Conqueror

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CONQUEROR

By
Lei Wu

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Fine Arts degree in Film Production

School of Film and Animation
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

Rochester Institute of Technology
2019
Advisory Committee

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Professor
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Abstract

This thesis primarily focuses on the shooting of a documentary about Lun Qiu, a shy and ordinary ethnic Tibetan boy from China. His family is poor, and he is a boxer who was injured when he was defeated in a competition. These events did not cause him to lose confidence because his experience has been very helpful for him. He dreams of participating in the Ultimate Fighting Championship and earning his own gold belt.

The original idea for my thesis had nothing to do with its final conception. In fact, the original idea was not even to make a documentary, but to produce a work of fiction. I finally chose to shoot a documentary for two reasons. Firstly, while studying at Rochester, I have already shot many dramas and served in a variety of roles in several film crews. Therefore, this time, I wanted to try to get out of my comfort zone and shoot about a topic in which I am really interested. Secondly, this is because during my first year in graduate school, I went to the Chinese city of Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan Province) to go sightseeing with my friend. While I was there, I heard some unbelievable stories.

Chengdu is a very unique city. Due to its geography, Chengdu is very close to Tibet, so many Tibetans live in Chengdu. Tibetans are one of the most ancient ethnicities in China and South Asia. Their personalities are different from those of most Chinese people. Furthermore, due to several complex political reasons, most of the cities where they live are able to have a high level of self-management powers, and also have a National People’s Congress and People’s Government. Furthermore, when ethnic minorities live in an unfamiliar city, they demonstrate an extremely strong sense of unity. Chengdu has China’s largest training base for fighting sports.
It has adopted many small children who are from poor families, and some of them are orphans. Besides receiving an education, these children often participate in different kinds of fighting competitions. The money earned from these competitions helps them support their living costs, and can also help them support their families. This special place made me very curious, and I was extremely eager to understand these special children. This documentary’s protagonist - Qiu Lun - provided us with detailed information about his lifestyle. We will use this documentary to understand the life of this distinctive group of children.

Introduction

This group of children is from mountainous areas in Sichuan Province, China. Most of them are unaccompanied minors, left-behind children or orphans. Each member of this fight club has their own dreams such as escaping poverty or gaining a sense of belonging and dignity. Their muscles and fighting ability provide them opportunities to earn a glittering gold belt, and give them hope that they can fulfill their destiny.

In July 2017, a video entitled ‘MMA orphans: If you don’t fight, then you can go back home and eat potatoes’ was extensively shared online. The video focused on two children from Sichuan's Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture who lost their parents and were adopted by a fight club in Chengdu. They practiced combat sports and occasionally participated in professional fights. After the news was broadcast, the incident of these ‘fighting orphans’ continued to create social controversy.

Many people agree with the club and this approach because the club provides these children with a way to escape a life of poverty. However, others have questioned whether the club is qualified to conduct adoptions and whether it can protect the children’s rights and interests.
These people feel that teenage boys should be in school, but the club sent them to arenas to participate in fighting competitions. They think that this type of dream may be too cruel, but a life as children without parents may be a more cruel situation. This issue has resulted in many differences of opinion. Chengdu’s civil affairs, industry and commerce, education, sport and other departments were involved in an investigation into this fight club. At a press conference held by the Ministry of Education, they considered social ethics problems existing within the club, the resolution of which required that the school should be closed.

After hearing these stories about this fight club, I was extremely curious about these children’s real lives. For example, I was wondering whether they could receive the correct guidance during the club’s training sessions, if these youth’s rights were protected, or if they were frequently injured while training at this club. Considering these questions, I chose this topic as the focus of my thesis.

