and the facts that are known today.

Every documentary has a mode, which characterizes the type of documentary it is. I inadvertently used three modes: expository, observational, and participatory. In the beginning of *Angel Walking*, I introduce who I am as a filmmaker. I use this technique to not only allow the audience to know who I am, but to allow the audience to hear my voice. The use of voice over is a significant part of the expository mode of documentary making and if used correctly can enhance a documentary.

I use voice over after various scenes to give the audience my interpretation and opinion about certain situations that had occurred. This helps me align the documentary with what I’m questioning. At one point in the documentary, Angel’s illness takes a turn for the worse; this sends half of the family to Mexico while the other half remains in McAllen, Texas. What should be made of this? This dividing of the family brought on a tremendous amount of imbalance in the Quintanilla’s’ day to day life. In an interview discussing the family’s temporary separation, Britney hugs Eddie’s arm, it’s evident that she misses her mom. My voice over was an interpretation of the scene, “How do you care for one child that needs more help and still feel like you’re leaving the other one behind?”

It turns out the sacrifice the Quintanilla family endures by separating themselves between Angel's treatments in Mexico, is a lot harder than expected. It tests the family's strength. A decision I made was to use my own voice for these voice overs.

According to Bill Nichols, it is "the cultivation of the professionally trained, richly toned male voice of commentary that proved a hallmark of the expository mode" (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* 106). Though, my voice isn't professionally trained by any means, I felt it my duty to keep true to the honesty of this project and use my own voice, rather than hire somebody to do so for me. Nichols does admit that "...some of the most impressive films chose less polished voices precisely for the credibility gained by avoiding too much polish" (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* 106). The use of the voice over with my voice was to hint at my opinion in given situations and scenes that were taking place, and also to show an honest portrayal of the story presented.

After a couple days, my documentary shifted into a more observational mode. This moment came when Angel "got sick" after filming a segment of how his parents met. The manner in which I transitioned into this mode of documentary was with a subtitle that allowed the audience to know Angel was ill. Bill Nichols states that, "The filmmaker's retirement to the position of observer calls on the viewer to take a more active role in determining the significance of what is said and being done" (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* 111). I was able to film Martha outside the Driscoll Children's Hospital in a frustrated state when Angel's doctor wasn't able to make their appointment.

An important factor in my observing the Quintanilla family was location. This dilemma came up several times. When filming a documentary, as a filmmaker you never know where your subjects are going to end up. From inside vans to following the family's footsteps as they went from art show to jewelry sales, the locations were constantly changing. As the observational filmmaker I wanted to capture the footage but not talk, unless I was talked to or needed to speak.

Eventually the documentary mode for *Angel Walking* shifted once more. This time, it called for the filmmaker's participation. Though, there were slight hints of my participation in this documentary in the beginning with my introduction and voice over, it was Angel's home use of an IV machine that propelled me to interact with him. We ended up playing a Nintendo game. A camera assistant, Kayla Guerra, decided to take hold of the camera and angle us both in the shots. The next scenes were highly participatory. "“Being there” calls for participation; “being here” allows for observation,”” writes Nichols in *Introduction to Documentary*. I was clearly “there” and in the picture for that matter, when I had to take Angel to the Men's Restroom to urinate, because his father was busy watching over the jewelry table. I was also “there” when I interviewed Martha on Angel's future and if she was being “too pushy” as a parent.

“The filmmaker steps out from behind the cloak of voice-over commentary, steps away from poetic meditation, steps down from a fly-on-the-wall perch, and becomes a social actor...” (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* 116). My choice in including myself, in all honesty, also has as much ramifications as the Quintanilla's choice in opening themselves up for criticism. Every choice a filmmaker makes can be questioned.

Lewis Herman defines documentary film as “a realistic portrayal, in depth, of a contemporary- or past- culture or situation; its purpose is to supply background material and unbiased social information as they relate to history, geography, customs, and more” (Herman 6). For the most part, this documentary had the potential to be an educational film for the masses. By masses, I mean a population of people willing to learn something different about another family. Not all families travel to Mexico to get medical procedures for their disabled son; not all families treat their disabled children the same way.

Angel Walking aims to be a fair social and familial portrayal of cerebral palsy. It showcases the Rio Grande Valley for citizens of other states that are unaware of how deep South Texas looks and how it’s inhabitants speak. *Angel Walking* would shed light on cerebral palsy from a different and unique perspective, a Latino 12 year old living in South Texas. If viewers were accustomed to the stereotype that involved envisioning Mexicans holding religious candles, eating tamales all the time, and wearing sombreros, then they were going to be taken outside of that stereotype; the Quintanilla family doesn’t fit the stereotypical profile many have long assumed. It would also show how far a family is willing to go to enable their son to walk. Most importantly, it questions the parenting skills of these adults. How should parents treat children with cerebral palsy? Should they treat them as normal children or should you treat them as a disabled?

Many documentaries and movies played an influential role in creating *Angel Walking*. Marcos discusses in the *Journal of Medicine and Movies*, that “Disabilities and the handicapped are topics and characters in many movies, cerebral palsy and those afflicted, among them” (Marcos 66). She goes on to include how movies can spark social

interest partly because films with issues of cerebral palsy can be “used for training and informing...” (Marcos 66) Of the media I present here, some are comparable in plot and scenes. Regardless, each work is unique in its own right and is highly commended as helping me formulate a stronger documentary story.

Early Influences

A film that had the longevity that I was looking for in *Angel Walking*, was *Tell Them I'm a Mermaid*. A young Jane Fonda introduces the film by saying it “will forever change the way you view yourself,” (Hochberg). This film, directed by Victoria Hochberg, was part documentary and part musical showcase. The set was quite simple: a theatre stage. Then seven women appear, all visibly disabled, singing about their handicap. In an effort to possibly promote the showing of this film in 1983, John Corry of The New York Times wrote about the neutrality and unique aspect of *Tell Them I'm a Mermaid*. He stressed how the film “...can be patronized, solemnized, or sentimentalized, however one sees fit” (Corry). This further proves how a provocative film such as this can stimulate discussion. The women sing in a satirical comedic fashion, taking hits at not only their own disability, but also their sexuality and how they are viewed in the eyes of somebody who is not disabled. Nancy Becker Kennedy, a quadriplegic, states early on that there is some sort of “social leprosy” that accompanies her having a wheelchair (Hochberg). This comment allowed me to develop questions for Angel’s interview. How did he feel about how others viewed him? Does “social leprosy” exist in Angel’s world?

Therefore, I filmed Angel talking to two customers at a jewelry sale. I wanted my documentary to show Angel in the public eye, to allow others to see him engage with other teenagers. This was important to see if the “social leprosy” Kennedy sings about existed. Based on the footage and documentary, it appeared that “social leprosy” didn’t exist in Angel’s world.

In a more contemporary study on other disorders, such as Director Ellen Goosenberg Kent’s *I Have Tourette’s but Tourette’s Doesn’t Have Me*, we the audience are allowed access into the minds of these individuals who have disabilities and are confronting them on a daily basis. In the Tourette Syndrome case, these individuals are children or adolescents. Seth, a young pubescent boy, confronts Tourette Syndrome every day of his life. He says, “It’s all about fitting in” (Kent). A sense of assimilation and integration into what “normal” is becomes evident from the beginning of these educational films that deal with disorders. Was Angel able to integrate himself in a school setting? How did his parents feel about their son not walking the school hallways, but rolling his wheelchair? Eddie answered my question about Angel’s school integration with hesitation. He told me that it was every parent’s fear to think about a school fire, would their child be out in time? This hesitation that Eddie felt was one that most parents feel but more worrisome because of his son’s handicap. Just as the progressive talk show host, Bree Walker sang of doubting her hand gestures because she had ectrodactyly and this gave her hands a “lobster look” in 1983’s *Tell Them I’m a Mermaid*, Seth deals with the same emotional weight that comes with having Tourette Syndrome in 2005. Seth later divulges that he “starts getting doubts” in his mind because “it is more of what other people think than your own opinion” (Kent).

But, Angel's life is quite different than these portrayals of insecurity and isolation that were showcased in *Tell Them I'm a Mermaid* and *I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me*. Angel is confident and knows that he has the gift of performance and on the surface, he is an outgoing person. Other preteens in *I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me* chimed in saying they were a "...marked man...", "...you can't make friends as easy...", "people stare and you have to just let them stare," (Kent). This is reminiscent of what Angel tells me when he is contemplating calling his friends over when he's sick at home. I asked Angel if he had ever called some of his friends and they declined meeting. His answer was yes. I assumed that his friends declined meeting because they weren't sure how they would play or have a good time with Angel disability. While watching these children with Tourette's Syndrome allow HBO to cinematically show their most intimate home videos of themselves crying at how the world was caving in on them and being intolerant, I came to question if Angel ever felt the same way, too.

I was able to find a documentary that captured disabilities from a unique perspective. Though, the characters here didn't sing or dance as in *Tell Them I'm a Mermaid* nor did we get multiple perspectives on how it is to live with a disability as in *I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me*, this film still proved influential to the creation of *Angel Walking*.

