LIFE IN THE SHADOWS: A LOOK AT HOMELESS YOUTH IN AMERICA

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Lisa Donette May
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The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Project of Lisa Donette May:

Life in the Shadows: A Look at Homeless Youth in America

Greg Durbin, Chair
School of Theatre, Television & Film

Michael Slowik
School of Theatre, Television & Film

Peter Cirino
School of Theatre, Television & Film

DEC. 28, 2015
Approval Date
DEDICATION

To my son, through your love anything seems possible. To my dad, without your support I would never have had the opportunity I so longed for. To Thomas Whit-Ellis, without your encouragement I would have never gotten very far.
ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT

*Life in the Shadows: A Look at Homeless Youth in America*

by

Lisa Donette May

Master of Arts in Television, Film, and New Media Production
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The number of homeless youth living on the streets of America is on the rise. It’s increasing at such a rate that, for the first time the 2015 San Diego County’s audit of the homeless will include the proportion of youth/minors to adults. The increase in number of homeless youth has been attributed to the increased number of dangerous home environments.

This paper is a discussion of the film, *Life in the Shadows*, a fictional narrative based on my research into the homeless and into the scenarios behind what causes these individuals to turn to the streets for “safety” and the conditions they face on the streets as a result.

One of the chief goals of the film is to convey a credible aspect of realism and drama as it encompasses an authentic scenario following the experience and hardships of a particular youth who has run to the streets in order to escape an unsafe home environment.

This paper will reflect the goals, research, and methods I had considered at the proposal stage of the project. Much of the paper will center on the research, which includes literature on Film Noir, Neorealism, current homeless statistics, and Eisenstein’s dialectic views on filmmaking. The research chapter will also reflect my exploration of a number of films on homeless youth, both narrative, including the film Sugar (2013), and documentary, including Streetwise (1984).

A third chapter will address specific tactics and strategies I anticipated employing in the production of the film at the proposal stage. These include Neorealist techniques intended to depict the reality of the street life, and Film Noir to suggest the protagonist’s point of view and state of mind.

A concluding chapter will evaluate the finished film with respect to my initial goals and objectives, as well as a reflection on my process of creative decision-making that led to some significant deviations from the original proposal.

A DVD copy of *First 72 Hours* is available in Love Library.
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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The National Runaway Switchboard estimates that on any given night there are approximately 1.3 million homeless youth living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers. Most of these youth say they became homeless in order to escape physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and other violent crimes happening in their homes. In case after case, the main cause of youth homelessness seems to be physical, sexual and emotional abuse from parents or guardians. While escaping one horrific environment they plunge right into another, homeless, higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health disabilities, substance abuse, and death (National Conference of State Legislatures). As a narrative intersected by documentary elements, this project/film will aim to encompass some of these real life scenarios by following the experience of a particular youth that has run to the streets of San Diego to escape an unsafe home environment.

My intention for this film project is to expose the tragic circumstances homeless youth face effectively in a unique and compelling way. My primary objective is to reflect the lives of these youth based on truths they collectively experience through an intense drama. I will explore utilizing a proper strategy blending techniques behind varieties of both narrative and documentary filmmaking styles in an attempt to bring about a heightened awareness on the subject. I am motivated to address the gripping reality homeless youth face through the art of filmmaking. Helping in any way possible would prove to be a meaningful and worthwhile experience.

Conceptually it would be interesting to explore my fascination of Film Noir techniques and blend them with elements of Neorealism. The reality of these homeless teens is the truest form of the type of “fatalism” found in Film Noir. Their self-preservation instincts to escape from one detrimental life, only leads these youth to another. The hopelessness faced is a theme across the lives of these individuals. The “reality” of
America’s homeless population is staggering. It’s even more horrific that 39% of America’s homeless are under the age of 18 (Regional Task Force on the Homeless).

This project will investigate the scenarios behind what causes these individuals to turn to the streets for “safety,” the conditions they face on the streets as a result and individual youths’ interpretation and feelings on the matter. The technique of the “Voice Over,” another commonly used Film Noir device, will be used to navigate an audience through “true to life” events. During potential interviews with those who live or have lived on the streets, I will attempt to gather an authentic way language has been used. The goal will be to get as close as possible to an active voice communicating “their” life experience. The perspective of the homeless youth should feel personal, engaging the audience as if they were being told an experience by way of an actual conversation.

Another element of Film Noir that will be utilized is stylized dark shadows and images against gritty street backgrounds. The aim is to capture the grit of the streets these kids are exposed to. The visuals will be created in such a way as to voice the subjects’ (homeless youth) point of view: lying on streets, huddled by walls, showing what they see through the darkness in which “they” see it. Subjective point of view shots will be delivered from the ground encompassing wet, filthy streets and garbage, and looking up into ominous darkness where danger lurks. As the story unfolds adversarial elements, such as drug abusers and sex offenders, will emerge from the darkness overpowering the subject visually before engaging physically.

Some of the films I will study in support of Film Noir styles will include *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Killers* (1946), and *The Naked City* (1948). *Double Indemnity*, directed and co-written by Billy Wilder, seems to be known for setting the standard of the styles Film Noir are known for. Some of these standards include fatalism, hopelessness, low-key lighting, and on-location shooting. German-born American film director Robert Siodmak made a series of Film Noirs in the 1940s including *The Killers*. Siodmak is well known for his stylization in lighting design that is found in classic Noir films. In the documentary *Visions of Light* (1992), which will also be studied, *The Killers* is used as a primary example of Film Noir cinematography. This study would not be complete without the film *The Naked City*, directed by Jules Dassin, as this Noir has been noted to take its visual style from Italian Neo Realism.
Given the Neo Realism use of non-professional actors, on-location shooting, and presenting the real life of the working class during its time, studying the way these elements were used can prove beneficial in telling the story of a homeless teen. This naturalistic movement in Italian literature and cinema that emerged in the 1940s will be studied in depth. Francisco De Robertis is one influential filmmaker to be researched who began expressing Neo Realism in his documentary film style prior to when the movement was socially and popularly recognized. Luchino Visconti’s work is also an interest to study as he is widely accepted being the first of the Neo Realism filmmakers with his film *Ossessione* in 1943. Vittorio De Sica was a dominant figure both as a filmmaker and actor during the movement’s time with honorary Oscars for *Sciuscia* (*Streetwise*) and *Bicycle Thieves*, two films known to be most influential in cinematic history. Finally, the study of film director Roberto Rossellini, who played a significant role in the Neorealist movement, is needed. Rossellini’s film, *Rome, Open City*, was one of the first films of its type globally recognized as it won the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1946.

There are a variety of elements at odds between Film Noir and Neo Realism, one being the “over the top” dramatization through the Femme Fatal character found in Film Noir. While an opposing female character may emerge within this project’s underdeveloped script, it most definitely would not work to have the attention of a Femme Fatal drive the story in a true to life experience of a homeless teen.

There is plausibility of integrating Neo Realism techniques with different elements of Film Noir to create a gripping dramatic yet reality effect. One common theme between the two types of film happens to be fatalism. Neo Realism came about after WWII depicting the reality of everyday life including poverty, injustice, and desperation. Film Noirs theme of fatalism centers around the main character not being able to escape doom. If the protagonist attempts to overcome adversarial forces it will only end in a hopeless fate.

