On Your Own

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On Your Own

By Tianyi Wang

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN FILM & ANIMATION

COLLEGE OF IMAGING ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF FILM AND ANIMATION
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
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Abstract

My thesis On Your Own is an 18-minute short fiction film focusing on the relationship between a daughter and her dying father. After his wife was killed in a car accident, Frank, as a single father, raises his daughter Giana who has Down syndrome on his own. Frank becomes informed that he is in the terminal stage of lung cancer. He teaches Giana how to live on her own and tries different ways to find a suitable facility to take care of Giana after his death.

The film was shot in HD format using Black Magic Pocket Cinema Camera with Zeiss Lenses, edited in Adobe Premiere Pro CC and Pro Tools and color graded in DaVinci Resolve 11.

In this paper, I will discuss my experience during the whole production processes, and explore goals and the authentic works from its original conceptions to the first official screening of my at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).
Origin

The first short film I made at RIT is about a woman with mental illness looking for her illusory sister. My second film talks about the relationship between a middle aged man and his stepfather with Alzheimer’s disease. I would love to set the focus of my future films on the minority group with mental or genetic disorder and their family.

Twenty years ago, when I was in primary school in China, there was a special needs school nearby. I could see that society discriminated against people with intellectual disability at that time. People used inappropriate words, like “mental retardation” or “retarded” to describe the person who had Down syndrome. Nowadays, the situation is better, but they still cannot get enough support from the society. They have very poor living conditions and it is almost impossible for them to get a job in China.

Coming to the United States, I saw people with Down syndrome working in the grocery store. I noticed the social environment in the United States is much better for people who have special needs. People with intellectual disability get a lot of support either from the government or society. I was hoping to explore some issues behind the benefits and the support.

Two years ago, when I was shopping in the Eastview mall, I saw a father who appeared to be around 50 standing beside a carousel in the mall with his 20-year-old daughter who had Down syndrome. In contrast, other parents were with very young kids. I was curious about the father and daughter. I told my girlfriend to look at them. She asked me a question: “What will
happen to the girl when her father passed away, if he is a single father?" I knew there were variety associations and organizations in every county all over the states, but what I did not know was if the support is enough or not for those families. The moment was strongly impressed on my memory.
Pre-Production

Research

To start my research, I contacted Chris Tumminelli, president of Flower City Down Syndrome Network. He also has a child with Down syndrome. He explained that Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of a third copy of chromosome 21, and that proper education and care will improve the quality of life for people with Down syndrome.

If parents need to go to work, they could send their children with Down syndrome to a day care center. As their children enter adulthood, some of them will choose to live in a group home. However, it is exceptionally rare that group homes have an opening. When they do have an opening, there is usually a long waiting list of people who would love the opportunity to be able to move in. In New York State alone more than 12,000 individuals with developmental disabilities are on a waiting list, and more than 4,000 of them are still in critical need.

When I brought up the question, “What happens to a child with Down syndrome if his or her single parent passes away?” I saw the concern on his face even though he is just a middle-aged man. At that moment, I decided to make a film focused on building awareness about that social reality.

I did research to learn how to talk to people with Down syndrome and to write a believable story based on facts of their condition.
I also read a lot of articles about the different stages of lung cancer and its common symptoms. And I watched several online videos of lung cancer patients’ families talking about taking care of the patient, and how those patients looked when they were at the terminal stage.

**Script**

Once the basic idea of the film was confirmed, it was the time to write a treatment. I was not a good writer especially writing in a second language. Luckily, Chris Tumminelli invited me to take part in the world Down syndrome day party and the annual buddy walk event. I met more families there and I heard so many incredible stories over the events. I saw the concern on the parents’ faces once I brought up the question, “What happens to your loved one once you pass away?” I wrote all the inspirational stories down and tried to fit the best ones into my treatment. After I got my first draft, I sat down with my thesis chair, Peter Kiwitt, in order to improve the structure of my treatment. Peter gave me many suggestions, and they definitely made my story stronger and more compact. I was also constantly sending my treatment to Chris and some of the other families that I met during the events, getting their feedback as well.

I started writing my script during the summer of 2014 right after I completed the treatment. The most challenging part of writing the script was the dialogue. I found it extremely helpful to create a biography for each character. By having the biography, I had a clear vision of each character’s personality, so I would know how the characters would talk and act in the story.
For the dialogue of Giana, I worked with Charlene Detsch, who is the actress’s mother, very closely. Since the actress, Katlin Detsch, had a stroke years ago, her verbal ability had not fully recovered. Charlene helped me with breaking down long sentence into several short sentences, so Katlin could deliver them much more easily. She also helped me to improve the dialogue to reflect Katlin’s style of speaking but still kept the original meaning.

Peter and I had meetings every week in order to revise the script. We added some scenes to make the film more emotional.

At last, I got a very solid script. However, I was open to any spontaneous ideas for the dialogue. During the rehearsal or shooting stage, lines would be changed to the way that the actors felt most comfortable.

Casting

- Giana

When I first proposed my idea in the thesis preparation class, finding an actress with Down syndrome instantly became the very serious question that I needed to solve if I wanted to continue making this film. Unlike a person with autism or any other intellectual disability, people with Down syndrome have characteristic facial features. With the technology and budget I had, it was impossible for me to ask a typical actress to act as a Down syndrome girl. I had to seek a girl with Down syndrome to be Giana in my film.

In order to find the actress, I reached out to Arc of Monroe county and Artists Unlimited
Inc., both of which had people with Down syndrome in their facilities. However, I did not get any feedback from these organizations. During the summer, I met Adrian Esposito, a local director from Rochester who made a film featuring people with Down syndrome. He suggested that I needed to contact Flower City Down syndrome Network in order to get the actress.

I contacted Chris Tumminelli again. He helped me spread the word to the Down syndrome community in the Rochester area. Several days later, some families contacted me and I had four potential actors. These actors were all experienced in acting and had different backgrounds, gender, and age.

I chose Katlin Detsch. She is a 24-year-old girl with a cheerful, positive, and strong personality. She comes from a single parent family and she is a swimmer with a lot of medals from the Special Olympics. She had a stroke years ago which rendered her unable to walk and speak. However, she fought back from the debilitation. Now she is a swimmer again. Katlin’s life experience and personality made her the best person to play Giana in my film.

- Frank

I did not have too many options in terms of a middle-aged male actor. My last two short films had two middle-aged male talents and I did not want to use them again even though they are both very good at acting. I posted casting information on the RIT acting group on Facebook and some other platforms, but I barely received any responses. One day, I accidentally saw a behind the scenes picture on Facebook. The image was of a middle-aged man featured in a local short film. His name is Robert Lindquist. He matched my vision of Frank a lot. Plus, his wife was
a teacher in the special needs school, so he knew how to work with people with special needs.