**Pre-Production**

**1. Background:**

After confirming the shooting topic, I started to watch some online videos and documentaries about boxing. I have seen many excellent films and TV works, it was very helpful for me to accumulate these source materials. I learned how to more effectively shoot athletes, and which kinds of lighting are suitable for shooting them. Immediately after this, I quickly contacted the club, hoping to obtain their permission to shoot. Luckily, a half-year before shooting, I obtained their permission to shoot (with my high school classmate’s help), after which I remained in close contact with the club’s manager.
As the fight club is a very strict school, they turned down most of the requests from the public for interviews and shooting. Even though I was from a school, the amount of time I could spend shooting at their school was tightly controlled. After several consultations, in September 2018, I flew from Beijing to Chengdu and started my first shooting session. After arriving in Chengdu, I contacted my only crew member immediately then communicated my ideas with him, and gave him a lot of demo music to convey the feeling I wanted. Then I found the club manager, hoping to double check what I could take, and get a license that I can get in and out. I didn't bring any equipment when I first time into the club. I observed the club three days. During this period, I mastered their schedule and mastered the light and shadow changes of the club, which played an important role in building the rhythm of the club film. After everything was determined, I picked my actor - Qiu Lun. This year, Qiu Lun is 21 years old, is extremely introverted, shy, and not skilled at communicating with people. Due to persistent persuasion by my friend and I, he finally responded to my request to shoot him, and was extremely cooperative in participating in all of my interviews. I lived with them at the club for one month, and successively shot a lot of source material, but all of this was the surface-level aspect of their lives. I knew that in order to understand them at a deeper level, I had to spend more time with them so I could become their friends and gain their trust. After the first month’s shooting ended, I returned to my hometown to make a rough cut and to summarize the content I needed to complete the second shooting.

Around Christmas, I went back to the club for shooting. Although it had only been several months since I had been there, I remained in close contact with Qiu Lun. When I met him again, I found that his conversation style had become more natural and he was not as shy as before. Furthermore, in his later interviews, he expressed a lot of his true feelings. I was pleased that he was willing to share his inner thoughts with me.
(2) **Equipment:**

During the shooting for this thesis, I chose a Sony FS5 as my video camera. I have to say, I love it so much! It is compact, lightweight, and portable, and I believe that it is the best option for shooting follow shots for long periods of time. It also has excellent battery life, as a basic battery can last for 4-5 hours of working time. I used a Zoom H6 as my audio recorder. When I conducted the interviews, I used a Saramonic miniature microphone that I could carry with me as my recording equipment. In this way, no errors would occur when the protagonist was moving, while it could also maximize the chance of them not noticing that they were being recorded.

(3) **Script**

A documentary does not have a script, and the entire story relies on the protagonist to tell it, so that is a one of the reasons I choose to shoot a documentary, because I prefer shooting without a script, it always brings me a lot of surprises. This documentary’s protagonist Qiu Lun was a boy who came from a poor Tibetan family. He had a shy personality, spoke slowly, and his voice was very low. Therefore, when he expressed himself, he lacked some enthusiasm. This enthusiasm was something for which I needed to compensate by using his fighting energy that he displayed during his competitions. At the same time, I invited the club’s boss Mr. En Bo and its manager Banma Duoji to create a summary and explanation of the entire documentary’s background. Qiu Lun had been severely injured during a competition, after which he was forced to stop participating in competitions. Therefore, he had no way to demonstrate his performance compared with the other athletes. However, his indomitable spirit helped him continue to attract the coach’s attention. Even though he had taken a long break from participating in competitions, he never stopped his intense training. During the interviews, Qiu Lun told me
countless times that he wanted to rely on the money earned from participating in competitions to support his younger sister’s efforts to attend school and give his family a better life, which is why he was never willing to give up boxing. When the shooting for the documentary was almost complete, we also experienced his first competition after he stopped his participation in them. This documentary has an open ending, and I will continue to focus on Qiu Lun’s future.