Another intent is to involve individuals who are currently living on the streets of San Diego and capture them and their actual environment within the film. This is where the exploration upon interjecting documentary elements into the story will occur. This idea is underdeveloped but is intended not only to have “real people” in the homeless population appear in the film, as Neo Realism introduced, but possibly have a bit of interviews interjected somehow fitting within the storyline.
Below is some additional information and statistics collected regarding homeless youth in America that I would like to reflect and stress through the use of Noir and Realism:

- 1 in 7 young people between the ages of 10 to 18 will run away.
- About 75% of homeless teens use drugs or alcohol to self-medicate due to the abuse they endure.
- It is approximated 1.7 million homeless teens are in the US.
- 5,000 young people die every year on the street due to assault, illness, or suicide.
- 75% of teen runaways are female (between 6% and 22% of these girls are pregnant).
- 20% to 40% of homeless youth identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (GLBTQ).
- A US Department of Health and Human Services study found that 46% of homeless youth left their home because of physical abuse and 17% left because of sexual abuse (over 50% of young people in shelters and on the streets report that their parents told them to leave or knew they were leaving and didn’t care).
- The average age a teen becomes homeless is 14.7 years.
- An average of 20,000 kids are forced into prostitution by human trafficking networks every year. (“11 Facts About Homeless Teens”)

A classmate, in a project evaluation, recently suggested that I myself should live on the streets a few days to gain a little insight on the perspective of those who really do. This has been haunting my conscience. While I feel passionate in my endeavors to stand as a voice for those who cannot, I can’t even contemplate putting myself out there in such a manner. Hopefully this project can get as close as possible, without actually having to submit myself to those dangerous and unsettling elements, in order to portray accurately the type of story the individuals who truly live these horrific circumstances deserve. The end result should be filled with meaning on behalf of them.

The purpose of this film is driven by the desire to make films for those that are forgotten, disregarded, and abandoned. There is a need to help those who have no means to express their own voice and deliver their important messages. If an interesting “true to life” narrative is accompanied by documented footage of real youth on the streets, moving an audience can not only be achieved but even possibly motivate people to act. Too many people keep from looking outside their own world. It seems so many are so deeply engrossed in superficial things that surround us daily that even the “true stories” or “based on true
event” movies with heart felt messages don’t make the impact in such a way that it seems they used to.

If people can watch the movie Blackfish and be moved to take a stand freeing Orcas, as many have, than it should be possible to bring awareness to the hearts of our society concerning homeless youth. I’m not saying this project can move the public the way the film Blackfish and the like have. However, it would be an incredible experience to be a part of a film project that brings a compelling “story” and “real life” qualities together, aiming to convey a heightened awareness of the many homeless youth in America today.

A working script can be found in Appendix A, a timeline in Appendix B, and the budget in Appendix C. A DVD copy of First 72 Hours is available in Love Library.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS, AND GENRES

LITERATURE ON PROJECT TOPIC

Homeless youth in America is the primary theme of my project titled *Life in the Shadows*. Every year, more than 2 million youth in America will experience a period of homelessness. Almost 40% of America’s entire homeless population is under the age of 18. The main cause of youth homelessness is physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse from parents or guardians. Escaping these situations only leads to more devastation living on the streets. One example is the 20,000 American children forced into prostitution by human trafficking networks every year (Covenant House). Exploring documented experiences that come as a result of living on the streets is essential to this project’s research. In order to help understand the dynamics of these real life stories, coupling them with statistics becomes useful.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) puts out an *Annual Homeless Assessment Report* (AHAR) to Congress. The 2013 AHAR stated that on a particular night in January, the states with the largest numbers of unaccompanied homeless children and youth under 18 were California (2,144), Florida (1,542), and Texas (718). Together, California, Florida, and Texas had 58% of all unaccompanied children and youth under 18 in the country. HUD key findings were that on the same single night in January 2013, there were 610,042 people experiencing homelessness in the United States, including 394,698 people who were homeless in sheltered locations and 215,344 people who were living in unsheltered locations. Nearly one-quarter (23%) or 138,149 of all homeless people were children under the age of 18. Half of the youth accounted for were unsheltered at
the time. Another way to express the concern is that 1 out of 50 children, 1.5 million, in America will be homeless each year (“Facts and Figures: The Homeless”).

Walter Philips is the chief executive officer of San Diego Youth Services (SDYS). This nonprofit organization seeks to aid in the lives of runaway, abused and at-risk youth in San Diego County. Walter’s wife Cheri experienced a life on the streets at the age of 15. Philips explains:

Cheri is one of the more than 200,000 youth ages 12-17 who experience homelessness each year in California. It is estimated that 2,500 of them at any given time call the streets of San Diego their home. Furthermore, over 7,500 youth each year run away from home in San Diego County. Many, like Cheri, are escaping abuse, only to be further victimized on the streets by adults. (par. 2)

Another organization in San Diego affiliated with SDYS and designed to help homeless youth is called Storefront. Two of the youths receiving help through this organization, Grace and Josh, tell their story of experienced homelessness. Grace was abandoned by her parents and had nowhere to go but the streets. If you aren’t pregnant or using drugs most organizations will turn you away. When Storefront outreach workers found her living under a freeway overpass, Grace had succumbed to using drugs and selling her body for a meal or place to sleep. It took time to break down her barriers but eventually she built trust in the organized group’s help. With the aid of Storefront she worked her way to a part time job and finishing school. Grace said, “I believe if it wasn’t for SDYS, I would be dead” (SDYS n. pag.). She is now making a living on her own (SDYS n. pag.).

Josh was put out on the streets and tells of his daily ritual. He begins his day waking early to avoid police officers. He then has to decide how he will get food. His preferred method for making money on the streets is panhandling though it barely amounts to obtaining a meal. Josh usually resorts to dumpster diving and expressed the humiliation and loss of dignity. At the end of each day he searches for cardboard to sleep on in order to keep a barrier between him and the cold concrete. Josh explains that he rarely finds what he needs and without owning a blanket he usually sleeps with a chill through his bones (SDYS).

These stories and statistics help to put into perspective the life these young people live. It is, however, the beginning step to contemplate the depth and complexity this project will require. My goal for Life in the Shadows is to deliver a meaningful story, truthful yet
artistic. The next step will be interviews within the organizations that help these youth as well as those who have experienced homelessness during their formative years.

**LITERATURE ON PROJECT STYLE**

My goal for *Life in the Shadows* is to incorporate narrative and documentary styles through elements found in Film Noir and the Neorealism genre of film. I plan to begin with Noir characteristics including its commonly appreciated stylized lighting. The opening montage scene will reflect the female protagonist’s point of view and state of mind. A fatalistic theme will ensue throughout the film. The following scene will capture her experience living on the streets through neorealism using techniques such as the long shot and long takes approach. I will continue to juxtapose these two styles and forms throughout the film expressing the protagonist’s state of mind with noir and the state of her reality with neorealism.