During the audition, I could tell that he was very interested in my story. From the rehearsal, I could tell that he was very into the character. During the shooting, Robert developed a deep friendship with Katlin and Charlene, which helped him to understand the “Frank” character.

- Holly

When I was writing this character, the talent in my mind was Holly Burch. She is a local actress and I worked with her a few times in different projects. In real life, she adopted several children from all over the world. She is such a nice person and inspired me to create “Holly” the character in the story.

During the script writing process, I contacted Holly to see if she wanted to become a part of our team. She immediately accepted my invitation.

- Extras

We had a scene with five to six people with Down syndrome in a swimming pool. I contacted the actors who auditioned for the role of Giana and asked them to be extras. Most of them accepted my invitation. Some of them even invited their friend with Down syndrome.

Locations

In terms of location scouting, I had a few problems. As I had eleven locations in the film, finding all these locations was naturally time consuming. From Giana’s bedroom to the loading
dock where Frank worked, my producer and I looked at different sites over the summer. To my surprise, the most difficult location in the film was the playground of the care center. Since I had a specific look in my mind for the playground, it needed to be located besides a building, with a swing, bench and nice background. We checked almost all playgrounds around this area, but I could not find the one with all the features that I was looking for.

When we talked to Legacy at Erie Station to get a room as Giana’s room in the group home, the Executive Director told us that Holy Childhood had a delightful playground that might fit my needs. Holy Childhood was a school for special needs children and Katlin went to the school when she was young. It would make Katlin feel comfortable if we shoot the scene there. We scouted the playground. It was the perfect fit for my vision.

Promotion

In order to finish my thesis film in a better quality, I chose to start a Kickstarter campaign to raise some crowd funding from the public. I contacted about fifty associations around the world through email or Facebook and asked them to spread the information about the campaign. A Facebook page for my film was created to post the news and updates about this project. I brought my project to the annual Buddy Walk in Rochester to introduce my film to the local community. Additionally, WROC channel 8 was very interested in the topic that my film talked about. They reported on film and more people learned about the topic I was raising. By the end of the campaign we successfully reached our goal of $3,000.
Aesthetic

Initially, I wanted a low contrast but still colorful look for the picture. Once I recruited Manojh Reddy, our director of photography, we began to discuss the options for achieving the look I wanted. We decided to shoot with his Black Magic Pocket Cinema Camera and to use Zeiss Prime lenses available at the Cage. It was our first time to shoot a short film with this compact but great camera in log. We tested through the workflow by using the camera from test shooting to color grading. We decided to shoot with one stop over-exposed and adjust contrast and color in the post-production process.

Production Design

Since I did not have much of a budget for my thesis film, we could not put too much money in production design. Instead of building a set, my production designer and I tried to find locations close to the picture in our minds. For example, in the original idea Frank worked in a small grocery store or pharmacy. However, after we talked to several grocery stores, we realized that it was hard to get that location. Moreover, we needed to be careful about brand identification if we shot there. So I adjusted the script and Frank became a loading dock worker because we could find a great looking loading dock, and Frank's identity as a loading dock worker still fit the story.

In order to make Robert, the actor, look like an advanced lung cancer patient, we had a
makeup artist on set. The makeup artist made Robert’s face more pale and gaunt. In terms of wardrobe, when he was on his loading dock shift, he wore brown hoodie, dirty jeans, and boots. His hair is also untidy. When Frank is home he is dressed more simply, but cozy and comfortable, in pajamas, T-shirt, and a robe.

When Frank drives Giana to the new group home, he is dressed more formally because he wants to impress the director of the new facility. Instead of a hoodie, we had a sport coat on him. The color was still in the same dark brown tone. His hair was also neater, which showed he took this meeting very seriously.

When I wrote the script, the color in Giana’s bedroom was pink and warm. During the summer, we visited Katlin’s apartment for a script reading. Charlene, her mother, invited us to take a look at Katlin’s bedroom. I was shocked because it perfectly matched my vision. Plus, shooting there would make Katlin feel comfortable and relaxed. My art director toned down the pink in the bedroom a little bit by removing some of the pink, fluffy toys, and swapping the pink sheer curtains with off-white ones so the pink color would not distract the audience.
Production

Working with the Thesis Committee

All of my thesis committee members met with me at beginning of each semester to discuss the plan for that semester. I used the opportunity to bring up questions and concerns. Professor Malcolm Spaull suggested that I watch films about people with Down syndrome, like *Up syndrome*, *Girlfriend*, etc. Professor Frank Deese helped me to improve the dialogue in my script and gave me advice about its structure.

My thesis chair, professor Peter Kiwitt, and I had a meeting every week. I kept him updated on what I was doing and got advice at each stage from scriptwriting and casting to shooting and editing.

I appreciated all of my committee members and their guidance.

Shooting

Overall, the shooting went quite well. Usually, we finished scheduled scenes on each shooting day.

Due to location and actor schedule restrictions, I had to shoot three scenes in three different locations on the first day. Even though all the scenes were relatively short, it was still very time consuming to switch locations. I would not have done it if I had a choice. In order to wrap the shooting on time, my cinematographer, Manojh Reddy, and I went to each location
prior to the shooting day. We planned everything we could, including character blocking, camera position, coverage, and lighting. When we arrived at the location on the shooting day, we were fully prepared. We reached our goal that day.

It was challenging for us when we came to the other multi-location shooting day. Manojh and I did the scouting again and we even did the test shooting several days ahead. However, there was one thing that we did not consider, Katlin’s stamina. All the scenes we planned had Giana in it. It was a chilly early winter day. We had an exterior scene to start, two car scenes, a scene outside of an adult care center and two scenes inside of the care center. All these scenes were very small, but added together it was quite a lot of work. Katlin needed to work the whole day in both exterior and interior scenes. During the morning, Katlin precisely remembered her lines and followed direction. In the car scene, she did a good job in expressing the emotion that I was looking for. However, when we came to the adult care center, the situation started getting difficult. Katlin could not fully focus on the shooting even though we had a half-hour lunch break after the car scene. Also, the manager of the location on that day suddenly required us to leave the facility an hour earlier than our scheduled time. The time restriction made the afternoon shooting more rushed.

By the end of that day, we did not finish everything we scheduled on the call sheet, and we were forced to move all our equipment out through the balcony door to the parking lot in order to leave the building early. I felt bad about making Katlin overly tired but I did learn how to schedule shooting in order to keep Katlin fully focus on the film. For the rest of the
production, I managed to leave Katlin enough time for breaks.

**Directing**

Because English is not my native language, I was concerned that I would take too long to direct the actors on set. Moreover, in this film I needed to work with Katlin whose verbal ability had not fully recovered at that time.