Director Alice Elliott, who produced the phenomenal documentary, *Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy*, was originally unwilling to film these two women. According to a taped interview in the Special Features section of the DVD, Elliott was approached by Diana and Kathy after screening another documentary at the 2001 Arc's National Convention.

The two had disabilities: one had cerebral palsy and the other had Down Syndrome. In order to warn Diana and Kathy how intrusive it is to have cameras following you on a daily basis, Elliott went to their home believing that they wouldn't enjoy the process of sharing their story, but they did. While there, Elliott realized that the potential documentary was more than just a profile of two women living with disabilities, it was about advocacy for social action through a personal and intimate story.

Unlike Diana and Kathy, Angel does not lobby for causes, but instead represents them at local events, where he sells his custom made jewelry. Half of Angel's earnings go to a number of children with disability organizations and to Mexico's *Teleton*, a yearly Telethon that takes place through television and radio. The other half of Angel's earnings go to his therapy and the buying of more beads to create the jewelry. This boy is a businessman, he knows what beads sell.

Though I wanted a unique take on cerebral palsy, I didn't go into our initial meeting with the Quintanilla family with the idea of being intrusive, which is what Elliott did. If anything I was prepared to plead and beg if I had to in order to get them to allow me to film. I told the Quintanilla family that I would film every "up and down side" of what was to happen, that I wanted them to understand that at times it would get a bit hectic and annoying with my filming and whether they would be willing to subject themselves to that. They agreed.

What was especially interesting about Elliott's documentary was that it featured a woman with Down Syndrome watching over a dear friend, Kathy, who had cerebral palsy. On an analytical note, Elliott allowed for a tremendous amount of discussion and

speculation after the documentary was finished. This, in my opinion, was something I wanted to allow in my documentary. How ethical was Diana's role as Kathy's full time caretaker? In *Angel Walking*, Angel's parents are his full time caretakers, who unlike Diana and Kathy's parents, have never given up on him, but instead sacrificed to keep him healthy and alive.

In one scene, Diana and Kathy leave their home to go protest against the opening of the "Lincoln Developmental Center." Diana adds, "...it was an institution where people like us were sent to live. We are fighting to keep it closed" (Elliott). After dealing with mental and physical abuse from her father, Diana spends the documentary watching over Kathy and searching for her mother.

Things take a dark turn, when not only does Medicare investigate the outing to protest the reopening of the developmental center, but Diana's mother refuses to meet her and, soon after dies. Kathy's cerebral palsy has taken her voice and she uses a voice activated machine connected to a computer monitor to speak, "...things are not going well for Diana, her mother has died. She still goes to the cemetery to pay her respects even though she cannot forget what they did to her..." (Elliott). At the end of the documentary, the Lincoln Developmental Center is not re-opened but shut down.

The Brooke Ellison Story, a feature film directed by the late Christopher Reeve in 2004, is the closest form of media that I found that shows a tremendous amount of similarities to *Angel Walking*, yet is able to still allow my documentary to stand alone and be different.

As a child, Brooke dreams of performing for a crowd. She sashays across the stage in ballerina attire and pliés to a beautiful soft music accompaniment. When filming my documentary, I learned that Angel also dreams of being a performer. He longs to perform, be it singing or acting. At any event, wherever they were, Eddie and Martha would encourage him to perform a couple songs for the audience. This plays out in the documentary script. Unlike Angel, Brooke is a quadriplegic and paralyzed from the neck down due to a car running into her as a child. Angel has cerebral palsy and was born with this condition. Regardless of the different handicaps, they both prove to be very capable of living an everyday life.

In one scene, Jean, Brooke's mother, must separate from her husband and children to take care of her daughter in rehabilitation center. As the treatments begin, Jean cannot bear being without her other children and husband. In *Angel Walking*, I have an "answer" to this scene and it's what this film lacked. While, Brooke and her mother are at the rehabilitation center, we hardly see her father or siblings. In *Angel Walking*, I was fortunate, to get an insight into how Eddie and Britney were doing while Angel and Martha were away for treatments. This allowed us to gain a different perspective of what Angel was going through. Following this scene, Brooke walks outside to get some fresh air, there she runs into another patient's mother, who tells her that the majority of the patients there are single parents. We immediately cut to Brooke's mom as she breaks down over a phone call she makes to her husband. "I can't do this," she manages to utter back to him between hiccups and tears.

That is also similar to what the Quintanilla's were faced with as they realized Angel's condition. Martha and Eddie admitted to me that the situation was "rough" and

they ultimately questioned their marriage. After receiving marriage counseling and discussing with me how many couples get divorced in situations where their children are handicapped, they remained strong and were able to stay together.

The movie does proceed and go forward through Brooke's life, one objective that I am currently not able to do in the span of filming that I did. Brooke gets accepted into Harvard and her mother sacrifices to attend and be her sole caretaker. Jean relocates with her daughter and they begin this journey of college life. When Brooke meets a love interest, she tells him that she still dreams of performing and standing. This dream she has is comparable to the dream that Angel's mother has at the end of my documentary. Martha openly and vividly describes a dream where she wakes up in bed and sees Angel standing in the doorway. Then he walks into the hallway. She questions how he is able to walk and is completely impressed with this sudden miracle, then she wakes up and reality sets in; her son cannot walk. When seeing a special interview with the real Brooke and Jean Ellison in the Special Features section of *The Brooke Ellison DVD*, I was able to get a better understanding of what Christopher Reeve was attempting to gain out of filming this family and it was similar to my objective.

After getting a call from Reeve, Brooke says that they "tried to be as honest...as they possibly could...which is scary...personally exposing..."(Reeve). She includes, "it takes a level of risk to do. These are situations that don't happen all that often. If people can learn from our honesty..." (Reeve). Jean Ellison adds, "It's easy just to focus on all the good things that happened and it's also easy to focus on the difficult things...we mixed it up." In *Angel Walking*, I wanted to show as many sides to the story as possible but still focus on the manner in which Angel is parented.

In *Angel Walking*, there is a scene when Eddie and Angel are arguing back and forth. The reason behind the argument is because Angel needs to go to the restroom. This sets Eddie off because he doesn't like public restrooms, they aren't sanitary. The bickering goes on for a couple seconds. I decided to show it in all its honesty. The film also shows arguments between Brooke and her mother, Parenting roles are questioned, and with every dramatic and real element a nonfictional story is born.

Filmmaker's Stance

There are drastic distinctions within documentaries. The manner in which the audience views this piece is also dependent on how I choose to portray Angel and the Quintanilla family. Therefore, the audience's views can ultimately be skewed into thinking a certain way. I clearly did not want that. I came to the decision that this was going to be an all out, no holds barred documentary on how the Quintanilla family copes with Angel's condition.

To skew or slant the documentary into a "pity" piece was not what I had in mind. Harwood's *Video as a Second Language* explains that a documentarian that insists on taking some sort of "stand" makes the documentary have a certain point of view. He says, it "...is subjective and aimed at convincing the audience of the validity of the documentalist's views" (Harwood 15). As much as I wanted to be neutral in the beginning and avoid slanting the documentary, everything I did in the formulation of this documentary was subjective. Every decision that dates back from the shots I used to the editing style was subjective. "One must learn to understand that editing is in actual fact a compulsory and deliberate guidance of the thought and associations of the spectator"

(Pudovkin 71). It became evident that I was going to have to be subjective in almost every process of the making of this documentary.

This question of what the filmmaker's position is one that happens with every documentary. "Where do filmmakers stand and how do they represent this stance? Do they represent their own knowledge as situated or omniscient? What consequences follow?" (Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* 2). My initial stance of neutrality didn't last long. In fact, once I realized that Angel was a young entrepreneur, I wasn't sure if it was a right thing to do at his age. The question that I had in the beginning of the documentary: How do you parent a child with cerebral palsy? This question grew into: How in the world is it acceptable for a parent to allow their child to be an entrepreneur at such a young age and disabled? Is this too much for him? Are the parents pushing him to the extreme?

The shift from neutrality to one of opposition is apparent in some of the voice overs I conducted. I based my stance on a number of objectives. It is partially based on the knowledge that I have of people that are disabled. The mentality that I have of the disabled is one of equality. They have the same emotions that we have. They can do the same tasks that people that aren't disabled can do, too. In fact, they may do it better. But just because they are able to do certain things better than others, doesn't mean to say that they enjoy doing it. This is what I questioned when I saw Angel selling jewelry and singing at events. Did he want to do this? Was he happy with the way his parents were raising him?

My stance is based on my experiences, beliefs, and values. As a filmmaker I know that not all audiences have to agree with my stance. They can oppose my way of thinking and the method I used to film this family. “All art is experimental or it isn’t art” (Youngblood 611). Every work of art and creative endeavor can be questioned.

Angel Walking: An Engaging Process for an Educational Film

The movies and documentaries I have presented are all educational films. The definition I use for what qualifies as an educational film is the one that Lewis Herman develops: “A film must possess a special capacity for teaching that is otherwise unavailable in traditional teaching methods” (Herman 12). There was a void in how Latino’s experience cerebral palsy and even bigger void on the younger generation of people with this condition. I wasn’t able to see that in any of the documentaries and movies reviewed.