Neorealism emerged in Italian cinema in response to the aftermath of WWII. It had a particular visual style and primarily focused on the working class and poor. Wikipedia states, “Italian Neorealist films mostly contend with the difficult economic and moral conditions of Italy post-World War II, representing changes in the Italian psyche and conditions of everyday life, including poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation” (“Neorealism” n. pag.). This is reminiscent of similar themes including anxiety, depression, and hopelessness found post WWII in the American filmmaking Noir. These types of psychological struggles found in both genres are similar connections that will make it plausible to integrate Neorealism and Film Noir style within my protagonist’s scenario.

After WWII there was a common desire to express the hardships and conditions of the average man. The focus in the majority of films became about what was normal, true to life, rather than the exceptional. Marsha Kinder and Beverle Houston with the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the State University of New York confirmed Neorealism focus in a 1980 essay stating, “Their task was to draw significant implications out of ordinary events that usually pass unnoticed. By focusing on the normal, neorealism films frequently celebrate the values of the common man who is exploited by corrupt institutions” (207).

I would like to adapt the reasoning behind the neorealist genre to fit within my film. The topic of homeless teens needs more attention. Stories about homeless youth need moral
commentaries. I feel adding elements of watching what one goes through, in real time, as they live daily on the streets will be a complementary element to Film Noir elements I will use to express the state of mind. Unlike the period during the post WWII movement the topic of homeless youth doesn’t necessarily affect the common man. However, with the statistics previously provided it can be argued that homelessness for youth is way too common and in dire need of more attention.

Through different opinions, I’ve come to understand the distinctive style of Neorealism is basically the aesthetic quality of “realism” and could be said to characterize the truth in the world around us. It was to portray the documentary look of a real setting. Major attributes were non-professional actors, on location shooting, natural lighting, long shots and the avoidance of complex editing. Author Mark Shiel expressed, “The perception of neorealism as visual truth is closely identified with the influential critical position of Andre Bazin who, more than any other non-Italian, argued in favor of neorealism as a cinematic agenda, thinking of it as a cinema of ‘fact’ and ‘reconstituted reportage’” (2). In Life in the Shadows I will utilize non-professional actors during the street scenes while shooting long takes in natural lighting to reconstruct, as close as I can, the reality of homeless life on the streets.

Another aspect to Neorealism is that it rarely depicts a happy ending (Cardullo 64). If it were to end on a positive, the message would minimize the call to society’s attention. Like Neorealism and Film Noir, Life in the Shadows will end on a fatalistic note. Having been immersed in the cruelty of the life the streets have offered her, the protagonist will walk away into the darkness. She will conclude with a dejected voice over as she expresses facing the remainder of her days surviving without a home. There will be no resolution only more obstacles to overcome. I’ll attempt to use this hopeless ending as the film’s final call to awareness the way Neorealism did but with the Noir elements added.

Neorealism is typically unconcerned with the psychological state of the individual (Lawson 146-53). With the exception of one of the latest films during its period, Umberto D (1952), the films were usually confined to external conditions. Umberto D delves into the loneliness of an elderly man and his difficulty accepting his later years in life. It is, however, an exemplary depiction of one man’s experience, which allows us to feel the duration of time. The long takes give you a sense of walking through reality with him. This will be a
similar intent for Life in the Shadows, as the audience will participate durations of real time through extended takes capturing life on the streets. Wide angles will be utilized in following the protagonist as she searches the streets for food, a hand out, or a “decent” place to stay for the night.

There is a vast amount of essays by scholars across the country as well as interviews of famous artists involved in the Neorealism movement. I’ve found there to be differences of opinion on just how realistic “Neorealism” should be in order to be classified as such. I would like to point out the differences of opinion the definition of Neorealism takes on as well as the angle I will be using to approach the use of the genres elements in my film.

Cesare Zavattini, who wrote films such as Shoeshine (1946) and Bicycle Thieves (1948) for Italian Neorealist director Vittorio De Sica, made his stand in a manifesto. He explains that a plot is a violation of true Neorealism, “the camera has a ‘hunger for reality,’ that the invention of plots to make reality palatable or spectacular is a flight from the richness of real life” (43). It would seem that Neorealism was never taken as far as to be exempt from plot, in fact the opposite occurred as it declined in popularity. More films within the genre began to emphasize narrative plots even including psychological elements as in Umberto D. In contrast to Zavattini’s opinion, Rosellini and De Sica had a fairly loose, if not all together different, interpretation. Rosellini remarked that realism was, “Simply the Artistic form of the truth” (Bondanella 31) and De Sica stated that his work reflected, “Reality transposed into the realm of Poetry” (Bondanella 31). Along with other directors they strove “less to depict a ‘factual’ social reality than to create a language that would enable them to heal poetically the pressing problems of their times” (Bondanella 31). Within the world of my protagonist living on the streets, I plan to utilize aspects of neorealism more closely to the interpretations of Rosellini and De Sica. My goal for Life in the Shadows is to juxtapose neorealism elements on the streets with the Noir elements used during moments of conflict. I believe this is a form of reality “transposed” in a unique individual artistic manner.

Mise-en-scène was a term originally used for theatre with the literal meaning, to place on the stage. When used for film, the term could be described as the composition of visual contents within a single shot. Well known French critic and film theorist, Andre Bazin, describes the mise-en-scène aesthetic as emphasizing choreographed movement within the scene rather than through editing (qtd. in Pramaggiore and Wallis). For others such as
American film critic, Andrew Sarris, it takes on mystical meanings related to the emotional tone of the film (Pramaggiore and Wallis). The mise-en-scène in Noir is described as anti-traditional cinematography. Place and Peterson, on visual motifs of Noir, state “Right and wrong become relative, subject to the same distortions and disruptions created in the lighting and camera work. Moral values, like identities that pass in and out of shadow, are constantly shifting and must be redefined at every turn” (69). I intend to reflect this visual style using Black and White photography and high contrasting shadows. The effect will compliment the unsettling state of mind, moral unrest, and destitution within my protagonist’s character. Unbalanced framing within these scenes will add to the reflections projected within the narration. I will have these disturbing moving shots directly tie to emotions. Place and Peterson describe the effect I’m aiming for, “More common are bizarre, off angle compositions of figures placed irregularly in the frame, which create a world that is never stable or safe, that is always threatening to change drastically and unexpectedly” (69). A constant threat will follow my protagonist. Harsh lighting creating imbalance and eerie compositions will accompany the mise-en-scène during the threatening scenes in *Life in the Shadows*.

If a genre takes on popularity it’s likely a reflection corresponding to an interest or need for expression within a society. I’d like to make note of the significance Film Noir had in its place and time. Film critic Steve Neale brings to light the social, political, and ideological conditions of the particular time Film Noirs were being made in Hollywood. Neale explains that during Noir’s time a portion of Hollywood filmmaker’s were departing from convention and being “critical of white society in general” (156). He expressed they shared an “anti establishment” ethos both with other contemporary films and “with broader movements, trends and currents of opinion in the US itself” (156). It was the stream of American doubt that came from WWII and fear of nuclear war that reflected pessimism about the future that became common found themes of Film Noir. Neale explains that amongst Americans there was “fear, alienation and both physical and psychological dislocation during post war years” (156). This is evident in that the Noir films displayed pessimism, corruption, fatality and despair. These are all themes inclusive to *Life in the Shadows*, involving homeless youth. The type of consciousness the public faced post WWII can be compared with those youth driven to the streets from an abusive and corrupt family
life. American people count on the government for safety similar to the way youth count on their parents. Society found a voice through Noir but these particular youth today don’t possess such a mass means of expression. Much like post WWII America feared impending doom; in my film, I plan to express the consciousness of fear and anxiety the protagonist faces due to the harsh realities of life on the street.