After I cast Katlin, we had several script reading sessions in order to let her fully understand the story and get familiar with the dialogue. Katlin’s mother, Charlene Detsch, also helped us by practicing lines with Katlin every day. Every time I visited her, I could tell she was better than the last time. Also, we talked a lot every time we met. Through the communication, I knew more about her, what made her happy, what made her sad, and what made her afraid. She also told me some of her personal experiences. For example, Charlene had a heart attack. Katlin thought her mother was going to die and she was scared. I gathered all these information and used them as catalyst in the direction to provoke certain emotions from Katlin.

After I cast Robert as Frank, we scheduled two rehearsals. Through the rehearsal, Robert and Katlin got to know each other better. They also built trust and a friendship. Meanwhile, I had enough time to try different possibilities with their acting. We went through all the scenes that had Frank and Giana in them. Holly did not get a chance to come to rehearsal, but I wrote notes and sent them to her. She also talked to me about what she thought about her character, “Holly”. With these communications, I felt much more confident when I got to the set. All the
actors fully understood their roles and goals in the story. It saved us a lot of time while shooting.

Before we started shooting, my advisor suggested I get a moderate performance from the actors as a backup and then push them to project more emotion. In this way, I could have two options when we came to the editing stage. I thought it was a good idea, and I did follow his suggestion during the production. Here is one example: when we shot the “final resolution” where Holly offers to take care of Giana until the group home has an opening. After we got a take that I liked, I talked to Robert and gave him more emotional catalysts in order to push him more. Because I knew he also had a daughter, I described a dangerous situation about his daughter and Holly saving his daughter from that horrible situation. This story gave him a stronger connection to the character, “Frank.” In the following take, Robert did a brilliant job of showing fatherly love: broadly and deeply, subtly and softly. I could see tears in his eyes, and I was moved at that moment. In post-production, we used this take in the final cut of the film.

Sometimes Katlin would get panicked or nervous on set, especially when she found out everyone remembered her lines better than her. “Take your time,” and “You’re doing great!” were my common directions when Katlin fell into that zone. I needed to encourage her and make her feel confident. Luckily, my producer Yumeng developed a strong connection with Katlin during the filmmaking process. Katlin sometimes trusted her more than me. When Katlin got into that zone, Yumeng would help me comfort Katlin until she felt better. However, when we shot the living room scene in Frank’s apartment, the lighting and camera set up took way more time than I expected. After the master shot Katlin began to panic while we were under a
huge time constraint. I still had to keep patient because there were a lot of decisions I needed to make. We took a ten-minute break. Yumeng tried to comfort Katlin while I talked to my director of photography about the shot list. We were able to simplify the shots so we had more single shots than over-the-shoulder shots. That way we did not need to worry about continuity problems as much. Katlin could then have more time to focus her mind on shooting. We did Frank’s single shot first with one of our crew feeding him the lines. Then it was Katlin’s turn. However, Katlin had not recovered yet. I could tell she was still worried about the situation. In order to save time, I had to use cue cards to help her remember her lines. Unfortunately, working this way Giana sounded different, since she was reading the lines. We had a lot of problems when we edited the scene. We had to use more of Frank’s single shots than Giana’s, and edit the audio to make her sound better. I still believe it was the best option I had to resolve the crisis.

During this production I really enjoyed directing. I liked sharing my thoughts on the script with my actors and listen to their feedback. I learned how to keep calm even when I was under pressure because the whole team was depending on me. All my actors did a great job. They paid attention to me, and we worked for the best takes we could get during production.

**Cinematography**

I lost my director of photography at the beginning of the semester to a scheduling issue. Since all of my actors and locations had been scheduled already, I had to start principal
photography as planned on the weekend of week 4. However, I could not find a cinematographer from the undergraduate students. They had been booked to shoot other films since the end of last semester. Plus, it was hard for the second year graduate students to shoot my film because they needed time to make their short films during that fall semester.

I thought about working as the director of photography as well as the director. Both my advisor, Peter, and my producer said it would overload me if I took on both responsibilities. Facts proved that they were right. There were way too many things for me to decide, like interpreting script, directing the actors, making final decisions about blocking, etc. I would not have had enough stamina to direct the actors and sit behind the camera.

I contacted Manojh Reddy, a talented cinematographer from the second year MFA program. Even though he needed to shoot his fall film during that semester, he was willing to help me to complete my shooting prior to his film. As payback, I helped him shoot his film right after mine.

The film was shot on the Black Magic Pocket Cinema Camera (BMPCC). It is a super compact, cellphone looking camera, but it can produce extraordinary images. The reason we decided to use this camera was that the camera records in log color space rather than linear Rec. 709 color space. The log color space gave us the opportunity to capture a wide dynamic range. The codec of the video file the camera records is QuickTime ProRes 422 HQ. It is a better codec compression than H.264. By using this camera, I would have more space to adjust the color for my film in post-production.
It was also challenging to use this camera for my film. We had limited experience in using the BMPCC to shoot a short film in log color space. We did a practice shoot to test the workflow from shooting to color grading. We noticed that the battery died much faster than all of the other cameras we had worked with before. In order to solve this issue, we ordered a good amount of batteries and had the AC adaptor just in case we ran out of power.

We had a very tightly scheduled day. There were six scenes in three different locations. Manojh and I knew it could be a hard day to accomplish. We did a test shoot for the playground scene and the car scene. Two stand-ins were used instead of the real actors. During the testing, we figured out the camera positions, lens choices, and the way to mount the camera in some particular shots.

The test shooting process was extremely helpful in terms of improving the efficiency on
set, especially in the car scene. There were three people (director, cinematographer, and sound mixer) who were all crammed in the back of a SUV while two actors were in the front seat. It would have wasted a lot of time to determine which lens we should use in such a narrow space. Moreover, we needed to use a suction car mount to position the camera in the vehicle for three particular shots. Figuring out the exact camera setup during the test shooting rather than real shoot saved us tons of time and made the shooting much easier.

There were different camera movements in the film depending on the emotion of the scene. For instance, when Frank walks with Sara in the hallway of the care center. I wanted a handheld feeling to match the hurried emotion. However, if we really handheld the camera and walked with the actor, there would be too much shakiness in the image and the shot would become unusable, especially when shooting with a small and lightweight camera. We borrowed a wheelchair from the adult care center and our cinematographer sat in the wheelchair holding a Manfrotto monopod with the camera on it. One of our grips pulled the wheelchair when the actor started walking. In this way, we captured the right amount of the handheld feeling.
Another example is when Giana finally accepts Frank’s death we used my Konova K5 slider to create a slow and smooth move to portray the gentle emotion between a father and his daughter. Konova K5 is a well-made, sturdy slider. Unlike a regular dolly, this slider does not take much space and is much easier to set up, yet still provides consistent camera movement horizontally or vertically.

When it came to filming the scene where Frank left Giana in the new care center and drove away, we mounted the camera on the back window of my SUV with the suction car mount. The camera started rolling when the car starting driving away. This kind of long range, gentle camera movement emphasized the loneliness that Giana felt as Frank drove away.
Post Production

Editing

I spent more time on editing than I ever had anticipated on this project. The editing cycle lasted five months, from January to May 2015.