Yet, there lay the foundational base for an educational film. Herman goes on to say that it “...is assumed that the broad purpose of every educational film is to aid the viewer in solving some sort of problem- mechanical (as in skill-and-drill films), sociological (as in social studies films), emotional (as in interpersonal relationship films), or the multitude of other problems that beset mankind” (Herman 14). *Angel Walking*, would present itself with the problem of disability and it would show how the Quintanilla family is solving this problem. Even more, it would ask the audience if they (Quintanilla family) were answering the problem appropriately.

I first met the Quintanilla family at their home sans video camera and crew. I wanted to introduce myself, first and foremost. This, I imagined, was indicative in

finding some sort of connection with the subject matter of cerebral palsy and also the family. Though, I hadn't read this in any book on documentaries, I felt the upcoming process of filming the Quintanilla family would be less invasive if I talked to them and got to know them a little better. I realized my connection to Angel's story was a lot stronger than what I had imagined. In my opinion, all people are all somehow linked together by some common thread. It's only a matter of finding that link.

When Eddie and Martha told me how Angel almost died at birth because of complications, I immediately thought of my mom giving birth and her complications. Apparently, Martha and my mom had a similar episode in the hospital. One in which, baby or mother or both could have died. This connection that I had with the subject matter allowed me to understand the Quintanilla family's outlook on life better.

I began filming the Quintanilla family around town and inside their home, by myself. By following their every move, I was able to play with camera shots and angles. Lewis Herman discusses several different shots that are used in educational films and how each shot is representative of something. For the most part, filming in the "medium-close shot" was easier because I was following directly behind this family or walking backwards in front of them. "The camera reflects the filmmaker's view... Filmmakers speak to an audience, blending their sense of themselves with that of the subjects" (Sherman 207). When I interviewed Eddie and Martha Quintanilla on how they met, I interviewed them individually. They were separated, Eddie was in the living room and Marta was in her bedroom. The shot I used, according to Herman Lewis' *Educational Films* was a "medium-close shot." The reason behind me using a "medium-close shot" to film the interview segments was because it allowed the camera to zoom into a "close-up."

The “close-up,” Herman believes is the “...most effective shot, however, as far as educational films are concerned...” (Herman 73). Not all critics and filmmakers believe this is the best shot, in fact, many believe it is manipulative. But with the manipulation of a “close-up” comes the possibility of developing an iconic image such as the case with Greta Garbo.

I’m not saying that the Quintanilla family’s “close-ups” were going to be of that caliber, but Garbo was able to bring a uniqueness to the “close-up” that arguably has still not been repeated on a cinematic level. Garbo’s face was iconic in nature partly due to how the interpretation of her reaction was. While some saw a sexual presence others saw much more than that but a concept and “idea.” Barthes states that Garbo’s “close-up” is part of a “moment in cinema when capturing the human face still plunged audiences into the deepest ecstasy, when one literally lost oneself in a human image...” (Barthes 567).

It wasn’t the simplest thing to do, though. Carry a camcorder, engage in what was happening, ask a couple questions and clearly attack those “medium-close shots” and “close-ups” whenever the family’s emotions or a serious topic developed. That was another reason behind the shots used.

As the Director, it was almost an inherent feeling that I would get, when I knew the interview was going in a serious direction or an outpouring of emotions as seemingly coming through- a slight zoom in gave it a more appropriate look. I had to keep the audience in mind as the filming took place. What I was shooting was what the audience would see. As intimate as I wanted this documentary to be, I initially believed I’d be able to capture these personal moments by myself...but, I needed assistance.

I called upon two members of my crew (Kayla Guerra and Brenda Rodriguez) to assist me in the filming process. They were understanding of the project and were considerably generous with their time as they filmed me interacting with the Quintanilla family. Though the documentary was partially filmed inside the Quintanilla's home, other scenes were filmed outside and around the city of McAllen, Texas. According to Gross, Foust, and Burrows, "Teamwork, combined with a cooperative spirit, is a *must*" when dealing with Field Productions (Gross, Foust and Burrows). The crew and I never disagreed on any level. I gave Brenda and Kayla an idea of what I wanted in the shots. The two members of the crew and I worked to keep the continuity of the shots for clean edits later.

This gave the documentary a journalistic style to some degree because I was part of the scene taking place. This allowed the documentary to also have a more realistic hands-on approach because it was clearly the participatory mode.

The minute I would arrive at the location, was also the minute Kayla, Brenda, or I pushed the camcorder record button on; anything was possible. To some extent, you have to quickly "survey" the location, do a little "preproduction planning," definitely forget the "breakdown sheets," and never really count on a set-in-stone "shooting schedule." The disciplines and techniques that Gross, Foust, and Burrows illustrate for Field Production were helpful in allowing goals to be met clearly and concisely.

Making a documentary is somewhat similar to that of hunting wild game. You wait and wait, you film and film. Then, suddenly, out of the mesquite branches and into the distance you see a twelve pointer gazing back at you. Sometimes you have to film for

a long time to get some kind of footage that will help formulate some sort of a provocative story that will in turn of interest in the documentary. How do you decipher what to use and what not to use? Out of the six hours worth of footage that the crew and I captured, I wanted to use the most provocative and stimulating footage that would play fairly on the balancing scheme of my subjective stance. Producing this documentary first hand in order to gather the necessary footage to create the script wasn't going to be an easy task.

According to Michael Renov, the concept of "objective" documentaries is "waning." He states, "The journalistic standards of objective reportage have been so eroded by the news gatherers and high profile TV anchors" (Renov xvii). I by no means have anything against objective reportage, but I felt this documentary needed my point of view to allow insight into what other people may think.

The making of *Angel Walking* was very much a "backwards process" in that the crew and I shot over an extended period of time, and then I began to find story plots hidden in the footage. Once the hidden plots were found, I had to choose which angle would work best. I wanted to make sure that the story also followed and somehow answered my question of whether the method in which the Quintanilla's choose to raise Angel was ethical or unethical.

Therefore, I gathered up all the footage that was provocative and would be subject to discussion. Once the story surfaced, I was able to transcribe word for word what the "social actors" said and apply it in a documentary screenplay format. The *Angel Walking* screenplay was used for the editing of the documentary. Whereas, most movies begin

with a screenplay, then production starts to film, then the editing and post production begins, making this documentary was certainly a “backwards process.”

If I wanted the audience to understand how Angel’s parents are raising him, I had to show the things Angel did. This is the reason I included the footage of Angel selling jewelry and singing at an art show. These are the activities that Angel is part of. When Angel was ill, I filmed his father make a tortilla chicken soup to help him regain his strength. “The patient with cerebral palsy is not a single isolated person conditioned by his situation, rather he is part of a family and society which will have an influence on him and vice versa” (Marcos 66). This documentary is representative of his life up to now. At birth Angel weighed a little over one pound and all the odds were against him surviving his very first month of life. Twelve years later, he’s now about to be a teenager. His parents are major part of his life because they’ve handled him since he was a toddler. The struggle that these parents are put through can be related to other parents who have children that are disabled.

After questioning the Quintanilla family’s reasoning to allow Angel to be the local celebrity at public events, I immediately came to the conclusion that the parents were somehow using the public’s pity to sell Angel’s jewelry. Though, this theory I had was made in the beginning, I didn’t see the whole picture. I wasn’t allowing myself to see that what Angel did was what he wanted to do. Angel’s parents were merely supporting him in all his endeavors. In all honesty, my perception of what disabled people can and cannot do might have contributed to me imagining his parents pushing him to do things he didn’t want to do, like sell jewelry at art shows. Apparently, Angel enjoys being an

active and a positive force to be reckoned with in the public eye more than his parents and Britney.

This documentary is also representative of the Rio Grande Valley. It is a story that many parents, children, and friends can relate to or know somebody that may relate to the situations shown. On the other hand, this story can be far from relatable to families that may not be under the pressure of having a child with a disability. Therefore, this documentary is only a snapshot, a portrayal of how one Latino family living in South Texas has viewed, dealt with, and parented their child with cerebral palsy.

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ANGEL WALKING A documentary

By

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A video montage of Jesse Garza's filmed segments is shown.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

At first impression you make think that I'm a city boy, but I'm actually from the rancho or ranches of South Texas, where if you look closely you can see a spider make a home out of a cactus...yep there it is. Or see the original country mouse, not the animated kind, scurry across the mesquite brush. Where I come from we let horses be horses, we make our own roads, when we're broken down, we rebuild ourselves. Or just let it be and call it artistic representation.

(beat)

The beaches here summon a creativity and life of exuberance. In South Padre Island, the waves crash against the grainy sand gently, gently, gently. Some days the waves crash harder, harder, gently. The castle builders, like angels from above, develop works out of water and sand. If you go to the beach during the day, after Summer and before Fall, you can sometimes hear the waves speak to you.

(beat)

For the past years, I've recorded major and minor events that have happened in my life. At first, I wanted something to laugh at when I got older...something vivid to show my family in the future. So, I recorded crazy sketches with fictional characters. I eventually documented my studies at The University of Hawaii-Manoa. While there, I went documentary crazy and everywhere I went I took my camera with me. It was easy for me to

record hours upon hours and create little stories out of the footage. My recordings became more dramatic with everyday life. In reality, not everyday is a walk through a park. But sometimes a challenge...