One of the elements worthy of examination is that of the Noirs leading character. Because of the cynical mood during Noirs time, people were drawn further into the popularity of the “Hard Boiled” crime novel protagonist. The hard-edged cynical character often played as a private eye ended up taking center stage in many Film Noirs. Though these characters were completely flawed and seduced into dark elements of their world, Stuart Kaminsky explains in his book, “The hero’s off beat and cynical behavior, however, displayed a romantic heroism, streak of valor, stemming from the constant belief of American pop culture that a good man can somehow hold the world together, right the wrong, and reaffirm existence” (85). In order to play on this popular feeling hidden amidst the cynicism, my protagonist will encompass a tough exterior possessing the behaviors necessary to survive yet she will display one moment of heroism. We might think she’s completely engulfed in the relatively new and horrific life on the street when she shows a moment of weakness, even concern for someone younger than herself. My goal is to get the audience to sympathize with her once again as a reminder, this girl came from uncontrollable circumstances that led to even worse yet she still holds a slight hope and sense of heroism to help another in need. Essentially there will be no character change just a moment of hope. On the topic of Noir character style, Kiminsky remarks on the film *The Killers*, “There is no essential difference between the darkness of the outside and that of the inside” (88). Like Noir my character will carry the weight of her reality within the spirit of her being.

Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein taught that there is always conflict in every art form. He explained, “It is art’s task to make manifest the contradictions of Being” (46). My intention for this film is to clash the opposing forms of Neorealist and Film Noir. Ideally juxtaposing unique aspects of each genre will allow the viewer to experience the reality that homeless youth face and the mindset that goes along with it. Eisenstein’s theory supports this concept; he wrote, “I also regard the inception of new concepts and viewpoints in the conflict between customary conception and particular representation as
dynamic—as a dynamization of the inertia of perception-as a dynamization of the ‘traditional view’ into a new one” (47), I aim to reflect Eisenstein’s theory of conflict and collision within the elements of *Life in the Shadows* in order to produce a new form of dynamic expression.

**Films and Genres That Relate Thematically**

*Streetwise* (1984), directed by Martin Bell, is a documentary portraying the lives of nine teenagers living on the streets of downtown Seattle, Washington. The teenagers have either run away or have been forced to leave their homes. The film primarily focuses on Erin Blackwell who is a mere 14 years old. She goes by the name of Tiny and is a child prostitute who works the streets. The film forces the gripping reality of children who need to dumpster dive, panhandle and prostitute themselves in order to survive. The reality is so shocking you might find yourself believing you are watching fictional characters. The street setting brings to light the reality of homeless youth blending into it like a backdrop. Unaware or unwilling to see the needs of these kids, people just walk past them, taking no concern. This group of teenagers documented have adapted to their surroundings so much so they seem just like a fixture amongst the streets.

*Life in the Shadows* relies more heavily on the narrative with documented elements expected to interject. The film *Streetwise* is a good study of the reality needed to portray real life visuals on gritty streets for the main character to interact with. It has also helped to narrow down the plausibility of where neorealism and documentary elements can be interjected and interwoven in the story. It would be ideal to have real elements of homeless activity interjected within the Neorealism scenes on the streets. The director Martin Bell spent time interviewing the kids in *Streetwise* and built up enough trust for them to agree filming. I have to expect the likelihood of actually having the ability to build this kind of trust. Permission to follow an individual more than a remote distance may not be possible. I will, however, have conducted extensive interviews through various local organizations helping homeless youth in order to gain a better understanding on what the reality is like for these kids today.

*Sugar* (2013) was co-written with Tony Aloupis and directed by Rotimi Rainwater. This narrative film is roughly based on experience from Rotimi who lived on the
streets for a period of time in his youth. The story is centered on a 20-year-old female named Sugar. Sugar, played by Shenae Grimes, suffers from PTSD, running from the trauma of losing her entire family in a fatal car accident. She makes her way to Venice Beach, California and there she survives as the only female in a group of boys.

We get to see the daily lives and the problems the collective “street family” deals with. While there is the addressing of addiction, panhandling and keeping a minor from being taken from the group back into the abusive situation he came from, I didn’t find the film depicting homelessness as I expected. Street living in Sugar is portrayed more lively than I can imagine if only from the homeless youth statistics found. Without addressing the excessive amount of prostituting for survival, the pain from lack of food and discomfort of adequate shelter, it felt as if it were but lightly treading on reality. There are two times when they buy big pizzas for the group; they acted as though it was a reoccurring thing. I thought for sure when a kid from another group went to dive into it he would get stopped. Sugar smiles and her boyfriend then helps the guy take a slice. If they were trying to say the homeless help the homeless, it didn’t work. It looked more like a frat party on the streets. Despite the scenario it felt like friends dodged summer camp so that they could bum it at the beach for a while. I could possibly see if they were dancing about, singing, and having fun while riding skateboards and it was then juxtaposed with extreme circumstances that occur on the streets in real life, it could have worked much better. The heaviest obstacle they encountered was keeping the under-age companion, Ronnie (Austin Williams), from being taken back into foster care. All in all it lacked depth.

In my project I plan to focus mainly through my female character’s point of view. Unlike Sugar, I’ll stress more on what is going through her mind. We got a few flashbacks where Sugar woke up abruptly but not much more than avoiding questions about them. I will have flashbacks in my project pertaining to the reason my character feels forced to leave home; however, the anxiety of them will stretch to encounters and experiences on the streets. Sugar’s circumstances leading her to the streets are far less common than the millions of kids that are running to the streets due to abusive homes. This was more about a young woman dealing with post-traumatic stress and less of a depiction of suffering on the streets. All the while she had a loving uncle and family back home that wanted desperately to find and take
care of her. My story will reflect one of the most common reasons kids end up on the streets, that it’s unsafe at home.

Another movie I studied, Conversations With God (2006), is about a man who has it all then loses everything and becomes homeless. This story is based on true events and has a strong moral commentary. This film has a very positive outcome but what strikes me is the difference in depth of the protagonist character. This film offers a gripping portrayal of the transition a man experiences while entering into the world of the homeless. I’ve never been moved by a depiction of homelessness the way this film touched my life. It felt real, one devastating act after another on the street and yet it felt real. This movie delves deep into the psyche as we watch this man go from desperation to destitution. I want to develop my character in such a manor that we find ourselves caught up in wanting what the character wants, the half eaten sandwich, the peace of cardboard to lay on for the night, the safety and trust from a group to stick by. These are all elements that came from Conversations With God.

**Films and Genres That Relate Stylistically**

Two documentary films related to project style that I find valuable contributions to my project are Visions of Light (1992), written and directed by Arnold Glassman with co-directors, famous film critic, Todd McCarthy and Stuart Samuels, and Light and Shadow (2013), directed by Steve Weiss.