At the end of spring 2014, I tried to persuade Fraaz Khan to join my team. Fraaz was a second year MFA film student at RIT. He had proven himself to be a good editor through the past two years. Fraaz also worked as a key grip on set during the production stage. In this way, he was quite familiar with the footage that we got on set.

Before the winter break, I gave all the footage of my film to Fraaz, and he worked during January for the editing based on the script we had. After winter break, he showed me the first rough cut. It was a twenty-five minute edited version. I was impressed by the job he did. The cut was very smooth and was definitely a good start to beginning the fine editing.

At the beginning of the fine editing stage I showed the version we had to Peter, my thesis advisor, and he gave me a lot of suggestions. Then I transmitted those notes to Fraaz and he made all the adjustments. After the first few weeks, I started to realize that this workflow had its own limitations. First, the turnaround time was much longer than I expected. Since Fraaz had other courses to take during that semester, I usually did not have enough time to watch the new cut before meeting with Peter in the following week. Second, the notes that came from
Peter, went through me, and finally were delivered to Fraaz. This risked misunderstanding generated during the passing of information. Unfortunately, we could not schedule a weekly meeting between the three of us because everyone had their own schedule. Soon, I decided to take the responsibility to edit the film myself. During weekly meetings, Peter sat with me, watch the latest version in Adobe Premiere Pro CC, and gave me suggestions to improve my editing. If it was not a dramatic change, I would make the adjustment directly on the timeline. If the adjustment had a greater effect the contents, I would write down the notes and adjust the editing after meeting. The workflow was faster in this way.

I was the editor of my past two films. I thought I was a good editor and I had enough knowledge to edit my film in an effective way. However, I learned a lot from those countless editing sessions with Peter. Editing is not just reassembling the footage based on script. It is actually a recreation of the story. After deeply studying all the footage I could: enhance emotions, fix continuity problems, make plain acting more dramatic, and make my actress sounds more natural even when she was reading cue cards. All I needed to do was to find the best action from the different takes and use them in an intelligent way. Those actions might even hide in the moment before I called “action” or after the “cut!”

I also learned that I could edit out dialogue in a conversation to make the emotion even stronger. In one example, Frank tells Nichole he will not live long enough to wait for an opening in the group home. Instead of letting Frank talk about how he only had a few months left to live, we cut out the dialogue and created a long silence by using the footage from another take. This
adjustment helped to show how helpless Frank was at that moment.

Color Correction

I also took the responsibility to color correct my film. It actually did not take too much time for me to finish. The Black Magic Pocket Cinema Camera (BMPCC) shot in log color space so the images from the camera were grey and de-saturated. During the test shooting, we figured out the color correction pipeline of this project.

First, we used a free 3D LUT, Hook_BMDFilm2Vid_V1.1, to pull the flat image to REC 709 color space. Second, I did a pass to unify the color in each scene. The third step was more creative. I colored some scenes based on my original idea of how the scene should look.

When I went through all the shots and tried to unify the color, I had some difficulties. We shot several pick-ups during production to fix continuity problems. Since we could not get exactly the same lighting, I knew we might have some color issues. Once we put shots from principle shooting and pick-ups together, we saw a huge difference between them. For example, the pick-up shots from the entrance of the group home were tinted blue compared to the original shots. My goal was to match them as best I could.

Automated Dialog Replacement, Music Scoring, and Sound Mixing

Yumeng Zhang was my sound designer and music composer. She is a pianist and extremely passionate about sound design and music scoring. I watched her design the sound
and compose the music on her own film and I felt she was very talented. Right after I had the picture lock, I sent my audio file to her and reserved the mix-down theater. During the sound design stage, we realized that some of the audio was poor quality. Some was too soft, and some had wind noise. I had to call my actors back to record those lines again.

I feared automated dialog replacement (ADR) would be time consuming because I heard that if I needed to replace one line in a scene, I would need to re-record all the dialogue in the scene to match the audio quality. Luckily, Michael Harper joined our team at this point. Michael is an ADR specialist. He told me that we only needed to re-record the dialogue in bad condition, and that he would make sure it matched the quality of the other lines. In this way, we only had two short recording sessions with my actors to get everything we needed for the sound design.

I previously had a bad experience communicating with an American composer. Because music is very abstract it was very hard for me to express the feelings I wanted in a second language. As Yumeng is also from China, I could communicate with her in Chinese. It was much easier to tell her the type of music that I was looking for. We also had the same taste in music. It made the music scoring process smoother. We recorded the music on a real piano, and then used it as a reference to re-create the music in MIDI software, Apple Logic Pro X.

After we recorded the ADR and music, we spent three nights in the theater to mix the audio scene-by-scene in order to make sure everything sounded good.
Exporting

While exporting my film, I did not encounter too many problems. It was a regular HD video pipeline, seeking the best color rendition with the least compression.

We tried exporting an H.264 codec file directly from Adobe Premiere Pro CC as well as exporting a QuickTime ProRes 422 HQ file that we subsequently compressed to H.264. It turned out that the quality of the second method was better. Hence, we used that method to export the final product, even though it took more time.

Over months of editing, I watched my film many times. I was never one hundred percent satisfied because the longer I worked on it, the more mistakes I could see. I wanted to fix them all. However, it is said that art can never be finished. At least in part this is true. An artist can never truly finish because they can always do better. I wanted my film to be better. However, eventually I had to stop because of the deadline.

The premiere screening was on May 17, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. It was in the middle of the graduate thesis block but it was the first live action graduate film of the day. When I was sitting in the dark, watching my film projected on the big screen, I was very self-conscious. Being in the theater with an audience made me see it from their perspective and judge it much more severely. Flaws were amplified and became more obvious to me. For example, some color correction still needed to be tweaked, some editing could be tightened up, etc.
Screening

After the film was shown, I went to the podium and presented my artist statement. Most of the feedback from the audience was positive and encouraging, which made me more confident about my film. They thought it was very meaningful, and that I raised awareness about the issue. They also felt Katlin Detsch, the actress playing Giana, did a decent job of acting. I did too. I could see how much effort Katlin and Charlene, Katlin’s mother, put into the project. I really appreciated that.

On the other hand, some in the audience thought there were places the film could have been improved. One audience member thought Holly offered to take care of Giana too easily. I recognized this problem during production, but I did not have a solution then or during post-production. If I had the time, I would have shown more of their background so the offer would not be that abrupt. Phillip Leteka, a first year MFA student, thought Frank coughed too much at the beginning as compared to the end of the film. I agree. When I was editing the film, I realized that I let Robert, the actor playing Frank, cough too much at the beginning. I tried my best to decrease the early coughs but it was still not enough.