EXT. QUINTANILLA HOME - DAY

A four member family walk around outside their home. The day is bright and beautiful.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

...my thesis is a documentary on a family that has reinvented the word sacrifice.

ANGEL, 12, enters his home with an orange walker.

EXT. ART HOUSE - DAY

A wall is covered with retro and classic vinyl album covers. The shot quickly drops down revealing, MARTHA, 30, who sits next to Angel, her son. She gets up from the couch, leaving Angel behind.

Angel notices the camera and timidly ducks down.

SUPER A TITLE:

ANGEL WALKING, a documentary

INT. QUINTANILLA HOME - DAY

EDDIE, 30, hovers over Angel, who maintains his posture holding on to his orange walker. We are in the living room.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

When I visited the family with cameras, I got a rundown of some of the house features that the Quintanilla's were hoping to revamp or fix...

Now we are in the kitchen. A small dining room table is pushed against the wall to allow enough room for Angel to pass through to the refrigerator and other kitchen appliances.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

One of the things I noticed was that Angel was using a walker to maneuver his way around the house. When I asked Eddie about this he said it was partly due to his therapy and that it's a miracle he was not confined to a wheelchair.

SUPER A TITLE:

"About 10,000 babies per year in the U.S. will develop cerebral palsy."

-Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Martha and Eddie move away from the kitchen counter to allow Angel to pass through.

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM - DAY

We are in Angel's room. The atmosphere quickly changes and becomes very Asian-inspired. A mural is on Angel's wall; Asian botanical gardens, a cherry blossom tree, and a cliff overlooking the sky.

ANGEL

We tried to make some improvements and uh as you can see on the whole Chinese theme. I tried to make a Chinese theme because I'm interested in the Chinese things like meditating and Kung Fu. A friend has done a mural and we have tried to- we bought a fountain and a special DVD to help me relax and meditate.

Eddie shows us Angel's closet door. It is filled with concert memorabilia, post cards, and pictures.

EDDIE

As you can see this is Angel's closet. You can see a lot of memories. When Angel had some surgeries...with his aunt...in Kinder...and this is uh-

Eddie pinpoints a typed out letter taped to the closet door. A photograph with two little girls, one in a wheelchair, is shown above the letter.

EDDIE

This is a special letter that this little girl Denise wrote to him, because Angel donated his chair to her when he didn't fit on it. She's from Mexico, she sent us this letter and picture.

SUPER TITLE:

Denise's condition worsened and she died, soon after receiving this gift from Angel.

Eddie continues showing the memorabilia.

EDDIE

These butterflies here, they come from his school nurse. She makes them by hand. She was so happy to have Angel this year, that she wrote some real nice things and mailed them to our home.

Marta holds up a gold trophy with a winged Angel on top.

MARTHA

This one is for Angel's Mile Stone Therapy. He had intensive therapy when he got operated from his legs. They gave him the award because he completed it all. It helped him a lot.

Angel positions himself in a tight spot at the foot of his bed and against the wall. He carefully holds on to the foot board as he slides through.

ANGEL

This is pretty much the space that I have to do the therapy and I struggle to get into this space. No, it's not really much. All I can

do is probably squat and march in place and do balances and probably lean on the wall a little bit.

He attempts the leaning on the wall.

INT. THE QUINTANILLA HALLWAY, CONTINUOUS.

Angel holds on to a long bar in the hallway that links his room to the restroom.

ANGEL

This is the hallway. These are the bars that I walk with. My grandpa got me these, with the money that we raised. The only bars that we got are for the restroom. And I usually struggle and I'm usually afraid of falling, you know? I'm afraid of letting go of the bar a lot. You see, alright, alright.

Angel struggles a bit to the grip as he manuevers his way into the restroom.

MARTHA QUINTANILLA

This is how he gets into the restroom.

ANGEL

Yeah.

MARTHA QUINTANILLA

The walker doesn't fit. Vas usar el bano.

ANGEL

Si.

MARTHA QUINTANILLA

He is going to use the restroom. But Jesse can't film that.

ANGEL

No he can't. This is pretty much the restroom.

INT. THE QUINTANILLA RESTROOM, CONTINUOUS.

Angel shows the restroom's features.

ANGEL

We painted it the same color as my room. The walker doesn't fit, I can't be in the restroom with the walker. That's why we put these bars because it doesn't fit and I can't get in there alone and walk. And that's why I want a bigger space for the door and maybe a bigger restroom. It would be a good thing to have because I wouldn't have to struggle and I wouldn't have to bump into the door and I wouldn't make scratches in the past. That's why we painted the house. A lot of bad times. I really want this house to be big enough. I take a shower on my own. But I would want it bigger, too. We have this special chair so I can sit and I can take a shower. It's not very easy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie and Martha tell me how they came to be a family.

EDDIE

I met Martha at a dance.

MARTHA

We met at a club dancing. It's a Tejano club.

EDDIE

I saw her and, "Hey Martha, do you wanna dance?" And Marta said, "Yeah, okay." So we started dancing.

MARTHA

Thank God I met him because he's a wonderful husband and a wonderful father.

EDDIE

So like a month later I asked her to be my girlfriend.

MARTHA

We started dating in September of 95...and uh he gave me a rose and asked me to be his girlfriend. So it was pretty cool. Then he started meeting my family, my parents, my brother, my sister, and uh-

EDDIE

That's it.

MARTHA

In May of 96, we got married, and after that in January of 97 I got pregnant and then Angel was born.

EDDIE

Angel...well you find out your pregnant, first of all. We were very happy. Then throughout the pregnancy, she would go to the doctor and they would say that there was something wrong with her platelets. Then we went to a place for oncology, where they diagnose Cancer and stuff. It was a little bit scary because we didn't know

(MORE)

EDDIE (cont'd)

what we were learning ourselves- on Marta's health and the pregnancy developments.

(beat)

So, Angel was born- One day she goes to the doctor and they tell her that she's very swollen from her legs and her body. The doctor told her to go to the hospital, but she instead, came to the house. Then we bumped into each other

because she came to the house and it was around twelve. I was supposed to go to work and I was coming out of school in college. She's like, "Eddie, I'm sick, the doctor told me to go to the hospital." We went to the hospital. I went with her to the hospital. When we got there, the doctor looked at her and he said, "I told you to come straight to the hospital, why didn't you listen to me?" I knew the doctor and he said, "You know what, Eddie? We can't- we need to take her to another hospital, because the baby is going to be born and we need her close to that neo-natal unit.

(beat)

So, I remember that everything was so fast. They got her in...put her in an ambulance...I don't remember if I drove or they put me in the ambulance.

MARTHA

I got the Preeclampsia. I was very sick. I had a very high blood pressure. The doctors told me he would have a better chance living outside than inside.

EDDIE

We went to the other hospital, which is about 20 minutes from there. I remember it was like three or four o'clock. They're preparing her and we're calling like her mom, her dad- our family...that Angel's going to be born and my wife is sick. They gave her some shots in the arm and it was like a white liquid and a big ol' needle because they were saying that they needed the baby's lungs to develop. That was around four- the liquid was supposed to help when they were going to do the c-section.

MARTHA

They did the emergency c-section.

EDDIE

They ask you like in the movies,
who do you want us to save your
baby or your wife? And we're like,
"Well, both."

MARTHA

My mother in law passed away, he
was- it was pretty hard for both of
us.

EDDIE

My mom had just passed away. A
month before my mom had passed
away. So, I was still shaky about
that. Now I'm sitting in the
waiting room with some of my close
family and we're waiting for what's
going to happen. They came and told
us around nine, nine-twenty the
baby's born. But when they take you
to your baby, your baby is like 800
grams...a pound and thirteen
ounces. I remember that I was going
to faint.

MARTHA

They told us that he might not
live. So we baptized him and
everything.

JESSE GARZA

Were you all preparing for the
worse, by baptizing him?

MARTHA

Yes. His first month, we bought him
a cake to celebrate that he lasted
a month. After that, he started
growing and growing until he got
out of the hospital. For two months
he was in the hospital. He came
home with oxygen. They told us that
Angel might have a disability
because he was too small. We really
didn't know what was going to
happen.

SUPER TITLE:

Shortly after filming this segment, Angel got sick.

EXT. OUTSIDE DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Martha stands outside the doctor's office, her face is visibly distraught. Her dark sunglasses shield her from making any kind of eye contact.

JESSE GARZA

So Marta, exactly what happened right now?

MARTHA

Well, the doctor couldn't come because of the weather. So, they're gonna have to- I'm going to have to call Corpus later on today, so that uh, they can see when they're going to reschedule me, maybe tomorrow or next week. We're going to have to come back. How do you say it in English? Una vuelta de oquis.

Martha laughs out loud, as Angel stands near her with his orange walker.

MARTHA

But, it's okay. We're going to go to lunch right now.

JESSE GARZA

It's okay, right Angel?

Angel nods his head in agreement, his back to camera.

ANGEL

Yeah...

Angel weakly gives his mom a "high-five." Martha and Angel slowly walk down the parking lot, discussing where they plan to eat for lunch.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

It appears that the Quintanilla family handle the frustration of

dealing with Angel's condition with patience. Though, visibly distraught because she pulled Angel out of school and there was no doctor, Martha will make the best of the day.