**Visions of Light (1992)**

This film documents a discussion on the art of cinematography by a cast of almost 30 cinematographers including Caleb Dechenel, Vittorio Storaro, Michael Chapman, and Gordon Willis. The film explores lighting techniques including influential styles of the 30s and the beginnings of Film Noir. Gordon Willis’s experience and work on The Godfather (1972) is an excellent study pertaining to artistic insight with lighting concepts. Gordon made an art out of underexposure. He broke from the traditional boundaries of his time with unconventional shadows and a brassy color look to The Godfather. He purposefully designs light in a way to tell story. He received complaints during production that one could not see Marlon Brando’s eyes in the film. Gordon explains that it is deliberate not to see his eyes so
you “saw this mysterious human being thinking about something or about to do something but you really didn’t know what the hell was going on” (Visions of Light). Gordon had conviction for the spirit of his work stating, “I never did it in that spirit, I simply did it because I liked it” (Visions of Light). He goes further to explain the importance of exploration with your “gut” and to keep from considering what is “expected” in designing lighting compositions. He expresses that many elements are brought together and that “It’s not one thing that you do from a visual point of view that makes anything work” (Visions of Light). Gordon’s reflection and opinion on lighting based on mood and character intentions is grand information needed to express a dramatic elements of the story as well as to be effective in capturing an audience. Life in the Shadows will contain sinister characters. These characters will embody an expression of darkness with the way I will consider placing hard shadows across them and within the scene. Taking special note of these lighting elements, such as darkening facial features for effect, is essential to the awareness and state of my protagonists mind.

Light and Shadow (2013)

Steve Weiss’s Light and Shadow is a short 20-minute documentary but impactful collection of the greatest cinematographers in the world. The legendary cinematographers interviewed share their perspectives on their craft and about working with light and shadow. They provide individual insight on light and its form of storytelling and expression in the film. Bob Primes comments on the role of light for the cinematographer, “You are moving emotions. You’re telling a story. You’re creating a mood. You’re building character. You’re are touching a human being without the person realizing your touching them” (Light and Shadow). Michael Negrin explains that as a cinematographer himself, they are “an interpreter who uses light and composition to affect an audience’s perception of what’s going on in that story” (Light and Shadow). Again, as in Visions of Light, the opinion to use your intuition and individuality is stressed. Rodney Charters explains “that you respond to the Gut level of what you’re seeing in terms of how light falls and what moves you and how you cut light and add light and take light away” (Light and Shadow). Rodney continues expressing the importance of utilizing individuality “to direct the eye in the way the story would want it to” (Light and Shadow). It’s encouraging to hear talented, experienced cinematographers state
this valuable point of individuality while heading into filming expression of a reality, such as through the eyes of a homeless teen. Gordon Willis appears in this documentary, as well as *Visions of Light* in 1992, discussing the same topic years later. He says you can’t really explain it and he doesn’t care what anyone else did, he’ll do what he has to do to tell a story (*Light and Shadow*). These artists all stand on individuality when working their craft. They collectively express that life is what teaches you about story telling. Filmmakers are encouraged to watch their surroundings, get their heads out of technology, to look at the world around them in order to feel and be unique. Janusz Kaminski ties up the common topic amongst the legendary collection of cinematographers nicely saying, “We need architecture, we need painting, we need music, we need philosophy. Only when you put all this art together you can create cinematography” (*Light and Shadow*). The experimentation to combine Narrative and Documentary styles is my artistic expression for a stylized film with realistic elements.

Kaminski’s comment in this film sums up the purpose and interest for integrating Film Noir and Neorealism elements in *Life in the Shadows*. I believe Film Noir and Neorealism to have complementary moods stemming from their history that are useful in relaying a destitute life such as living on the streets. My end goal is to combine montage expressionism with long shots of realism in order to give the audience the experience of what happens within the mind of one living in the horrific conditions on the streets today.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL CREATIVE AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH

I think it’s very difficult to say whether or not I’m approaching the topic of “the homeless youth” experience in a realistic manner. My opinion is that narrative story telling and Neorealism elements can complement one another to create a film audience experience that allows them to walk through the streets as the homeless do and then see visually how it’s affecting the psyche of one young individual. My plan to shoot in black and white may be considered a risk but I feel it is a proper projection of the daily world living on the streets. Color lends itself to life, beauty and hope. I can’t imagine much beauty can exist in a life of such difficult circumstances. It’s that world without color that we choose not to look at, it’s that story world’s story I want to tell.

MISE EN SCÈNE

Setting

The opening sequence will hold the only color in the film, a dusty sepia hue that will fade into full black and white at the end of the scene and continue for the remainder of the film. This is the reflection of my protagonist’s mind as she goes from the last in her world of hopes to the pending doom on the streets. As she takes the first steps to life on the street, she begins her own voice over that will give us more insight to her psyche as we go along. She will have flashbacks from the day she left home revealing little by little the actual incident leading up to when she left. The remainder of the film will be her life as a result of leaving. Scenes will take place on the city streets where she’ll interact with elements to survive. This will give the viewer a look into the reality of homelessness. In a dark filthy alley she will find refuge and concealment when she’s alone. This will allow the viewer moments to sense her state of mind and isolation from within her destitute surroundings. At a freeway underpass
we will get a look and feel of a place some homeless youth take refuge. This location will be where homeless youth have been known to gather in real life. She, along with the audience, will learn about how these youth came to be where she, as the protagonist, is now.

**Lighting**

I will continue to play with depth and contrast in the world of black and white. The camera focus will be on gritty unclean elements in choosing streets for the film and the angles in which to shoot them so as to expose those very elements. The street should be typical of one frequented by homeless teens in reality. I aim to discover where these locations are through my interviews. I’ll be using Noir lighting elements during moments of conflict for my protagonist. Harsh light will cut across her face as an opposing force descends upon her in complete darkness. I will be using Neorealism elements including real homeless on the streets and for the underpass. These two scenes will use natural lighting whatever that day may hold.

**Hair, Makeup, and Wardrobe**

The protagonist will leave the opening scene with a hooded sweatshirt on and promptly pull the hood over her head. The hood will represent covering up her reality, which she doesn’t want society to see as well as a society that doesn’t want to acknowledge her situation. As the following scenes progress she becomes less put together and more disheveled and dirty. She will make reference to her hands, as if they were not her own, a few times in the dark lit moments she faces alone. She’s unfamiliar with being filthy and her hands are the only reflection of her physical state she can see. The other characters will be in accord to the homeless life, messy clothes, unclean, torn socks and shoes. The kids that truly live on the streets that offer their stories will come as they are.

**Performance Style**

My main concern is to find an actress that is willing to do semi-method acting. With a situation such as homeless being so unidentifiable there will be difficulty depicting the emotion within the situation. I feel there will be a need for the actress to call upon her affected memory in order to express raw emotion. I’d like to find someone open to sitting in on interviews and participating in visual storyboarding on the streets. I believe this would be
helpful exposure so as to be prepared for the intense performance needed. The role of the protagonist will be complex as she reflects the Noir hero. She is cynical and dry but in one moment she will show a bit of heroism that will bring us back to identifying with her. She must carry the story through the tone of her voice over holding no hope and yet bring to the forefront this one moment encompassing it. She will find herself engaging to protect a younger female exposed to the same sexual abuse as she has on the streets. She must convey the believability that if she had been born in the right circumstances she could be productive and stand for humanitarianism.