Overall, however, the audience enjoyed watching On Your Own and regarded it as a well done short film.
Appendix

Appendix 1: Original Proposal

Thesis Proposal

“On Your Own”

By

Tianyi Wang

MFA in Film and Animation

School of Film and Animation

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester, New York

April 2014

Proposal approved for submission by:

Date:
Synopsis

A 50-year-old single father with advanced lung cancer must make his daughter who has Down syndrome understand his death and provide for her care after his death.

Rationale

I am from China. In my culture, family is of great importance. After two years of learning filmmaking in US, I found the story that I love to tell is about the relationship within the family.

One year ago, when I was shopping in Eastview mall, I saw a around 50-year-old father stood beside the carousel in the mall with his over 20 daughter who has Down syndrome. In contrast, other parents are all very young with their kids. I was moved because I saw father’s love at that place. So I want to make a film about this particular father and daughter.

After I talked to Chris Tumminelli, who is the President Flower City Down Syndrome Network, I realized it is the big concern that what those parents should do when they pass away. They cannot make sure their kids who have down syndrome will live a life as good as they can provide. So this film that I want to make is also to explore their concern. As a filmmaker, I think it is my responsibility to show this kind of situation in society.

Treatment

In the morning, Frank, 50-year-old, lies on the bed, coughing hard. He enters the bathroom, washing face. He opens the closet. Here are a lot of pill bottles in it. He takes some pills out and eats them. He looks at himself in the mirror and sighs.
He knocks open Giana’s bedroom. He calls Giana up patiently. Giana looks at Frank happily. Giana asks him to bring her daily pink shirt. Frank says, “You know how to do it. Come’n. I’ll see you in the kitchen”.

Giana comes to the kitchen in the pink skirt. Frank lets her to make her favorite pancake for herself today. Giana says, “I don’t want to make them. I just want to eat them.” Frank attempts to persuade Giana to make a try. But Giana says. “I’m not gonna do it.” “Yes, you are.” Giana gets a little bit upset. “I just want to eat them.” “You make it or we don’t have breakfast today” Giana throws the mixing spoon into the mix bowl. Frank hugs Giana and apologizes. “I can’t make you pancake forever.”

Frank and Giana walk out of the house. Their neighbor, Holly, is watering the flowers in her yard. Frank says hi to her. Giana runs to Holly and gives her a warm hug.

Frank opens the door of drawing classroom. They are in the day care center. Here are several kids with different intelligence disabilities in the room practicing painting. Giana comes to her friends and says hi to everybody. She sits down and starts painting. Frank talks to the director of the center to see if here is an empty spot now to let Giana get in. The director shakes head and says. “If I can, I defiantly would help you. But we can’t jump around the line. I’m sorry. We still need to wait probably three years.”

Frank does his loading staff job with his colleague at a loading dock. While Frank moving several bulky cardboard boxes, he starts coughing. The cardboard box falls onto the ground. The colleague asks if he is ok. Frank notes that he just gets cold. The colleague asks if he wants to
take a day off. Franks refuses the offer. Frank goes behind the truck and takes a pill.

Frank sits in the living room with Giana. He tells Giana that she will move to the other place to live. Giana asks, “Will you come with me?” Frank explains that Giana will be there without him. Giana says, “I don’t want to.” Frank says, “But you have to. Here are new thing, new room, new friends and new toys. Everything will be new.” Giana says, “But I don’t like new things, you know.” Frank looks at Giana, “Look, Giana, you must live a life without me. Someday, I will die. I won’t be here with you forever.” Giana grabs Franks arm, “Where will you go? Why don’t you bring me with you?” Holly comes to Frank’s house. Giana is distracted by Holly’s coming and very excited to see her. When Frank wants to leave home, Giana tries to stop him. Holly stops her and tells her that Frank will come back.

In the father’s night, those fathers whose kids have Down syndrome sit together and share their experiences. Frank talks to those fathers. “I know here is not much time for me. I really hate to leave Giana behind. Why I can’t find a better solution for Giana. Why I can’t take care of her forever. She needs me. But I can do nothing but push her to live on her own.”

Frank gets back home. Giana is asleep. Frank asks how Giana was. Holly says that she comforts her. Frank says, “I was trying to tell her my death.” Holly asks him whether it’s a good idea. Frank says I just have to.

Frank drives Giana to the group home. He tells her that she will meet some new friends there, and the place is so cool. She’ll definitely love the place. Frank promises, “I’ll visit everyday. Holly says that she will come. I’ll bring your friends from day care center to here.”
Frank also prepares a gift for Giana.

They arrive the group home. Giana loves the place, although the group home is further away from Frank’s house. Giana gets well with other residences there. Frank entrusts Giana to the stuff in the group home. Frank gives the Barbie doll to Giana. Giana plays with the Barbie doll in her room. He enjoins Giana to be a good girl. Then Frank leaves.

Frank sits in the living room surrounded by cardboard boxes. He is packing up family memories, photo albums and frames. He looks at one photo frame. In the picture, Frank companies with Giana when she was a young girl. Frank’s phone rings.

Here is a person yells in the group home. Frank goes into the group home. The staff tells him that Giana was fine in the afternoon. But she got anxious in the evening. Nobody could comfort her. Frank comes into Giana’s room. Her room is messy. Tears are on Giana’s face. Frank hugs Giana and comforts her.

Frank’s car drive into his driveway and stops. Giana thinks Frank doesn’t love her any more. She yells at Frank and beats his shoulder. Giana gets off the car, knocks open Holly’s door and gets in there.

Frank and Holly sit by the tea table in the couch. Frank apologizes for Giana. Holly says, “Never mind. I like her.” She can stay here few days and take her back again. Holly says you don’t have to do that. Holly says that she can take care of Giana after Frank passes away until the best group home has a room for Giana. Frank is reluctant it, cause Giana is kind of liability to Holly. Holly convinces him and says I’d love to take care of her. They’re getting on very well.
In Frank’s dining room, Giana wants to drink ice water. She requires more ice. Frank grabs some ice for her and sits on the chair in front of her. Frank talks to her seriously that he is dying. “I want you start change when he is still there to help her change. You need to live with Holly.”

Giana argues, “I don’t want to live with Holly. I just want to be with you.” Frank explains that after he dies, Giana won’t see him anymore. She cannot be with Frank anymore. Giana needs to chose, either live with Holly or live with the Group home they tried today. Giana says, “I don’t like that place.” Giana asks Frank that will Holly love her. Frank promises Giana that Holly will take care of her as well as he does. Giana worries about what if she misses Frank. Frank walks outside of the house. Giana follows him. Frank points at the sky and says after he dies, he will become a star in the sky. If Giana misses him, she just need to look at the sky, he will know that Giana is missing him. Giana nods.