(4) Casting:

Whether for a drama or documentary, the process of searching for an actor was extremely difficult. I faced an even greater challenge: in order to ensure that there were no problems, I had to choose a protagonist before I returned to China. Before searching for a protagonist, I could only rely on some photos from friends and the club’s manager, as well as background descriptions to make a decision. The first protagonist I originally chose was a 25-year-old boxer in the prime of his professional career. This boxer was actually the boy that the manager requested me to shoot, and was not someone whom I chose on my own. This was because this boxer had a good physique and was very successful. It may have been that the manager wanted the non-Chinese audience that would be viewing this documentary to have a positive image of China’s boxers, and was pressuring me to agree with him. However, the situation’s development was significantly less successful than I had imagined. After I returned to China and arrived at the club to start shooting, this boxer was not very willing to agree to my shooting him. I think that there were many reasons for this: he had already been on television countless times, and had encountered many professional directors and shooting sessions, which was why he did not really care about my shooting. After not showing up for several appointments to conduct my interviews, I decisively requested the club’s manager to switch to a different protagonist. After gaining their approval, I focused on Qiu Lun, a shy boxer with a personality that was obviously
different from other people. At an age when most young people are outspoken and domineering, his low-key attitude unexpectedly attracted my attention. This was why I asked for stories about his family and past. I found that he had just experienced a major defeat in a competition, and was at a low point in his career. I felt sorry for him, as he was only 21 with a pure expression and a limited amount of competition experience. He was also very friendly, and was the most popular person at the club. After several days of getting to know him, I found that although he seemed very introverted, he was actually a very resilient and indomitable athlete. Therefore, I decided that Qiu Lun was the one I would choose as the documentary’s protagonist.

(5) Location:

Due to practical constraints, I wanted to shoot this documentary, so I had to return to the club’s location in Chengdu. The entire club had many different campuses, including the main campus, dormitories, precompetition exercise area, and even a separate building for displaying awards. Most of the time I spent shooting would be at the main campus and in the dormitories, while the other campuses would be used as alternate locations for shooting video material. Their training area had a lot of windows as well as sufficient light, which I found very satisfying. As a result, the shooting location became the first issue I had to solve.

(6) Controversy:

There are many controversies related to the boxing club. These include many people who believe that the children’s training will affect their efforts to take cultural classes, and whether participating in too many competitions will turn the children into money-making tools. In addition, before I started shooting, the Ministry of Education required the school to close down. Even though the club worked hard to reopen the school, and obtained certification to operate as a
sports school, there have always been controversies related to the children’s human rights. However, I did not put this information in my documentary because I hoped to focus on portraying the life of these youth. Excessive social commentary would impact the atmosphere and pace of my entire documentary. My focus is only an ordinary but stubborn Tibetan youth, and that extra noise is something that I do not want to record.

(7) Lighting Design:

Documentaries are different from dramas, and in most situations, other than some special interviews, most documentaries must rely on natural lighting for shooting. For this shooting, I carried several tungsten lamps, which I used while interviewing the boss, coaches, and the protagonist Qiu Lun. For other lighting situations, in the morning, I chose to shoot footage about the lives of these youth. This included their life in the dormitories and recreational activities outside of the club. In these types of scenarios, the morning sun was very suitable for shooting because even though there was plenty of lighting, it was not overly bright. I stopped shooting around noon because the sun made people shut their eyes and they even became exhausted. At this time, I usually put down my video recorder and only ate and talked with them, which helped bring us closer together. In the afternoon, and even at sunset, I was more willing to shoot indoors. This was because their training base had a large amount of windows. When the sun was about to set behind the mountains, shooting them in their boxing stances while they were in the light and shadow created a beautiful effect, and my documentary’s first scene was shot during the afternoon. Due to my limitations when carrying my lights, and because the youth usually returned to their dormitory at 8 in the evening to go to sleep, I did not have any footage that I shot at night.
Production

(1) Directing the Actors

I was really happy with and moved by the fact that my actor Qiu Lun was an extremely intelligent athlete. Firstly, before shooting, I proposed that during the entire time I would be shooting, I hoped that without impacting his activities, he could do more to turn his body towards the camera. Therefore, during the entire shooting process, he intentionally or unconsciously turned his body towards the camera. The shooting process was perfect. However, only because I lack experience with shooting documentaries, do not have a lot of experience with regulating actors’ emotions, or do not know how to stimulate actor’s emotions, Qiu Lun was always very shy during the interviews and did not fully display his personality. This is an aspect of the interview that I regret.