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM - DAY

Angel lies in bed coughing, his face is pale. His room is darker than usual.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Angel accepts his condition. He accepts it even though it challenges him. Today, his condition is pushing him beyond the norm. He's missed school because of the flu.

ANGEL

Sometimes I don't like going to the hospital. But the reason, I do is because I get to rest, maybe just get a little ready for school. The two things that I don't like are the IV...and especially being sick.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Eddie is making Angel a family recipe of homemade chicken soup.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Today, Eddie comes home early from work. He does his best to hide his fear of Angel being put on an IV machine.

EDDIE

They used to do this to me when we got a cold.

Eddie prepares the bowl by cutting a tortilla into strips.

JESSE GARZA(O/S)

Your mom?

EDDIE

Yeah, she'd make a little bit of
soup de tortilla.

ANGEL

She used to make gorditas.

EDDIE

You put a little bit of this.

Now Eddie puts pieces of carrots and celery in the bowl. He searches the pot for a piece of chicken Angel will like.

EDDIE

...it's real hot so the tortilla
will soak it up.

JESSE GARZA(O/S)

There's your tortilla soup.

EDDIE

Kind of like a tortilla soup.

JESSE GARZA(O/S)

Tortilla chicken-

EDDIE

Soup.

Now Eddie slides the soup bowl down the table to where Angel sits.

EDDIE

Angel's plate is ready. Be careful
because it's very hot. You got to
eat everything so you can be better
by tomorrow.

SUPER TITLE:

"The average lifetime cost for one person with Cerebral Palsy is estimated to be \$921,000."

-Center for Disease Control and Prevention

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM - DAY

ANGEL'S GRANDMA sits in his bedroom. She bares strong resemblance to Martha, her daughter. Her Arthritis-ridden hands lay on the side of Angel's bed.

She is alone in Angel's room.

ANGEL'S GRANDMA

Angel is very special. I'm very very proud to be Angel's Grandmother. I'm sure my husband is proud to be the granddad, too. Angel has brought so much happiness and so much union to our family. He's kept us all together. It's something we never imagined existed until Angel was born. That we realized how many babies have disabilities.

SUPER TITLE:

Cerebral Palsy cannot be cured.
-CDC

ANGEL'S GRANDMA

How blessed we are to have him.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

As blessed as they are...Angel's condition worsens. This sends half of the family to Mexico, splitting them up beyond borders.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

BRITNEY, 5, smiles at the camera as she sits next to Eddie. The two look at each other. Father acknowledges daughter. Eddie realizes the camera is rolling...

EDDIE

Today is Wednesday and uh we're expecting Angel, my wife, and my mother in law. They were on a trip to Mexico for some therapies for Angel...and we haven't seen them for four days, right Britney?

Britney nods enthusiastically.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Britney stands on top of a kitchen table chair and uncovers a pink cake that sits at the center table.

BRITNEY

A cake for my brother and we did it with sprinkles of Halloween and we brought some balloons, but one popped out.

JESSE GARZA

What happened to one of them?

BRITNEY

One popped out...and we brought our Mom flowers.

She pulls out a bouquet of red roses. Then does a little dance of happiness and anticipation.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie shifts his body as he sits on the living room couch. Britney continues to sit by his side. Her small head rests on his stomach.

EDDIE

So we've been talking to Angel and my wife on the phone. I know on Tuesday you talked to Angel, right?

Britney nods.

EDDIE

What happened? You started to what?

BRITNEY

Cry.

EDDIE

Britney started to cry and it's tough, it's part of Angel's wild ride.

Britney hugs Eddie's arm. She looks directly at the camera and bows her head down. Her turns to his daughter. She's visibly hurt.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

How do you care for one child that needs more help and still feel like you're leaving the other one behind? It turns out the sacrifice the Quintanilla family endure by separating themselves between Angel's treatments in Mexico, is a lot harder than expected. It tests the family's strength.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Everything is dark now. The lights are off. We see only silhouettes scurry about and around the living room.

EDDIE

You excited?

BRITNEY

Yes...

EDDIE

Are you ready?

Eddie opens the front door to the house, some evening light immediately pours in and we are now...

EXT. QUINTANILLA HOME - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

...outside. Eddie holds Britney's hand.

EDDIE & BRITNEY

Surprise!

They run to Martha's white van. She opens the door, half exhausted, half smiling.

MARTHA

Hi mommy!

Martha quickly scoops Britney up. Eddie slides the passenger door open and we see Angel, just as happy to be home.

EDDIE

Papi! I miss you!

Britney quickly runs to the open front door and turns mimicking a "shh" with her index finger to her lips.

BRITNEY

Papi, cover his eyes.

EDDIE

Orita, I'll cover his eyes over here.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Angel slowly maneuvers his way into the kitchen with his eyes closed. Martha walks behind him, her eyes closed, too.

ANGEL

Now?

EDDIE & BRITNEY

No.

Eddie grabs the red roses, while Britney stands on top of a kitchen table chair.

EDDIE

1, 2, 3, open them!

EDDIE & BRITNEY

Surprise!

They reveal the pink cake and balloons! Eddie gives the roses to Martha. The family hug and kiss each other.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Eddie and Martha sit on the couch detailing Angel's procedures.

EDDIE

As a parent, you have a child...you're always looking for the next best thing to help your

child. For us, there's a clinic in Mexico. Actually, about three to four hours away from here, it's passing Monterrey. So, my wife and Angel had to go. My mother in law accompanied them. It was very stressful because right now, there's a lot of violence in the border towns. But for me, letting them go further is very worrisome, because me and my daughter have to stay behind. I couldn't get those days off, so my wife had to drive over there, you know. Making sure that we have insurance, that we have all the money. So that they can go and travel. They go and stay with family. It's an everyday violence in Mexico, right now. I fear for them and uh the driving in itself for her. My wife, my mother in law, and a child, and a vehicle in Mexico. If Angel had some of the therapy equipment here, they wouldn't have to travel that far.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Of all the places that Angel can get therapy, the family chooses Mexico. I don't have any children, so it's hard for me to envision traveling in and around dangerous areas to help my child. If they care for the health and overall well being of their child, should they be traveling to Mexico? I couldn't find an exact answer. But, Martha helped me get a better picture of the violence in Mexico.

MARTHA

Like I tell Eddie, we go to Saltillo. That's where Angel gets his uh, Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. We take him to his therapies over there. Usually, it's three days out of the week every month. So, when we go, I drive over there it's like four hours away. And uh, even though we go through the uh

expressways, the uh, toll roads,
it's kind of dangerous in
Monterrey. I mean, you go over
there and you see in the news,
"There was a shooting on the
highway...and there was a shooting
here..." It's kind of dangerous to
go- it's not safe.

(beat)

Especially, if I'm going by myself
with Angel. My husband's not with
me...or they see me alone. Or they
see me, my mom and Angel by
ourselves...it's kind of scary.
Even when you see a tourist or the
car, the van from another state, it
worries that they might do
something or the cops might stop
you, or the soldiers in the
borders...It's kind of scary,
because you don't expect it. All of
those things...it's a challenge to
go all the way over there by
ourselves.

(beat)

Angel was sad, he was nervous, I
don't know what was going on
through his mind. But, he wasn't
feeling comfortable. He told me, "I
miss dad, I miss Britney...I'm so
used to us four going all the
time." I told him, "Papi, it's not
going to be like that, sometimes
it's going to be you and me,
sometimes just and Papi."

JESSE GARZA

Nothing scary has happened yet?

MARTHA

Not yet. I hope not. But yes! Just
crossing the border, the way they
look at you, they stare at you...

EDDIE

The soldiers, the cops-

MARTHA

The border from Mexico is kind of
scary. We're right here thirty

minutes from the border. I couldn't sleep. When I got back, I was just so thankful that I was back in my house and my bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Britney hugs her grandma as she cries loudly.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

The family's separation has really affected Britney. She's aware that Mexico is a dangerous place, she's aware that there is risk involved.

ANGEL'S GRANDMA

(Spanish)

Why do you cry?

BRITNEY

Because I miss mom...

ANGEL'S GRANDMA

Ah, she misses Mom, chiquita. I missed you, too chaparita.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

It's heartbreaking to see that the younger sibling is having to endure this, she's having to grow up at a faster rate because of Angel's condition.

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM - DAY

Angel's Grandma sits on his bed discussing their most current trip to Mexico and it's effect on Angel.

JESSE GARZA

Do you think that the treatments in Mexico are helping him?

ANGEL'S GRANDMA

Definitely, definitely. This last time that we went, we saw something that they had not given him here.

(beat)

Besides, I think the faith has a lot to do with it. I'm hoping that one day he will leave his walker. You never know.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Britney shuts her eyes, as Martha holds something in a fist.

BRITNEY
I'm not looking.

Britney impatiently jumps around.

MARTHA
Ready?

Britney nods her head. Martha opens her hand, revealing a "Teleton Heart" charm. It's symbol of hope for Angel's condition.

Britney cries and hugs her mom. Martha smiles.

MARTHA
Do you like it? Where you going to put it?