Several months later, Giana is in Holly’s kitchen. She is making a pancake. Frank’s photo frame stands beside her.
Title: “On your own”  
Director: Tianyi Wang  
Producer: Tianyi Wang  
Running Time: 20 minutes

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**4 Months Pre-Production**  
**10 Days Shooting**

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## Spring 2015

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Appendix 2: Final Script

On Your Own

By

Tianyi Wang

Life

Final Version v16  wangtianyi128@gmail.com
585-270-9114
INT. GIANA’S BEDROOM – DAY
CLOSE UP: PINK RABBIT ON THE SHELF
CLOSE UP: PINK BUTTERFLY ON THE WINDOW
CLOSE UP: SOME MEDALS ON THE WALL.
CLOSE UP: PINK BEAR FAIR ON THE TABLE
CLOSE UP: MINNIE AND PINK CLOWN LAY ON THE TABLE
FRANK, 60 years old, knocks at the bedroom door.

    FRANK
    I’m coming in.

Frank walks to the bed.

    FRANK
    (hoarse)
    Time to wake up, my little princess.

A girl on the bed rolls over.

Frank sits on the edge of the bed. He pats the girl on her arm softly. However, his voice is hoarse.

    FRANK
    Princess.

The girl covers her face with her comforter.

    GIRL
    Please. Ten more minutes.

Frank pretends to tickle the girl. GIANA, 24 years old with Down syndrome, giggles on the bed and sits up, smiling.

She lifts her arms up, and waits for Frank to help her change clothes.

Frank looks at her. He doesn’t move. Giana waits for a while and looks at Frank.

    GIANA
    Daddy!

Frank gently strokes Giana’s hair, and shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
You know how to do it. Pick your
own clothes out for today, too.

Frank stands up. He leaves the room and closes the door.

2

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF FRANK’S HOUSE - DAY

Frank and Giana walk out of the house. Giana is in her pink
shirt. HOLLY, 37-years-old, Frank’s neighbor, is just
finishing morning jog.

Giana runs to Holly and gives her a warm hug.

GIANA
Good morning!

HOLLY
How are you sweetheart? Are you
ready for your field trip?

GIANA
(excited)
Of course!

Frank coughs by his car.

HOLLY
(sincerely)
Hi, Frank! How are you?

FRANK
(friendly)
I’m good.

Holly looks at Frank carefully. Frank rubs his shoulder.

FRANK
Honey, we need to hurry!

Giana runs back and gets into the car. She waves to Holly.

3

INT. HALLWAY OF SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Frank looks through a window at the pool. Giana, in her
swimming suit, says hi to her friends.
INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Frank looks at Giana and smiles. He waves his hand to Giana. Giana waves back in the water.

INT. HALLWAY OF SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Frank suddenly hides behind a wall. He leans on the wall and coughs with all his strength in the hallway. He covers his mouth with his hand. Nicolle, 45 years old, the director of the day care center sees Frank.

INT. LOBBY OF SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Nicolle helps Frank to sit down on a bench. She passes Frank a cup of water. Frank drinks the water and eases himself down.

NICOLLE
Can I get you anything else?

FRANK
I’m fine.
(sips his water)
Is there any change in the waiting list?

Nicolle sighs and shakes her head.

NICOLLE
Three, maybe two years... Maybe you can get someone to help you at home.

FRANK
I don’t have that long. Months, not years.

NICOLLE
I’m so sorry. I didn’t know.

Frank sighs.

NICOLLE
I’ve seen Giana grow up. I would love to have her. And we can still take her in our day hab. But we just don’t have a bed for her yet.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)
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(sips his water)

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Frank sighs.

NICOLLE
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Pause.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NICOLLE
Have you tried Koelle Care Center?

FRANK
They’re pretty far.

NICOLLE
But they are good facility. I can put a call in.

Frank coughs and nods.

7 INT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

Frank is moving some small cardboard boxes from a truck. Frank’s hands are shaky. Some sweat appear on Frank’s forehead.

When he comes out of the truck, he trips on the edge of truck. The boxes that he carried fall on the ground. His college, BOB comes to him.

BOB
Are you OK?

FRANK
I’m fin...

Frank coughs. He feels short of breath. He crouches down and uses his hand to cover his mouth.

BOB
Wow. Take it easy, man.

Frank tries to catch his breath. Bob pats him on the back. Frank waves him away.

FRANK
I just got a cold.

Bob picks up the boxes.

BOB
Maybe you need to take a sick day.

Frank joins Bob putting the boxes on the cart.

FRANK
I’m fine. I just needed a second to rest.
INT. BEHIND THE TRUCK - DAY
Frank takes out a pill box and takes two pills.

INT. FRANK’S KITCHEN - DAY
Giana comes into the kitchen in another pink shirt. Frank grabs a mixing bowl and a bag of flour.

FRANK
Good morning, sweetheart. Do you want some daddy’s special pancakes?

Giana sits beside the dinner table. She holds her head in her hands.

GIANA
I like pancakes!

Frank pours some flour into the mixing bowl.

FRANK
Come here! Let’s make some together.

Instead of moving, Giana shakes her head.

GIANA
I don’t want to. I just want to eat them.

Frank grabs two eggs, puts those two eggs beside his ears and shows them to Giana.

FRANK
(funny tune)
It’s really funny. Dad will teach you how to make delicious pancakes.

Giana turns her back to Frank. Frank brings the mixing bowl and the whisk to her.

He dips his finger into the flour and puts some flour on Giana’s nose.

FRANK
(funny voice)
Come on. Let’s perform some magic together.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 6.

GIANA

No.

Giana turns her head to one side. Frank puts down eggs.

FRANK
(serious voice)
Yes, you are,

Giana shakes her head.

GIANA
I’m not gonna do it. I’m not gonna do it.

Frank tries to put the whisk into Giana’s hand. Giana throws the whisk into the mixing bowl. The flour falls on the table.

FRANK
You make it or no breakfast today!

Giana gets scared. She almost cries. Frank calms down.

FRANK
I’m sorry. I can’t make you pancakes forever. You have to learn how to take care of yourself.

Frank coughs badly. Giana turns back her head and looks at Frank. He uses his hand to cover his mouth. There is blood on his hands and mouth. Giana bends down at looks at Frank’s hand carefully.

GIANA
You’re bleeding?

FRANK
Giana. I have cancer.

GIANA
What’s cancer?

FRANK
It’s a very bad disease -- in my lungs. And it’s going to take me from you. So I need you to listen.

Giana, in hurry, puts the whisk back in the mixing bowl.

GIANA
I don’t want you to be sick. I’ll do what you tell me. I’ll be a good girl. Don’t leave me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK

It’s okay.

Frank tries to calm down Giana.

FRANK

Honey, I just want teach you how to make pancakes.

INT. FRANK’S CAR – DAY

Frank, in a casual suit jacket, and Giana are in Frank’s car.

Frank drives past a intersection. Giana notices that. She turns back and looks at the intersection. Then she turns back to Frank.

GIANA

This isn’t the way.