(2) Russian Coaches:

During the shooting period, I shot some footage about many Russian coaches. They were very professional, and a few of them had even worked for Vladimir Putin. The role they played in the club was not only as coaches because they lived and ate with these children, and also slept, trained, and competed along with them. The coaches and children quickly developed a brotherly relationship. When I watched the video of the competition during which the protagonist Qiu Lun’s previous injury occurred, I found that these coaches all had tears in their eyes. I could see that they were very emotional, and was very moved by this kind of feelings between these brothers from different countries. Therefore, when I was shooting, I interviewed many of these Russian coaches, and also shot some footage about their teaching methods. I
hope that during my documentary, I can reveal their most natural state and can believe that the state of these coaches from a different country can enhance my documentary while also allowing the audience to feel a different kind of emotion.

(3) Shooting:

Even though I encountered many difficulties in my initial preparation, the shooting process was extremely successful. My crew only included myself and my sound engineer, so we were very efficient during shooting. During the two weeks before shooting, I went each morning to shoot some material of the boxers’ training, as well as some interviews of the team members. Although the club’s manager had told me early on that I would not be able to interview the club’s boss Mr. En Bo, I always wanted to interview him because the documentary would not be complete unless it included an interview with him. After I finished the initial shooting, I returned to Beijing from Chengdu, and started my rough cut. During editing, I found that I needed to shoot more scenes and more interview content involving the key figures to make the documentary more substantial. Therefore, around Christmas, I flew once again from Beijing to Chengdu, and started the second shooting. The second shooting made me a lot more courageous. After I finished preparing for the worst possible scenario, I repeatedly
requested En Bo to accept my invitation for an interview. When I was eating dinner with his
daughter, I finally obtained his approval for an interview. His interview helped my documentary
become more complete and coherent.

(4) Cinematography

Due to this documentary’s unusual nature, I needed to become its photographer. Shooting a
documentary and shooting a story are different, and as a female photographer, I needed to choose
a lightweight camera to ensure that I would have a stable scene. I also hoped that I would have a
high-quality scene. Therefore, after extensive consultations with friends, I finally chose the Sony
FS5 as my camera. This camera was very suitable for shooting a documentary, as it had excellent
battery life and the scene shot using its screen was very stable. Its only weakness was that the
resolution was too ordinary. However, while shooting, I had to stop using 4K because the source
material I shot each day was longer than eight hours. As the camera was lightweight, I could
shoot and talk with Qiu Lun at the same time. As a result, he often faced the screen while he
chatted with me. This created a very effective scene that looked more intimate and natural.

(5) Budget and Preparing Funds:

Throughout the entire initial shooting period, I made a project budget (See appendix) that
was about 6000 USD and included tickets, accommodations, equipment rentals and personnel
rentals. Since the shooting site was located in southern China, I was not familiar with this area
and had to increase the budget so funding shortages would not interrupt shooting. In my
opinion, 6000 USD is a large amount of money. This is because when I was shooting, I had just
finished paying my tuition, and my parents gave me only 2000 USD because it was not
possible for them to provide more than that amount in order to finish my thesis. As a result, I
started planning how to earn the remaining 4000 USD. After returning to China, I quickly found
an internship that I hoped I could use to earn enough funding on my own. However, it was
extremely difficult to save money soon after starting this job. Moreover, I was in Beijing, a city
with a very high cost of living. After three months, I was only able to save 1500 USD. At this
point, time was very limited, and I had to start shooting. Therefore, I had no choice but to
borrow some money from friends, and immediately bought a plane ticket to Chengdu.
It was fortunate that Chengdu’s cost of living was vastly lower than Beijing, as after finishing
shooting, I had more than 1000 USD left over. This greatly reduced my stress, and I quickly
paid back the money I owed, after which I set out to complete the next part of my work.