BRITNEY
My pocket.

Britney runs off to her room. Martha relaxes in the sofa recliner.

FADE IN PALMFEST MONTAGE

JESSE GARZA(V/O)
Regardless of possible health concerns, Angel and his family don't give in. Angel takes part in community events throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Angel makes jewelry outside, as customers watch him.

Britney passes out business cards to passerbys.

Eddie talks to potential buyers.

Jesse attempts to make a bracelet and fails.

Angel gives Jesse a bracelet.

INT. ART HOUSE, DAY.

Eddie stands in a clothing store with Angel by his side.

EDDIE

Angel is somebody who gets invited to different events. Everything is improvised, like right now we didn't have a table. So somebody went to get a table. It is really a uh a ride, a wild ride with Angel because we never know what we're going to get. Sometimes it's really successful, sometimes it's really normal.

(beat)

Today, we're having fun. Angel really likes this store. Sometimes we have air con sometimes we're outside. Angel is really brave withstanding all the elements of nature.

FADE IN FAMILY MONTAGE

Britney plays with hair, smiling at the jewelery laid on a blue table. The shot is representative of who she represents in the family: the comic relief.

Angel adjusts his legs in his bed.

Angel puts his shoes on by himself.

Britney holds up a frame in the shape of an Angel.

Marta holds up a sign that says: LITTLE ANGEL'S FUN JEWELERY

Picture of Angel on a rocking horse.

Picture of Angel in elementary- the only student in the class with a wheelchair.

Eddie stands near Angel in the kitchen and moves the meat

around Angel's soup.

Angel sits in his bed coughing.

EDDIE(V/O)

As a parent, you worry for your kids. Especially, because of Angel's situation. He has a walker and I'm afraid that he might fall or that I don't know. Your junior high years are kind of tough. But Angel came home and he was laughing and having a blast and was like, "I love school, I had fun!" I was like, "What?! All my tears for nothing?" The next day, I was like, "Wow, at least I can breathe now." But sure enough, the days have gotten better for me. Every time he comes from school I ask him, "How was your day? How was school? Anything unusual? Did you eat? What did you eat?" I think it's very important that as parents, me and my wife ask him all those questions so that we can know what's going on in his life, what's going on in his mind.

(beat)

We want the best for him and we want the best education for him. So, we survive. The very first time I cried was when Angel entered kinder- actually it was a self-contained unit where he started school, because he was three years old. You just couldn't pull me off the door. I wanted to see through the window. See how he would do...again, you're fearful that somebody is going to hit him. What if there's a fire in the school, will my son have the same chances to get out? Maybe, parents with regular kids may not think- but, somebody with uh special needs, it's very different.

(beat)

We're surviving, we're going on the third week, right Angel? And, he's

already sick. We'll get through.

INT. ART HOUSE, DAY.

Angel wears a vintage inspired Paperboy Hat. He slightly stands a little taller in his walker. The room is filled with men's clothing and apparel.

JESSE GARZA

How does it feel to know that you just met Miley Cyrus?

EDDIE

Dile, Disney! 3, 2, 1...

JESSE GARZA

Disney, 411. Don't they do something like that?

ANGEL

Well, they changed it.

JESSE GARZA

What they change it to?

ANGEL

They changed it to Disney 365.

JESSE GARZA

Let's pretend like this is Disney Channel.

EDDIE

Okay, come on.

Angel lip syncs an "okay."

ANGEL

Disney 365.

JESSE GARZA

But instead of "Disney 365," maybe you should say Angel 24/7.

EDDIE

Orale.

JESSE GARZA

Yeah, try that.

ANGEL
Angel 24/7.

JESSE GARZA
Woohoo!

EDDIE
Angel, you need to keep your eye on
the camera. Remember what I told
you about commercials? Eye contact.
Go.

Angel points to the camera.

ANGEL
Eye contact.

EDDIE
You're a clown.

ANGEL
Angel 24/7, Woo.

INT. ART HOUSE, DAY.

Angel is interviewed about The Room Clothing Store. He sits
in front of an array of brightly colored couture dresses.

JESSE GARZA
So, how are you doing today, Angel?

ANGEL
I'm doing fine, thank you.

JESSE GARZA
What are you doing here today at
The Room Clothing Store?

ANGEL
Well, I'm participating in the Art
Walk.

JESSE GARZA
What's the Art Walk all about?

ANGEL

Well, I guess it's some kind of charity to me. Like right now I'm selling jewelry- I have a jewelry line. I think it can help people with their fashion and help with their own sense of style. Help people...because I do a lot of things for charity.

JESSE GARZA

How would you describe your jewelry line?

ANGEL

Well, I would describe it as colorful, very happy, very fun, very-

JESSE GARZA

Do you participate in the Art Walk, every month?

ANGEL

Actually, no this is my very first time.

JESSE GARZA

At the Art Walk?

Angel nods his head.

JESSE GARZA

Are you having a fun time?

ANGEL

Yeah, I am.

JESSE GARZA

Are you expecting some people today?

ANGEL

Yes, I'm expecting some friends from school and some friends from Pan Am.

JESSE GARZA

How many people do we expect to

show up?

ANGEL

Well...I don't know how many people are going to come.

(beat)

Actually, I don't expect that much people.

JESSE GARZA

You don't expect a lot of people?

ANGEL

No...

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

I didn't expect Angel's answer to be so blunt with himself. I suspected that something internal was going on. Did he feel isolated because of his condition? I thought so.

JESSE GARZA

Why not?

ANGEL

I don't want to seem very demanding.

JESSE GARZA

Demanding...

ANGEL

...and I'll be really happy if they make it.

JESSE GARZA

If your friends make it?

ANGEL

Yes.

Angel's bright face quickly turns to a more somber and reflective one.

JESSE GARZA

Well, I'm here. That's all that should matter.

INT. ART HOUSE, EVENING

Contrary to what Angel believes, the Art house fills up with customers. A TEEN BOY CUSTOMER, 14, pays Martha for an Angel designed necklace.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Though, Angel was partly right...his friends didn't make it, but the customers quickly poured in. Angel also made some new friends.

MARTHA

Well, it's five, ten, fifteen...

TEEN BOY CUSTOMER

Thank you.

A TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER, 14, tries on a necklace.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

It's so pretty. Angel, this is so pretty.

MARTHA

He's going to be tomorrow at the WalMart in Trenton and McColl.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

Oh, okay.

MARTHA

He's going to be selling jewelry. If you want to take your mom or if your mom wants to take somebody else. Spread the word.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

Twitter, Facebook, Myspace...

JESSE GARZA

Tweet, tweet that's all I gotta say. Tweet, tweet.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

I love Twitter.
(beat)

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER (cont'd)

Oh, hi I'm Nicole and I just bought this necklace from Angel it was really pretty. I loved the colors. I love pink and blue and reddish. Those are my colors...and also to help out the children.

ANGEL

What's your age? 16, 17?

TEEN BOY CUSTOMER

I'm not that old.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

We're 14, all of us.

ANGEL

It's fine, it's fine. I really-

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

How old are you?

ANGEL

12.

TEEN GIRL CUSTOMER

No bad, two years apart.

TEEN BOY CUSTOMER

Uhm, I was like, "that's the wrong Math" but I did it in my head and was like "oh yeah."

JESSE GARZA

You bought a necklace from Angel...

TEEN BOY CUSTOMER

I bought a necklace for Mom. I liked it and I think it's really cool that he made it by hand...and I just really want to help out his cause.

ANGEL

Really thanks. I really like to help other people, too.

INT. ART HOUSE, NIGHT.

In a matter of moments, The Room Clothing gets filled with more customers willing to buy Angel's jewelry. With every passing customer, every necklace and bracelet bought, Angel slouches in his seat of exhaustion.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

It had occurred to me that Angel was somewhat of a celebrity. A lot of people knew who he was. His entrepreneurial efforts at becoming a positive role model seemed to be paying off.

Angel says "Hi" to strangers. He shakes their hands. Some customers hold up necklaces and bracelets in "awe" that he made these intricate pieces of work.

ANGEL

I'm tired.

JESSE GARZA

You sold a lot of jewelry.

ANGEL

A lot of people came in.

JESSE GARZA

A lot of people took your picture.

ANGEL

Wow, I'm tired.

JESSE GARZA

You want to go home.

ANGEL

I really want to stay...

JESSE GARZA

...and meet everybody?

Angel's mom picks him and maneuvers him to his orange

walker.

Angel grips his walker and mother and son head out slowly. Eddie appears at the door way and quickly thanks the staff of The Room Clothing Store.

The staff consists of young women, who all laugh hysterically as Eddie tells them a joke. Martha and Angel wait impatiently by the door.

The short conversation turns to a longer one. Angel appears annoyed and frustrated.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

A question that also occurred to me was: Should Angel be doing all this? Should he be up late selling jewelry? Can this have an adverse reaction to his health? This clearly does not look like the right way to raise a disabled child.

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM, DAY

Angel's room is the darkest it has ever been. A little light pours in through his room window. Angel is hooked up to an Travenol IV Infusion Pump.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Angel's fear and what Eddie clearly didn't want has happened.