FRANK

We’re going to have an adventure at another care center today.

Giana panics.

GIANA

I don’t want to go to some place else. I was your good girl.

FRANK

Calm down, Giana. Calm down. We’re just going to meet some new friends.

GIANA

I don’t like new friends.

FRANK

Do you trust Nicolle?

Giana calms down a little bit and nods her head.

FRANK

Nicolle told me this care center is very nice. There are a lot of good people. She said you will love this place.

Frank strokes Giana’s hair tenderly to clam Giana down.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
It’s okay.
Frank tries to calm down Giana.

FRANK
Honey, I just want teach you how to make pancakes.

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Frank strokes Giana’s hair tenderly to clam Giana down.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GIANA
Nicolle said I can go there?

Frank nods his head.

INT. BEDROOM OF KOELLE CARE CENTER – DAY

Inside of the bedroom, SARA, a staff of Koelle Care Center, opens the bedroom for Frank and Giana.

SARA
And here’s one of our bedroom.

Giana holds Frank’s hand firmly. She hesitates.

GIANA
I want to go home.

FRANK
Are you daddy’s big girl or baby girl?

GIANA
I’m big girl!

FRANK
That’s right.

Frank walks into the room. He looks back at Giana and beckons her to come in.

Giana looks at the room and Frank.

FRANK
Come on.

Giana steps into the simple but tidy room. She touches the bed, the curtain.

EXT. PLAYGROUND OF KOELLE CARE CENTER – DAY

Giana sits on the swing. She doesn’t look happy.

Not far away, Frank sits on the bench with Sara.

SARA
We’d like to fill the bed as soon as possible. But I’m worried Giana isn’t ready for the transition.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
How long can you hold the room?

SARA
We really can hold it at all. There is no one looking right now. But it might change tomorrow.

FRANK
She really is a good kid. Just give me a few days. I’m sure she won’t be a problem.

Frank and Sara look at Giana. Giana, in the swing, is also looking at Frank.

Concerned, Giana watches at Frank and Sara talk.

13
EXT. ENTRANCE OF KOELLE CARE CENTER - DAY

Frank, Giana and Sara stand beside Frank’s car.

FRANK
Holly’ll pick you up at the usual time.

Frank strokes Giana’s hair.

GIANA
I don’t like this place. I don’t know anyone.

FRANK
You’re dad’s big girl right? Sara will show you lots of interesting things here.

GIANA
Daddy...

FRANK
Please, Giana. Just do this for me.

Frank gets into his car and drives away. We can see a wide shot of Giana and Sara stands by the entrance of the care center.
EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT
Frank goes toward his car. He starts coughing badly. He squats on the ground, covering his mouth with his hand. Blood sips through this figures. Short of breath, he struggles to open his car.

INT. FRANK’S CAR - NIGHT
Frank throws himself onto the seat. He grabs a bottle, and swallows several pills.
He slowly eases himself down. There is blood on Frank’s shirt.

EXT. HOLLY’S HOUSE - NIGHT
Frank knocks. Holly opens the door quietly, putting her finger to lips.

HOLLY
(whisper)
Shhh! She just fell a sleep.

Frank sees Giana on the couch, sleeping.

FRANK
(whisper)
I’m sorry I’m late. Giana alright tonight?

HOLLY
(whisper)
She was great.

FRANK
(whisper)
Thank you.

HOLLY
(whisper)
It’s no bother. She’s a lovely girl.

INT. HOLLY’S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUES
Frank follows Holly into her living room. Giana is covered with a blanket.
Frank gently pushes Giana’s shoulder.
CONTINUED:

FRANK
My little princess, time to wake up.

Giana keeps her eyes closed. It seems like she sleeps pretty tight. Frank continues shakes her shoulder tenderly in order to wake her up.

Giana suddenly wakes up. Frank gets shocked.

GIANA
Got you!! Ha ha ha!

Giana laughs. Holly looks at them, smiling.

Frank realizes that he was pranked by Giana and Holly. He starts to tickle Giana. Giana laughs. After a while, everyone settle down.

FRANK
Sweetheart. Did you tell Holly about your adventure today?

HOLLY
She did. Giana made some new friends, didn’t you?

Giana curls her lips.

GIANA
I like my old friends better.

HOLLY
They want you to come back again tomorrow.

GIANA
I don’t want to. I miss Nicolle.

Holly sits beside Giana.

HOLLY
I’ll be so proud of you if you could go back again.

FRANK
(watches the clock)
We’ll talk about it tomorrow. It’s time for bed.
18 INT. GIANA’S BEDROOM - DAY

Giana comes into her room. Frank stands beside the bed, his back to Giana.

GIANA
What are you doing?

Frank turns back, revealing A pink suitcase, full with pick clothes, open on Giana’s bed.

FRANK
Packing. You’re gonna have a little vacation.

Giana, happy, picks out two more shirts from the drawer.

GIANA
Where are we going?

FRANK
Not "we." Just you. You’re gonna have a sleep over at Sara’s place.

GIANA
I don’t want to sleep there.

FRANK
You need to do this.

GIANA
Why are you trying to get rid of me?

Giana throws the clothes on the ground and runs out of the room.

19 INT. EXT. FRANK’S CAR - DAY

Frank drives Giana to Sara’s place. She holds Barbie, unhappy. Her pink suitcase is on the back seat.

20 INT. GIANA’S BEDROOM - DAY

A photo frame is on Giana’s dresser. In the picture, young Frank holds little Giana.

Frank takes the frame.

He sits on Giana’s bed and looks around.
INT. FRANK’S BEDROOM – DAY
Frank takes off the frames of photos on his wall.

INT. FRANK’S LIVING ROOM – DUSK
Frank sits on the floor in the living room. Around him, there are some unfolded cardboard boxes, books, tapes, frames of photo, albums and two folded boxes on the floor.

Frank puts photo albums and frames in a small box beside him. He looks at the last frame of photo and smiles. It’s the frame he takes from Giana’s room.

Frank’s cellphone RINGS.

INT. HALLWAY OF KOELLE CARE CENTER – NIGHT
Frank walks in the hallway of care center. Sara comes to Frank.

FRANK
What happened?

SARA
She was fine this afternoon, but she got anxious in the evening. We tried everything but nobody can comfort her.

INT. BEDROOM OF KOELLE CARE CENTER – NIGHT
Frank comes into Giana’s room. Sara stands by the door.

Giana, holding her knees in her arm, sits on the floor between wall and bed.

Frank walks closer to Giana. Tears are on Giana’s face.

FRANK
Sweetheart.

Giana throws the Barbie doll away, stands up and walks toward Frank.

GIANA
Where were you?

Frank kneels down beside Giana. Giana hugs Frank.

(CONTINUED)
FRANK
I told you’ll sleep over tonight.

GIANA
I want to go home! I don’t want to stay here.