Post Production

(1) Editing

Editing was a very challenging task for me when I was shooting the documentary. Firstly, I
needed to think about which were the important scenes that I shot during the time I spent
shooting. Throughout the initial editing, I had to select the best scenes among several hundred
hours of source material, and categorized the meaningful scenes. Even though I made some notes
while I was shooting, this was still a very long project. I also always became trapped in
‘decidophobia’. I always found it difficult to choose between footage with the same theme. After
the first rough cut, I realized that I lacked a lot of storylines that would link these scenes
together, so I quickly shot the second pick-up shots. After completing all of the shooting, I
quickly did the second editing. During the editing process, I endlessly adjusted the sequence of
each section, and it was not until the deadline was approaching that I confirmed the scene
sequence. In the final version, I divided the film into four sections. Each section had its own
theme, which further clarified the documentary’s structure and made it easier for the audience to understand its content.

(2) Color Grading

A colorist was one of the last additions I made to the team. I have a certain amount of experience with color, and a documentary is different from a drama, so a colorist’s requirements are also different. Documentaries need to ensure authenticity, and excessive color adjustments will influence the audience’s viewing experience. Therefore, I have always believed that in terms of colors, if I want to maintain a documentary’s authenticity, it is best to maintain as much of the original colors as possible. However, my camera’s saturation was not very high, and the scenes still had a grey tone. Therefore, I focused mostly on adjusting the exposure, white balance, and contrast ratio. I also used different adjustment methods in different scenes, as I hoped to ultimately present the most authentic color effects.

(3) Sound Design

My composer was also my sound mixer, and due to the documentary’s uncertainty, before shooting, we chose a Saramonic miniature microphone. Its volume was small, it had a long battery life, and its sound quality was outstanding. It was very important throughout the entire process of recording interviews, and was also essential during everyday conversations.

(4) Music
This was probably my favorite part of my film. From the beginning of this project, I knew that music would have an important role. I have a close relationship with a composer named Pipi, who is a professional based in Chengdu. I expected that he could make passionate and powerful music that could be used throughout the documentary. I must admit that he was an extremely responsible colleague, and all of his work perfectly matched my storyline, and even exceeded my expectations. During our first production meeting, Pipi asked me what kind of music I was intending to use in the documentary. Since this documentary’s theme was a story about a boxer, I needed some music that had a strong rhythm and was full of enthusiasm so it could strengthen the film’s sense of energy. He helped me make the majority of the background music, which was closely related to the plot, and it made my documentary more attractive to the audience. Pipi was very efficient, and a month after our last discussion ended, he gave me all of the music he had made. I loved it immediately, and really think that it helped integrate the entire documentary.

(5) Narrative of the main sequences of the documentary

This documentary includes four sections, each of which has its own main content.

The first part "Embo" is introduces the owner, teaching environment and situation of the club. In fact, it’s really hard to get the permission to film or interview Embo, but I didn’t give up to argue with his assistants and friends, so after I finished filming the most scenes, I finally got the owner to agree the interview!
I shot a lot of full shots of the club, and I also chose a lot of angles, from low camera position to overhead shooting with rocker arm, I hoped to make the audience feel the scale and background of the club quickly and lay a good foundation for my subsequent shooting.

This is not just a club, but an incubator with good wishes for the next younger generation.
In the second part, "Qiu Lun", the main content is a simple introduction to the main character. I filmed many footages of his training and his coach.

My name is Qulun. I come from Hongyuan County, Aba Prefecture, Sichuan Province.
The third part, "This is the life", it is the main content of this documentary. In this part, I no longer only filmed his training and competition, but seriously talked with him face to face. In the scenes of these interviews, I used low-power lamps to create a significant shadow effect on Qiu lun’s face, so his temperament became better.
The fourth part, "You are best", it shows Qiu lun's comeback competition and the mental state of the athletes. I put a lot of thought into this part. I borrowed my friend's studio to take close-up shots of their bodies; I used an overpowered lamp and some dust to give the training ground the perfect backlighting, so I got some powerful ending shots!
(6) Challenge:

It was actually very challenging to be a photographer who was making a documentary on their own. There were many reasons why I chose to be a photographer making a documentary on my own. The main reasons for this were:

1. I really liked this topic, and want to become a documentary filmmaker;

2. I had a limited budget, and had no way of paying for more crew members to join me;

3. Before I started shooting, the club stipulated that it would be best if there would be no more than three shooting participants, so I decided to do the shooting myself.