**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

The cinematography will take note from two distinctly different genres, Noir and Neorealism. I will need a controlled environment for the flashback/abusive scene as well as the alley/night. These two scenes will utilize high-contrast lighting to relay the state of the protagonist’s mind. The camera will be hand held during the abuse sequence with rough jagged pans and jarring motions as the protagonist’s point of view is captured during a struggle. The camera will actually be the protagonist’s point of view the entire time. The alley scene will encompass similar framing at first and then progress to wider shots. This is an attempt to provide a working transition to the following “street” scene where we will be keeping truer to the form of neorealism with long static takes capturing the action.

**EDITING**

I will be using montage editing for the psychological scenes and a more linear approach to the “street” and “underpass” scenes. The montage during the abuse/fighting flashback scene will incorporate quick cutting of its rough movement footage. I will abandon continuity editing here. This will add to the disorientation hopefully making the audience feel uneasy. The idea is to give the audience the feeling as though they were being tossed about themselves. The linear approach to the realistic scenes will basically hold the view of the audience as if they were there on the street looking around at the people and what they are doing. I plan to take the longest shots possible with the fewest edits here. I believe an audience will be able to relate to the outside world with this more realistic approach. The
goal in combining the different types of editing is to offer the audience a look into the mind of the protagonist and consider how she is a part of the real world around us.

**Sound Design**

I plan to incorporate different sounds between the psychologically driven scenes and the juxtaposed “street” scenes. The opening scene will have distorted sounds of crashing objects, hitting body parts, and bumping into walls. These noises will follow accompany the protagonist’s psyche whenever she encounters dangerous situations. When she proceeds to go into flashbacks we will hear the noise in her head and she will react as if it’s painful. On the streets I will only record diegetic sounds and record voice in the studio later. This will provide the truest form of life on the street audio. A musical score will be used sparingly through the opening and closing scenes and the dangerous encounters in order to build intensity.

**Resolution of the Subproblems**

I believe my stylized approach of combining narrative story format and documentary style will work to suit this project. The objective is to create something unique but meaningful. Interjecting moments of realism during the time my character resides on the streets will project to the audience a true to life situation. Further, bringing together youth that are actually on the streets and having them describe in their own words the experience will be the final element that will make all the stylized flashback trauma of my protagonist work.
CHAPTER 4

ASSESSMENT

First 72 Hours underwent significant changes since it was originally proposed with the working title, Life in the Shadows. Before the production that resulted in the finished film, there had been a first failed attempt at filming an earlier version of the script. While this first attempt was ultimately unsuccessful, assessing it and analyzing its weaknesses led to a significantly stronger and more dramatic finished film. While the final version retained the proposed balance of realism and noir, noir assumed a stronger valence in the telling of a homeless youth story than anticipated at the proposal stage.

One of the most significant mistakes was jumping the gun into production. Most significantly, in the first production, we had locked in shooting dates before we had adequate crew commitment. With only a part-time Producer and Director of Photography, the pre-production process suffered greatly. Insisting on the scheduled dates for fear of losing the Producer and Director of Photography left nearly all the myriad tasks and responsibilities in hands of the DP and director. The crew was simply too skeletal, and proved completely inadequate. I found myself, as director, splintered among multiple jobs—serving as Assistant Director, Production Designer, Makeup and Hair artist, Wardrobe Department, Script Supervisor, and “clapper girl.” Collectively these jobs distracted me dramatically from my principal role as director, dramatically diminishing my focus and effectiveness in that task.

Assessing the first cut of the film foregrounded in bold terms what was needed, leading me to the decision to write a new draft of the script and start the production over from scratch. The sobering experience of the first production prompted me to recruit a dependable and dedicated crew. Collectively we studied the first cut, analyzed its weaknesses, and formulated a plan, beginning with the onerous preproduction work. Originally, we had chosen a Canon 70D for the first production with the idea that it would support the realistic look on the streets that I had imagined at the proposal stage. But this
camera lacked the low-light sensitivity to capture the night shots, resulting in a “muddy” image lacking the contrast we associate with night photography. Moreover, the Canon 70D lacked the quality to produce the crisp contrast and rich blacks needed for the intense film noir inspired flashback scenes. For our second production we chose the Sony A-7S for our night scenes. This is an SLR 4K camera known for its remarkable low light sensitivity. We chose the Sony F3 for the intense flashback scenes because its 10-bit depth and S-log output offered a more dramatic image with greater dynamic range and latitude in color grading. As stated, these choices magnified the dramatic or “cinematic” dimensions of the film that might be associated with film noir, and somewhat lessened the originally planned strategies that might be associated with Neo realism or documentary work. Significantly, these two opposing visual styles are still in play in the film, just not in the same balance as projected at the proposal stage.

There were other reasons to consider using less of the realism originally planned. Our first production exposed us to a variety of opinions regarding the ethics behind using real homeless people in the film. For example, there was a group of homeless people who at first welcomed our request to let our actor walk past them, but then later became angry. The locations were chosen because they were actual locales where the homeless frequented. I completely abandoned this idea during the second production. While we did meet some extremely supportive homeless people who were happy we were telling a homeless youth story, we also ran into those who clearly preferred that we leave them alone. Some of the homeless people we encountered on the street were offended that we were filming our actress, whom they believed to be a real homeless youth. It became clear that to continue with our strategy of “neo-realistic authenticity,” we would have to negotiate with some shady characters, and in my judgment, it was too risky to expose the crew and the cast to their unpredictable reactions. Thus my idea of including real homeless people in the film failed.

For the second production we used actors to play all the roles of the homeless. We also based our choice of locations on what would work for a particular look rather than where actual homeless resided or hung out. These changes resulted in not only a safer production, but for me, an aesthetically more successful one as well.

After abandoning the somewhat uncompromising rigor of realism originally intended for the film, the primary focus became presenting the realities of what happens to a homeless
female youth during the first 72 hours she is on the streets. In adhering to this, we were able to maintain a different but equally important dimension of realism. This change in direction prompted the title change as well. What once was Life in the Shadows, now became First 72 Hours. I believe that all the artistic and stylistic choices we made were driven by the overarching goal of making our story of the experiences homeless youth face compelling as a narrative. We went off track from the first script to make the film darker. We changed many of the day scenes to night scenes for dramatic effect, and for the opportunities such scenes offer for noir lighting. While we substituted color for the traditional black and white photography associated with the classic noir style, we retained the dark night settings, also associated with noir, to increase the feeling of the dangers that lurked in the character’s life.

Our first failed production also influenced the way we auditioned and cast talent. We initially rushed putting a casting call together, resulting in very few possible candidates. Because of time constraints, we failed to find one of our key players, Bobby. We had to use an actor whom we never auditioned nor even met. Though the actor was talented, he was miscast for the part. This made our climactic scene flaccid. For the second production, I was able to tap the resources my crew had already established with good actors. I set up a casting call through many SDSU sources and with a website called Backstage. As a result, we were able to choose from a number of actors who possessed the skill and talent and aspect we were seeking.