FRANK
You promised me you’d give it a try.

GIANA
Please daddy, I didn’t do anything wrong.

INT. FRANK’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Frank’s entrance door opens. Giana rushes into the room first. Frank comes into the house, closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT
Giana gets into her room, turns on the light.

INT. FRANK’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Frank stays in the living room and sits on the couch, disappointed.
Giana rushes into the living room.

GIANA
Where’s the picture of us? It’s not in my room.

Giana notices the boxes are on the floor.

GIANA
You’re packing?

Giana bends down and checks the small box.

FRANK
I was ...

Giana picks up a picture frame. The picture in the frame is the one that Young Frank holds little Giana.

Frank comes to Giana. He tries to put his hand on Giana’s shoulder. Giana pushes his hand away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GIANA
Don’t touch me!

FRANK
Calm down, princess. I just wanted you to have some pictures of us at Sara’s place, so it would feel like home.

GIANA
This is my home. I don’t wanna live without you.

FRANK
Giana. I told you I have cancer, very bad cancer.

Pause.

FRANK
I’ll be gone soon, like mom...

GIANA
You said Mom died because the doctor couldn’t get to her in time. We have time. You could go to the doctor. And the doctor could fix it.

FRANK
There’s somethings even doctor can’t fix. You have to live in Sara’s place because I don’t have choice. We don’t have choice.

GIANA
No, you could!

FRANK
Don’t you understand? The cancer’s killing me. You will never see me. I’ll be gone, and you will never see me again. Forever.

Giana cries.

FRANK
I don’t want to leave you. But I can’t stop it.

GIANA
You don’t love me anymore! I hate you!
Giana runs out of the house.

28  EXT. HOLLY’S HOUSE - NIGHT
Giana runs to Holly’s door. She knocks. Frank comes to Giana.

    FRANK
    Let’s go back.
Giana ignores Frank and continues knocking at the door.
Holly opens the door. Giana pushes into the house.

    HOLLY
    (to Giana)
    What happened, honey?

29  INT. HOLLY’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Giana runs to the couch and buries herself under cushions.
Frank and Holly walk into living room. Frank kneels beside Giana.

    FRANK
    We need to go home.

    GIANA
    I don’t want to talk to you.

    FRANK
    Giana --

    GIANA
    No.
Holly kneels down beside Giana.

    HOLLY
    Would you like to stay here tonight?
Giana lifts her head and nods.

    HOLLY
    Why don’t you go upstairs?
Giana runs to the stairs.
Frank sighs and sits on the couch. Holly sits beside him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOLLY
What happened?

FRANK
I tried to make her understand... she has go to Sara’s place. It’s just hard. I love her so much. I can’t bear to leave her. I just wish there was more time.

Frank chokes and stands up. Holly listens to him carefully.

FRANK
I’m sorry. I’ll pick her up in the morning.

Frank walks toward the door. Holly sits on the couch, thinking.

HOLLY
She can stay here.

Frank turns back.

FRANK
I need to get her back to the center... or... we’ll lose the room.

Holly stands.

HOLLY
No, she can stay with me.

FRANK
What do you mean?

HOLLY
She doesn’t need to go to Sara’s place. Here’s a bed for her.

FRANK
I can’t let you to do that. It’s such a huge commitment.

HOLLY
I know. It scares me a little. But I want to do it. I don’t have anyone else in my life. You said the bed in Nicolle’s center will be ready in couple of years. I can do that.

Frank hesitates.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 18.

HOLLY

Please...

Frank gives Holly a big bear hug.

30 INT. HOLLY’S BEDROOM - NIGHT 30

Giana is lying on the bed. Frank knocks and enters.

GIANA
I don’t want to talk to you.

Giana uses pillows to cover her head.

FRANK
Princes, you don’t have to go to Sara’s place.

Giana sits up and looks at Frank.

FRANK
But you can’t stay at home either.

GIANA
I only wanna be with you.

FRANK
That’s what I want, too. But everyone dies and we don’t get to choose when. We can only choose what we do with the time we have. Let’s make every day special. I’ve always been so proud of you and I need you to make me proud again. When I get too sick to take care of you, you need to come live with Holly. You’ll still get to see your friends at Nicole’s. And when a room opens up, you’ll have to live there but Holly will visit you. OK?

GIANA
You’re not going right away?

FRANK
Not right away.

GIANA
OK, daddy.

Giana hugs Frank firmly.
EXT. FRANK’S YARD - NIGHT

Face.

Frank and Giana sit outside of their house. Frank holds Giana’s hand. Giana puts her head on Frank’s shoulder.

GIANA
What do I do when I miss you?

FRANK
Search the sky for the brightest star. That’ll be me. Then you’ll know that I’ve never really left my little princess.

Giana nods.

INT. HOLLY’S KITCHEN - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Giana and Holly are in Holly’s kitchen. She shows Holly how to make pancakes.

Frank’s photo frame stands beside her.

THE END.
### CALL SHEET

**PRODUCTION COMPANY**  BearCox Productions  
**SHOW**  On Your Own  
**SERIES EPISODE**  
**PROD # 3**  
**DAY # 3**  
**OUT OF 6**  
**LOCATION**  100 Groton Pkwy, Rochester, NY 14623  
**DATE**  10/19/14  
**DIRECTOR**  Tianyi Wang  
**PRODUCER**  Tianyi Wang  
**CREW CALL**  9:00 am  
**SUNRISE**  7:29 am  
**SUNSET**  6:21 pm  
**LEAVING CALL**  7:30 pm  
**SHOOTING CALL**  9:40 am  
**IS TODAY A DESIGNATED DAY OFF?**  NO  
**LEAVING CALL 7:30 pm**  
**SHOOTING CALL 9:40 am**  

### SET DESCRIPTION  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENE #</th>
<th>CAST</th>
<th>D/N</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXT.</td>
<td>Frank and Sara talk, Giana sits on a swing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT.</td>
<td>Frank drives Giana to the new group home for the 1st time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXT.</td>
<td>Frank leaves the new group home</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT.</td>
<td>Sara shows Frank and Giana the bedroom</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT.</td>
<td>Frank comes to pickup Giana</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT.</td>
<td>Frank rushes into the group home</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>N</td>
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### CAST  
<table>
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<th>PART OF</th>
<th>LEAVE</th>
<th>MAKEUP</th>
<th>SET CALL</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Robert Lindquist</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Katlin Detsch</td>
<td>Giana</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Steph Byers</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ATMOSPHERE & STAND-INS

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NOTE: No forced calls without previous approval of unit production manager or assistant director. All calls subject to change.

**Assistant Director** Tianyi Wang 585-270-9114  
**Production Manager** Yumeng Zhang 585-754-6636  

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Appendix 4: Title & Credit

On Your Own

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MFA degree in the School of Film and Animation, Rochester Institute of Technology

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Appendix 5: Production Stills