JESSE GARZA

Is this the first time he's been on the IV at home like this?

MARTHA

No. It's the second time. The other times he just goes to the hospital. Every time he needs to go to restroom, I have to disconnect it and take him to the restroom. The battery of the machine is not working well, so I have to keep it charged all the time.

Angel sits on a little chair staring out, blank.

INT. ANGEL'S ROOM - DAY

Angel is more awake, now. Jesse sits on the floor near the IV machine. Angel pulls out a wrinkled up paper.

JESSE GARZA

What's that?

Angel waves the paper around in the air.

ANGEL

It's a list of my friends' numbers.
My friend Cody and the rest are
right here.

Angel hands the paper to Jesse.

ANGEL

Cody and Deandra and Elizabeth...

JESSE GARZA

This is a party list, that's what
this is. It says "Party List" on
top.

ANGEL

Oh, I know. But I wanted to call my
friends for my birthday parties and
stuff. I can only invite two.

JESSE GARZA

Only two people.

ANGEL

Ahuh.

JESSE GARZA

Of this entire big list?

ANGEL

Ahuh.

JESSE GARZA

Have you called anybody from this
list-

ANGEL

Yes.

JESSE GARZA

-and they don't come?

ANGEL

Yeah, it has happened.

JESSE GARZA

How do you feel when they don't come?

ANGEL

Sort of disappointed, kind of the typical thing.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

I wondered if his friends were afraid of him because of his condition?

Angel pulls out a pair of Nintendo games. Both Angel and Jesse gaze with intensity at the television screen. Game music echoes from the television speakers.

ANGEL

Okay, now you're wondering how I just did that, aren't you?

JESSE GARZA

I don't even know which character I am, what are you talking about?

ANGEL

You're the one in the green!

JESSE GARZA

Oh, okay!

ANGEL

The green clothes.

INT. THE QUINTANILLA HALLWAY, CONTINUOUS.

Martha helps Angel walk to the restroom, she holds him up and allows the IV machine to trail behind. Jesse follows closely behind. The IV machine beeps.

JESSE GARZA

Why does it beep like that?

MARTHA

Because of the- I disconnected it.

The IV machine continues to beep.

JESSE GARZA

You got it?

Marta opens the restroom door and Angel slowly edges in. The small walk from room to restroom fatigues Angel even more.

INT. BRITNEY'S ROOM - DAY

A white door is shown with pastel Styrofoam puzzle-font letters that spell "BRITNEY" on the top. Britney sits on the floor painting on a white paper.

JESSE GARZA

I knew how Angel's condition affected Martha and Eddie, but how was Britney handling the situation? After all, she cried when the parents split up to take Angel to Mexico for treatments.

JESSE GARZA

So, what are you painting, Britney?

BRITNEY

Little gold fish.

JESSE GARZA

Who is it for?

BRITNEY

For my mom and dad.

She shifts from painting with pink to yellow. Her little hand outlines pink circle with yellow paint.

She decides to use a black paint. After she grabs the tube, she places the paint on a Styrofoam plate, where a rainbow of paints is already showing.

Jesse decides to paint with Britney.

JESSE GARZA
...and what did you do today?

BRITNEY
My mom and dad were making jewelry
and I was...uh...I wa...

JESSE GARZA
What were you doing?

BRITNEY
I was...

JESSE GARZA
Painting all day? You were painting
all day?

Britney nods her head in a agreement.

JESSE GARZA
You're an artist. Do you like to
paint?

BRITNEY
Yes.

JESSE GARZA
What do you want to be when you
grow up?

BRITNEY
An artist because we always do
paint. Hey, that's mine!

The quick high pitch in her voice resounds in the room.

JESSE GARZA
This is a cat. I was going to do a
dog, but I decided to do a cat.

BRITNEY
You took my paintbrush.

JESSE GARZA
This is your paintbrush?

BRITNEY

Yes.

JESSE GARZA

Look, there, it's a cat.

Jesse holds up a painting of a green cat.

BRITNEY

Oh, it's so cute.

JESSE GARZA

Let's draw like a little big smile.
I'll put your name on top. How do
you spell it?

BRITNEY

B-

JESSE GARZA

B-

BRITNEY

R-

JESSE GARZA

R-

BRITNEY

I-

JESSE GARZA

I-

BRITNEY

T-

JESSE GARZA

T- and then how else do you spell
your name?

Britney grabs Jesse's hand and helps him spell out the
letter "N."

JESSE GARZA

What's this one called? N?

BRITNEY

Yes.

JESSE GARZA
Okay, what else?

BRITNEY
E-

JESSE GARZA
E-

BRITNEY
And Y-

JESSE GARZA
Y- Good job. Look Britney...Britney
the Cat.

Jesse holds the painting up so Britney can see it.

JESSE GARZA
Do you like it?

BRITNEY
It looks funny.

JESSE GARZA
So, how'd you get your name to be
Britney then Shoney?

BRITNEY
I did it when I was born. They
named it to me.

JESSE GARZA
Britney Shoney.

ANGEL(O/S)
Actually, we named her Britney
Alejandra, but we call her Shoney
because she was so chunky.

BRITNEY
I was chunky because I was little
and now I added big cheeks because
I was born with big cheeks and I
always have to be born and when I
was born my dad was in my room and
he was painting with me and we had
a little aquarium.

JESSE GARZA

Oh, cool.

BRITNEY

But, the aquarium was lost and we found a big dog and a chihuahua and two chihuahuas for my grandma and a big one for my grandma. So my grandma has three and we have one. It's outside and we have a back room in the back and it was Angel's living room and I just went in there to get a plate like this and I always play with my brother and sometimes we little fight a little bit but we still love each other.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

Despite it all, she loves her brother- imperfections and all. But, I wonder if she feels isolated. Could all of Angel's attention make her feel left out? I didn't get that feeling. But, I wasn't fully sure.

INT. MARTA & EDDIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Angel sits near a computer in his parent's bedroom. He is aware the camera is rolling and chooses not to log of a Facebook game because that is what he's doing in the moment.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

When I was able to pull Angel aside for a bit, I wanted to ask him personal questions about his life, his future. How did he feel in society? At the Jewelry Sale, he looked exhausted and forced to sale jewelry. Was he?

ANGEL

This is sort of a private thing, I'm not sure if you would show that in the documentary...so...

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

...and I did show it. I felt Angel would enlighten others with his motivation. I knew he could answer questions that I and I'm sure the public would want to know, but would feel "judged" by asking.

JESSE GARZA

At the end of this documentary, where do you see yourself going?

ANGEL

Where I see myself going is...um...it's Thanksgiving Day and we're going to be thankful for everything. I feel like I might cry right now. Um. Um. We are a very emotional family.

JESSE GARZA

Mmhmm.

ANGEL

...and uh...

Angel's voice cracks- a sign of puberty. A clear moment of coming of age.

ANGEL

We would probably be together as a family. I sort of wish that you would film the other holidays. Let me tell you, I love the holidays because I'm with my family...and I'm going to be really thankful for it.

(beat)

Oh, my goodness I feel the notch to cry right now.

JESSE GARZA

Are you 100 percent happy?

ANGEL

Yes, I am, I'm really happy.

JESSE GARZA

What are you happy for?

ANGEL

For everything that God has given us. Especially for my little sister. She's everything that I could ask for. I can't even speak anymore. I can't even speak anymore.

CREW MEMBER

Wanna take a break?

ANGEL

I think I'm thankful for my family and friends. Those are most of the things I'm thankful for.

JESSE GARZA

How many pills do you take a day? Do you take any pills for Cerebral Palsy?

ANGEL

No, not at all.

(beat)

I took some pills to help my immune system.

JESSE GARZA

Like vitamins?

ANGEL

Yes, like the chewables. A doctor from Reynosa gave them to me. He said, "Take it for 10 days twice a day." I guess the 10 days are over.

JESSE GARZA

Have you ever had a seizure?

ANGEL

No, not at all. The only thing that I've had is fainting.

JESSE GARZA

So, you've been really fortunate.

ANGEL

Yes, I have.

JESSE GARZA

Now that you're in middle school...middle school is often the tough part-

ANGEL

Like the tough part like with the strict teachers-

JESSE GARZA

Bullying really comes in middle school, high school.

ANGEL

Actually, no. None of the kids that I know are bullying me. None of the kids in the whole school are bullying me, at all. None of the teachers are strict because I'm uh...because they're really nice and uh...they think I'm a really good student and I have really good grades.

JESSE GARZA

Great. Whenever you go out in public to sing, to perform or to do some speech seminars or to sell jewelry...do you ever feel that sometimes people are making fun of you because you can't walk?

ANGEL

No, not at all. They're actually very inspired. I've never thought of that. I've never thought of that before. None of the people that I've ever met...they've never made fun of me. They're sweet and inspiring...they're even inspiring to me...and I'm just very happy and fortunate that nothing ever happens to us...because I always pray to God.

JESSE GARZA

When you pray to God, what is it that you pray for?

ANGEL

For my families protection, for the

protection of the whole world, and my neighbors and family. Actually, I pray for you and Brenda because you're actually kind of my friends, now.

JESSE GARZA

Do you think that you're going to walk one day without a walker?