This decision had many advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, I could shoot while also pragmatically asking myself the questions that I would currently be considering in my mind and wanted to ask, which dramatically increased my shooting efficiency. Secondly, acting as my own photographer allowed me to change my composition method and scene movements at any time based on my preferences. It also made it easier for me to create the scene I wanted.
However, there were several disadvantages. As I was my own photographer, I was sometimes overly focused on the composition, along with the scenes’ coordination and aesthetics. This caused me to overlook the content of what they were talking about, which resulted in me missing some details.

**Audience Reaction**

Due to my nervousness, when my film was about to be screened, I stood in the back of the auditorium so I could focus on watching the audience more closely than my documentary. This was a good choice because the audience was clearly engaged throughout the film. They laughed at all of the appropriate moments and the drama quietly captivated them.

After the film was screened, I read my prepared artist statement which informed the audience regarding my views as a filmmaker and my inspirations for this film.

During the question and answer session, I received many useful suggestions. During the screening, I did not know why the film’s sound became extremely loud. I felt very apologetic because I had not immediately discovered this sound-related problem, and it affected the audience’s viewing experience. My experience with this problem taught me a lot, and during future work, I will definitely prevent something similar from reoccurring.

**Conclusion**

As a female filming an all-male sport, I had many advantages. The first one was my keen sense of observation and sensitive mind. I could quickly observe their mood changes, identify
which relationships between them were more intimate, and determine which of them relied on each other. These observations were very helpful when investigating their inner world. The second one was because I was the only female in the entire club. Everyone showed consideration for my perceptions, so when I proposed some shooting requirements and new ideas, the manager readily agreed. This allowed me to reduce a lot of negotiation time.

However, at the same time, there were also obvious disadvantages for a female shooting an all-male sport. As I was of the opposite sex, they had very few opportunities in their daily life to come into contact with those such as myself. As a result, when the youth at this club encountered me, they were a bit nervous, shy, and some of them even hid from me. This was a very detrimental situation for the documentary, as this prevented it from recording the real personalities of these youth, and made me very worried. I thought of many methods of developing a closer relationship with them, including actively trying to find mutual interests, understanding their hobbies, and even eating with them each day. I have to say that these methods were certainly effective, but time was still the most important thing. Spending time with others for a long period of time can make people let down their guard and get rid of their nervousness. I was happy that I could transform a disadvantage into an advantage while also making many new friends.

This thesis’ shooting was the final project in my academic career. It started with the proposal at the very beginning, and ended with participating in shooting and writing the thesis. This process took a year to complete, and it was extremely enjoyable. During shooting, I made many new friends from different ethnicities, and also learned about the value that this community gives to society. Serving as a photographer, editor, and colorist also greatly enhanced my production ability and improved my skills. I hope that this thesis not only represents the end of my studies, but also forms the foundation for my future professional success.
Screenshots
LEI WU

MFA Thesis proposal
School of Film and Animation
Rochester Institute of Technology

“Untitled”
A documentary, approximately 23 minutes.

Approved for submission by:

Malcolm Spaull, Professor, Chair School of Film and Animation

“Untitled”
A boy from the depths of the mountain (his parents work in the city to earn money and cannot take care of them in person at a long term, so he is raised by grandparents). This boy is living in a fighting club of Chengdu. The fighting club offers free food and accommodation for these kind of boys.

**Rationale (Background):**

They are a group of children from mountainous areas in Sichuan, China, most of them are "unaccompanied children", left-behind children or orphans. The fighting club has their dreams. A dream of escaping poverty, a dream of hope for a sense of belonging and dignity. Muscles and fighting give them a brave, glittering gold belt, and hope to illuminate their destiny.

In July 2017, a video entitled "Fighting orphans cannot get back to their hometown to eat potatoes" was extensively spread. The video said two children of Liangshan who lost their parents were adopted by a fighting club in Chengdu and practiced general combat and occasionally participated in commercial activities. After the news was exposed, the "fighting orphan" incident continued to spark public opinion.