The strong crew and talent I was able to assemble on my second attempt resulted in not only a far better film, but a good experience. Each of the positions I had taken on myself in the previous production were now filled by competent and dependable people, which removed an enormous burden from me. There was little if any confusion as to what needed to take place and when. The DP was on point, the AD did a marvelous job at moving us along and the gaffers and grips worked at a professional level. We even had Audio techs each day of shooting. I was grateful for the opportunity actually to direct and work with the actors without distraction.

The initially planned three-day shoot actually required four and one-half days to complete. We had to go back and shoot the “walking the streets” scenes that we just couldn’t fit in. One huge disappointment the loss of a location we chose. The important “Homeless Camp” scene was located at Mission Bay Park. The park had gates at the front entrance that
closed at 10:00 p.m. While we were on point as soon as night fell, we ended up needing about an hour and a half more time to complete our scenes. The most critical “Rape” scene was compromised as we failed to get adequate coverage. After frantically exiting the park before we thought we would be locked in, we realized that sometime after 10:00 the gates were still open. We would have had enough time to get those important shots had we known. We also missed out on a portion of the script involving Ami and Macy. We went back with a skeleton crew to get this footage, but it just didn’t stack up to what we had earlier with the full crew and lighting capabilities that offered. During the editing process we decided to cut this portion.

The first failed production gave me better direction and perspective going into the second. I’ve learned many things including the importance of halting a project if all the essential elements are not in order. It was a great learning experience to see the effects and limitations an extreme skeleton crew can have on a project. This gave me profound respect and understanding of the importance of each individual role in a film production. I’ve also come to learn how bold, idealistic, and unrealistic I was about real homeless youth participating in the film. On the other hand, discovering that these homeless youth generally are not comfortable telling their own stories or being seen, I’m happy to have tried my best to tell their stories myself in as authentic a manner as I could muster.

Because the final product changed dramatically from the proposal, I am surprised to be satisfied with the results. The truth behind what happens to female homeless youth and why they end up on the streets is the core reason I pursued this project. It is most important to me that we were able to deliver what I believe are truths about these situations and in a compelling way.
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APPENDIX A

SHOOTING SCRIPT FOR FIRST 72 HOURS

First 72 Hours
By
Lisa Donette May
EXT. HOMELESS CAMP-MORNING

A camp site on a beach is a refuge site to a group of homeless teens. Articles of clothing, paper, and empty bottles drape the landscape. A few homeless teens are getting ready to leave. A girl lies unconscious in the distance.

CUT TO:

72 HOURS EARLIER

EXT. AMI’S STREET-DAY

AMI, a mature looking 17-year-old, with a stern look in her eye, wears a hoody and backpack over her shoulder. She is walking down the streets of her neighborhood in San Diego.

AMI V.O.
My name is Ami.

INT. AMI’S BEDROOM-DAY

AMI, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, sits on her bedroom floor against her bed. She tugs at her hair in frustration then scrambles to her feet.

AMI V.O. (CONT)
I’m a normal teenager

EXT. AMI’S STREETS-DAY

AMI continues to walk along the streets. Hands in her hoody pockets.

AMI V.O. (CONT)
With a not so normal life.

INT. AMI’S BEDROOM-DAY
In a sudden rush Ami grabs her backpack and stuffs in items that are scattered around the room which includes an old picture of her with her mother. She takes change on top of her dresser and jams it into her pocket.

With a deep breath, she sits on the edge of her bed and grips her backpack close.

EXT. AMI’S STREETS-DAY-CONTINUOUS

Ami continues to walk.

AMI V.O. (CONT)
I stayed out of trouble.

INT. AMI’S BEDROOM-DAY

Her attention quickly shifts to the bedroom door.

AMI V.O. (CONT)
But trouble always seemed to find me.

She moves furniture to block the door.

AMI
No!

EXT. AMI’S STREET-CONTINUOUS

Now gripping tight to the backpack over one shoulder, gaze toward the ground, Ami rushes down the street away from her house. With fierce determination in her teary eyes, She yanks the hood of her sweatshirt over her head.

AMI V.O.
Never again.

She continues to walk out of her neighborhood.
EXT. AMI’S FRIENDS HOUSE

Ami anxiously waits at the front door of her friend Stacy’s house, backpack at her side. The door is partially open, then Stacy returns.

STACY
I tried. My mom just doesn’t want to get involved. Sorry Ami.

Stacy shuts the door leaving Ami hurt and frustrated. She picks up her backpack, throws it over her shoulder and continues her walk with nowhere to go but the streets.

EXT. RANDOM STREETS-DAY TO NIGHT

Ami wanders up and down streets. She keeps her head lowered using her hood to conceal herself.

Ami stops to rub her aching feet. She cases her surroundings, pondering her direction, before she continues walking.

Ami walks through several parts of the city before reaching the beach. She passes by a homeless man sleeping on the sidewalk.

EXT. OB STREETS-NIGHT-CONTINUOUS

Ami stops in OB, stands by a closed store, nervous, clutching her hands. She slides down the store wall into a seated position.

A group of people approach and Ami gets up before they pass. She continues to walk off into the distance.

Ami finds a quiet corner, sits down, hands over her knees in a huddle. She stares off into the night with angry eyes.

FLASHBACK-MEMORY

Ami lies in her bed in almost complete darkness. A streak of light creeps in as the door is opened. A shadow figure emerges. Ami’s body stiffens, her eyes open wide.
EXT. OB STREETS-NEXT DAY

Ami is in the same position as the night before.

Ami gets up and walks along the same streets, head lowered.

She turns a corner into an alley with less traffic. Her back to the wall, she gets emotional, collects herself and with a deep breath she turns back to the busy street.

Walking down an alley, Ami passes a homeless man rummaging through a garbage dumpster. Ami puts her head down then looks back at the man.

Ami walks around a corner with fewer people, takes the money from her pocket and counts it. Just as she stuffs the money back into her pocket she is pushed from behind and falls to the ground.

First confused, she then realizes her backpack has been taken. She looks up the street to see the thief run. Ami runs after him to a corner, he disappears. Ami stands in disbelief.

    AMI
    Why me?

Out of sight, from behind, Ami is shocked to hear a girl’s voice, MACY, 19, homeless, answer.

    MACY
    Why not you?

Ami turns to see the disheveled girl sitting behind her against a building.

    MACY
    You think you’re special or something?

Stunned Ami says nothing as Macy takes a good look at her. She stands, sizing her up, making Ami uncomfortable.

    AMI
    No.
Ami tries to walk past Macy. Macy steps in Ami’s path. The girl is too close for Ami’s comfort.

MACY
Got any money?

Ami takes a step back. She can’t find the words to respond.

AMI
That guy just stole my bag.

Macy takes a step forward.

MACY
Aw, and I bet you can’t go home because you have daddy issues.

Ami glares at Macy then stares into the ground for fear of tearing up. Macy pouts her lips, wraps her arm around one of Ami’s. Ami is unsure what to think.

MACY (CONT)
(assertive)
Come on. You can buy me a burger and tell me all about it, or not. But you can buy me a burger.