ANGEL

Yes, I am. I actually am. We were taking treatments and I stopped for a while because I was going to take the TAKS and the doctor said, well, you're going to have to deal with it because it was making me drowsy. Pues, tu teines que awantarte and I'm like phff, my mom was like phff ay que loco and we're going to have to stop. Suddenly, when I took the Math Re-test I got sick with the flu in the hospital and I took the TAKS in the hospital with my 5th grade teacher.

JESSE GARZA

Do you ever feel like sometimes you have to make your parents do things that they would not normally do? Like you have to make you parents sacrifice for you?

ANGEL

Not that much, I haven't actually noticed. But, when they're talking to somebody like you they say "it" and I overhear "it." I overhear everything that they say, even the little arguments that they have...and I'm like okay, okay are they saying something? I overhear them...sometimes it's good things and sometimes it's bad things. Sometimes, it's a really good quality to hear people with what they're saying so that they don't have to keep a secret from you.

JESSE GARZA

They do things because they care about you. So, they always have you at the best- at your best interest?

Angel grabs a mouse pad and folds it, then places it down properly.

ANGEL

I'm sorry I'm squishing this, I'm trying to get the emotion out of me.

(beat)

I remember the time you were interviewing my grandma...she was also crying. We are a very emotional family. I think that would get us into Extreme Home Makeover...the emotional part of this family. The happy parts and the sad parts...the bad things in the house like the cracks in this house. All the things we have tried to repair and we have done a good job in doing it, but sometimes we try to do it a little better. I kind of wish that Extreme Home Makeover would do it better. I have lost my focus, I have lost my train of thought.

(beat)

It's a very emotional thing, a very emotional everything. I feel like it's some sort of magical thing...with the blessings. My family is in good hands. Sometimes I make things as my lucky charms.

Angel picks up a rosary.

ANGEL

I feel very emotional, very happy. Well, I guess that's all I have to say.

JESSE GARZA

Okay, do you think you see yourself in the future getting married?

ANGEL

Well...

JESSE GARZA
Having children, having a family?

ANGEL
Well, I'm not sure about it. I'm
not sure about it, I'm not sure
about liking somebody right now.
I'm not sure if I'll get married.

EXT. ART HOUSE - EVENING

As the crowd circles around Angel's table, a musician is heard playing an acoustic version of "Stand By Me." Jesse kneels next to Angel.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)
Angel is at another Art Show
Jewelry Sale. I've learned that
half of his earnings go to Children
with Disabilities organizations and
the other half goes to his
treatments.

Clapping erupts after the song ends. Angel looks up to Eddie...

ANGEL
Papi, quiero ir al bano.

EDDIE
I'll take you in a minute...but
what did I tell you about public
restrooms?

ANGEL
I know, they're dirty.

EDDIE
Well, okay.

ANGEL
I know, they're dirty.

EDDIE
I know, we don't listen.

Angel makes an irritated face towards his dad.

EDDIE

I'm going to have to buy you a portable restroom so you can have it attached to your chair. It would be a good idea, right?

ANGEL

It would...

EDDIE

Gee...thanks. I'll put a diaper on him over there.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

With nobody to secure the table, I took Angel to the restroom.

INT. ART HOUSE - EVENING

Jesse rolls Angel through a white walled corridor and past painting after painting. A couple of art enthusiasts linger by.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

As I rolled Angel to the restroom, I wondered how he felt about me helping him. I personally, would've probably felt embarrassed, but he mentioned nothing, just a "thank you."

They both arrive at the destination...the restroom.

JESSE GARZA

Do you want me to help you...I'll push it open.

Jesse pushes the door open and wheels Angel inside the restroom.

EXT. ART HOUSE - NIGHT

Angel sits in his wheelchair, a crowd of people surround him as they all look on at a religious Art Show Play.

EDDIE

Once you get up there, the play is only going to take about 10 minutes. You're going to have to do a commercial and say, "Hi, I'm Angel Quintanilla and I'm selling beautiful jewelry over there and I'm here to sing for you three songs...The Climb, Rascal Flatts and I'm going to kill you with...Michael Jackson! Okay?"

ANGEL

The characters in the play pull a girl from side to side. In the play, a man in a white cloak saves a young girl by the dark forces represented by kids wearing black. A sense of Evil versus Good is quite visible in the show.

The crowd erupts in clapping as the show finishes. Angel practices his "commercial" as he is rolled to the microphone.

ANGEL

..."The Climb" by Miley Cyrus and Rascal Flatts' "God Bless the Broken Road"...

Angel is rolled off. Jesse holds Britney's hand as they move through the crowd of listeners.

JESSE GARZA

Eddie just told me that Angel is about to perform, so we're going to check it out.

ANGEL

Hi, my name is Angel and as you can see I have a little table of jewelry over there and right now I'm going to be singing three songs for you. I hope you enjoy them.

Angel prepares to sing.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jesse and Martha sit at the kitchen table. Martha is visibly exhausted.

JESSE GARZA

Angel sings, he has a jewelery line, he gets to meet all these famous people... He gets to do things that the average twelve year old wouldn't even dream of doing. Do you ever feel like too much too soon at such a young age? He's seeing so many things at such a young age that it may be too pushy for him?

MARTHA

No, we're just doing whatever...because we ask him, "Do you want to do this? What do you think? Is it good for you?" If he says "Yes," we'll go for it, if he says "No, I'm too tired, I don't want to do it." We just leave it at that.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

I realized that Angel was first and foremost, hoping to walk. In order to get close to that goal he had to pay for the treatments, so he sold custom made jewelry, sang at events, and got himself out there in the public eye. I figured that at first it appeared unethical to push your child to do things he didn't want to do, Angel wanted to be in the public eye.

JESSE GARZA

If Angel were to walk next year or in five years or ten years...if he were to walk without the need of a walker, without the need of a wheelchair, without any need to treatments...how would that change everything for you as a parent? If he were to walk, let's say next year? He's thirteen years old.

MARTHA

It would be a blessing if he were to walk on his own, without any assistance. But, it wouldn't change anything. I would still take care of him the same.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

The Quintanilla family treat Angel like a normal child without a disability, they care for him and help him.

JESSE GARZA

Would he be able to go out? How would he go out?

MARTHA

Yes that would be...we don't let, besides he doesn't like to be left...

JESSE GARZA

Alone?

FADE IN FAMILY MONTAGE

Britney and Angel hug it out on the couch.

Eddie stares at Martha...Martha looks away and back at Eddie, they share a smile.

JESSE GARZA(V/O)

What may appear as a dream is reality to the Quintanilla family. They represent a family that resides in Deep South Texas. Each of them has had to sacrifice something in their life. Eddie and Martha have had to question the strength of their marriage. Britney has had to grow up and mature at a faster rate to understand Angel's condition. Angel has accepted his condition and hopes to walk someday in the near future.

(beat)

But what about the ethics behind treating a child with this

disorder? The extent that one will go in order to care for a child like this. I wasn't allowing myself to see that what Angel did was what he wanted to do. Angel's parents were merely supporting him in all his endeavors. In all honesty, my perception of what disabled people can and cannot do might have contributed to me imagining his parents pushing him to do things he didn't want to do, like sell jewelry at art shows. Apparently, Angel enjoys being an active and a positive force to be reckoned with in the public eye more than his parents and Britney. The Quintanilla's choose to raise Angel like a normal child, one that is sociable and a positive force to be reckoned with. He sings and sells jewelry...and all by choice. His parents are supportive of this. I've learned that they have raised him and continue to raise him knowing he will be free of a wheelchair and walker someday.

FADE IN DREAM SEQUENCE

Angel walks in the family hallway. He lets go of the walker and places a step forward. Martha walks down the hallway and peers out...she sees Angel standing and walking.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Martha and Jesse sit down at the kitchen table. She looks down at her coffee cup. She looks up. Jesse stares at Martha as she comes to terms with her inner thoughts.

Martha hesitates and releases her hopes for Angel...

MARTHA

Sometimes I dream that he stands right there at the door. I'm like, "What are you doing?" "I'm walking." I'm in shock to see him standing there. I'm like, "Really?"

Did you walk all the way over here?" I'm impressed and shocked. He's like, "Yes, don't you see I don't have my walker?" And then I wake up.

FADE OUT

THE END

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jesse Garza received his Bachelor's degree in Business Marketing with a concentration in Promotion from The University of Texas- Pan American in December of 2007. He's studied at The University of Hawai'i- Manoa, where he constructed an undergraduate thesis paper for a Consumer Behavior course on *Sexual Innuendos in Advertising: How Much Does Sex Really Sell?*

His interest in creative writing started at the age of 16 when he met author Gary Soto. Jesse enjoys immersing himself in new activities to better his writing. Apart from reading books, acting, and doing stand up, he believes experiencing life and all that it has to offer is truly his inspiration to write. Jesse presently lives on the northern outskirts of Edinburg, Texas. His mailing address is located in the city and not the rancho:

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Though, he plans to write a children's book soon, Jesse is currently working on several projects because he is a busy bee: One is a comical and lighthearted memoir on his childhood life with his grandma; the other is based on many tragedies along the Mexican-American Border.

Angel Walking is his first documentary film.