There are many people who agree with the club and this approach, because the club provides a way out of life for these children. However, some people have questioned whether the club has adoption qualifications and whether it can protect the rights and interests of children. They feel that teenage boys should be in school, but the club was sent them to the arena for fighting. Some people think that such a dream may be too cruel, but for a child without a parent, which one is more cruel? These are many conflictual opinions. Chengdu civil affairs, industry and commerce, education, sport and other departments involved in the investigation. At a press conference held by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education considered social ethics problems in the club, which required the closure of the school.

However, the Fight Club has recently won the sport school qualifications, it seems that many children can back to club.

**Treatment:**

This is a documentary, I'm hoping to on a left-behind boy, he may be about 10 years old and he was adopted by the fighting club. In his hometown, people generally have low quality of life, they only can choose to be a peasant or go to the city to work in the service industry after they graduate from high school or primary school. But coming to the fighting club, where they will be organized classes, providing accommodation, these kind of children participate in boxing training and competition in return. However, the club causes a lot of controversy in China, too many people think it is illegal, the fighting club doesn’t have approval for running a school, it was just a club. These people also think it’s cruel to let children punch. However, from a child's point of view, it seems that clubs give them countless possibilities in life. They can even make money to improve their family life and gain dignity. Some people may even become champions in the future.
I will choose a boy and record his life in the fighting club, at the same time, I will interview some teacher's opinion and common people’s thought in American and China. I will also find out how these clubs obtain money to support these activities.

**Work Process:**

I have contacted the fighting club and received permission to shoot.

I will go to China during the summer to choose a boy and record his life in fighting club.

I will interview some teachers and common student in China.

**Audience:**

I want to use this documentary as a social documentary. In recent years, vulnerable children have become a hot topic of international concern in any country. However, how to protect the rights of vulnerable children is a thorny issue. I want to focus in this special event and hope that more people can pay attention to the lives of vulnerable children.

**Budget**

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Artists statement

Thank you for coming to watch my thesis.

Conqueror is my first documentary in my life. It brought me the most unforgettable shooting experience ever. You should have known that there were only two people in my crew. I don’t think anyone would have fewer crew members than me in these screening days. I'm so grateful that Pipi, my composer, gave me the chance to know such a wonderful place. So now I have this documentary. The Tibetan is one of the oldest nations in China. The fight club is in ChengDu City, which is close to the Tibetan autonomous region. I don’t know anyone except for Pi in this city. After I got permission for only two people to film. I thought I would just go for it. I believed two people still could complete the documentary. This thesis has helped me grow and practice a lot.

There has been a lot of obstacles, such as changing actors, losing footage,. I also realized how difficult it was to cooperate with the other teammate. We had to achieve mutual understanding all the time to ensure we could finish the shooting successfully. Here, I would like to show my appreciation to my friend Pipi, although he is not here today, I would say I couldn’t get this done without him. Thank you for your unconditional support and sorry I made you lost 10 pounds weight during the shooting.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Malcolm, Cathleen and Karl. Thank you for your help. You guided me through the Internet and gave me valuable feedbacks and comments during my shooting in China. Thanks for your encouragement and patience, supporting me to finish the thesis. I wish you all the best.

RIT might be the last school in my academy life. After I graduated from China, I came to the States. Back then I was already 23 years old, not a teenager anymore. I thought that I would not be too emotional attached to this place. However, as the graduation is approaching, I found that I was in love with Rochester. My first impression of Rochester was not that good. Chinese restaurants are tasted different and every winter I just wanted to keep myself in a warm room, refused to go outside. In this city, I have been through a lot with my friends and classmates. We are now like a family. I can always be myself being with them. Thanks all my friends, thanks all the people I know in Rochester. You made me stronger and more optimistic.

Chinese people are kind of conservative. We don’t always share our feelings or thoughts. But spending the past few years in the United States, I have been changed by the lovely people. I love you very much. I love RIT very much. I will always remember the good times I had in Rochester.

Thank you!