Macy, with a slight tug, leads Ami, hesitant, down the street.

MACY (CONT)
My name’s Macy.

EXT. OB-BURGER PLACE-DAY-CONTINUOUS

Ami and Macy sit at a table and scarf down the last of their burgers. Macy grabs a drink set near Ami. She slurps the last drop. Ami’s eyes stay fixed on the table. Macy studies her.
MACY
You know I saw you last night. I spotted you a mile away. I’m surprised your bag didn’t get taken sooner. And your shoes... Nice shoes.

Ami looks at Macy with shock and surprise. Macy laughs.

MACY (CONT)
(Sarcastic)
Don’t worry. Don’t think yours would fit anyway. I like mine.

Macy dangles her mangled shoe out in front of her in admiration.

MACY (CONT)
You better mess yours up.

AMI
Why?

MACY
(amused)
If you want to keep them. You’re a moving target.

Macy hops off her chair and stretches as she taps her belly.

MACY (CONT)
(coy)
Well, you can hang with me, or not. Up to you.

AMI
(curious)
Where are you going?

MACY
(playful)
Does it matter?

Macy giggles and walks away. Ami thinks for a moment, watches her, gets up, looks down at her shoes then follows.
EXT. OB-DUSK

Ami is following Macy along the beach sidewalk. She stops to look at the families on the beach. Macy turns back as she realizes Ami stopped.

    MACY
    You coming?

    AMI
    Yeah.

EXT. HOMELESS CAMP-NIGHT

Ami sits on cold ground barely awake. Macy walks up and hands her a filthy, smelly blanket.

    MACY
    Here. You can use this till you get your own. I’ll keep a look out so you can sleep. Go ahead...

Macy motions for Ami to take the blanket then drapes it over her.

    MACY (CONT)
    (teasing)
    I won’t take your shoes.

Ami reluctantly lies on her side. She fights shutting her eyes, she gives in.

FLASHBACK

In a dream Ami lies in her bed in almost complete darkness. A streak of light cuts across her bed. A shadow figure of a hand traces the edges of her bed. Ami’s body stiffens, her eyes open wide.
EXT. HOMELESS CAMP-NIGHT-CONTINUOUS

Ami, lies stiff, still on her side, eyes wide open, in a daze.

Macy sits nearby, across a camp fire, with two homeless youth, ANDY and BOBBY, early 20’s, smoking from a meth pipe and drinking. Bobby offers the bottle, concealed in a paper bag, to Macy.

Macy approaches Ami. She taps her with the bottle.

MACY
Hey.

Macy sits down next to Ami.

AMI’S V.O.
Everything came rushing back. Every sickening memory I left behind me.

Ami slowly sits up. Macy offers her the bottle. Ami sips the drink and winces. Macy laughs then gives her a tablet.

MACY
Take this, it will relax you, take your mind off things.

Macy takes her own tablet, grabs the bottle and washes it down. Ami studies the tablet and delays taking it. Bobby watches while lighting his meth pipe.

MACY (CONT)
That’s Bobby. He takes care of us around here. He knows the streets better than anyone.

Ami tries to study Bobby but recoils and looks to the ground

Macy nudges the bottle back to Ami and gestures for her to take the pill. Ami reluctantly takes the drink, swallows the pill, manages a weak smile and sets the bottle down.
Bobby approaches, sits next to Ami and nods at Macy to leave. Macy complies as she is pushed aside.

Bobby hits his pipe again, offers Ami some, she refuses. He sets down the pipe, picks up the bottle and offers her another drink.

BOBBY
I was able to score the good stuff this time. Don’t you like it?

AMI
It’s fine. I just don’t want anymore.

Ami begins to notice things are not right, she becomes lightheaded. Bobby sets the bottle aside, a bit perplexed.

BOBBY
Hmm...

Macy, now sitting next to Andy, occasionally takes a glance at Ami and Bobby.

Full of confidence, Bobby scoots in tighter next to Ami.

BOBBY (CONT)
You sure are pretty.

Bobby strokes her hair.

Ami, uncomfortable and feeling awkward, brushes Bobby’s hand away.

AMI
Thanks.

Ami attempts to create space between them but becomes unsteady.

Bobby casually pulls her close as though to help then suddenly pins her down and covers her mouth. Ami freezes in the all too familiar position.
BOBBY
You think you’re too good?

Ami struggles mumbling, under Bobby’s hand. Macy stands up to intervene, Andy grabs her arm.

BOBBY (CONT)
It’s not polite to refuse our hospitality, now is it?

MACY
(concerned)
Bobby just leave her alone.

Andy, now standing, puts his other arm firm in front of Macy holding her back. He whispers into her ear.

ANDY
It’s Bobby.

Ami gains access to her right arm and begins to pull at Bobby’s grip to free her mouth.

AMI
Macy!

Bobby covers Ami’s mouth with his hand and shushes her as she slowly becomes weaker in her struggle.

BOBBY
Shhh. You want to stay with us?

Macy looks at Ami’s pleading eyes only a moment before she allows Andy to turn her back.

Ami slowly begins to see distorted images of Bobby, Macy, and Andy before passing out.

Bobby pulls Ami away from the light and begins to take Ami’s clothes off.

FLASHBACK—MEMORY

Ami pushed up against her bedroom door. She dug her heals in deep pushing back against the force from the other side.
AMI

No!

The door is pushed open, Ami is thrown forward, stomach to the ground. A hand grabs her leg and pulls her back. She turns to face her fear as a dark image of a man, her FOSTER FATHER drapes over her, bringing his hand down over her face.

AMI

(whimpers)

No.

EXT. HOMELESS CAMP—EARLY MORNING

In the slightly remote area Bobby left her, Ami lies on the ground alone. Her Clothing is askew, her hair disheveled. She appears horribly hung over or disoriented as she awakens. She attempts to gather her clothes and composure.

AMI V.O.

My name is Ami. I live on the streets.

Across the way homeless teens, including Bobby, Macy and Andy, collect their things to leave the camp.

AMI V.O.

I try to stay out of trouble.

Bobby heads away first with the group. Andy and Macy look back Ami’s direction as they follow.

AMI V.O.

But trouble always seems to find me.

Ami stands up, looks over her shoulder, then follows.

FADE TO BLACK:
APPENDIX B

TIME SCHEDULE FOR LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

During the second film shoot, now called First 72 Hours, we ran out of time to complete shooting 11.20-22.15. We had to reschedule for the remaining Mission Bay Park scene and walking the streets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Scenes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.20.15</td>
<td>Ocean Beach Alley, Old Town Restaurant</td>
<td>Ami, Macy and Homeless Man</td>
<td>8,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.21.15</td>
<td>Mission Bay Park</td>
<td>Ami, Macy, Bobby and Andy</td>
<td>1,12,13</td>
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<td>11.22.15</td>
<td>4666 Terry Lane, La Mesa CA 91924</td>
<td>Ami, Stacy, Foster Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.6.15</td>
<td>Rolando Village Streets, Ocean Beach Streets</td>
<td>Ami</td>
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<td>12.8.15</td>
<td>Mission Bay Park</td>
<td>Ami and Macy</td>
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## APPENDIX C

### BUDGET FOR LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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