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# NARRATIVES OF ABUSE: A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF BATTERED WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF THE FILM, IN THE EYES OF OTHERS

Elisa Herrmann

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale*, [elisaherrmann@gmail.com](mailto:elisaherrmann@gmail.com)

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NARRATIVES OF ABUSE: A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF BATTERED WOMEN  
AND THE MAKING OF THE FILM, *IN THE EYES OF OTHERS*

by

Elisa Salem Herrmann

B.S. Federal University of Paraná, 2001

A Thesis Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Fine Arts Degree in Mass Communications and Media Arts.

College of Mass Communications and Media Arts  
in the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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THESIS APPROVAL

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Elisa Salem Herrmann

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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Master of Fine Arts  
in the field of Mass Communication and Media Arts

Approved by:

Lilly Boruszkowski, Chair

H.D. Motyl

Dr. Susan Felleman

Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
June 25, 2012

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

ELISA SALEM HERRMANN, for the Master of Fine Arts degree in MASS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ARTS, presented on JUNE 25, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: NARRATIVES OF ABUSE: A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF BATTERED WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF THE FILM, *IN THE EYES OF OTHERS*

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Lilly Boruszkowski

The thesis film *In the Eyes of Others* is the result of three-years of research on viewers' fascination with horror films, Brazil televisions' seeming non-stop broadcast of news about crimes of passion, and my study of the link between crimes of passion and domestic violence. The film tells the story of Amanda and Jack, a battered woman and her abusive husband, who, in the eyes of others, seem like the perfect couple. By showing one of the possible tragic outcomes of a life where violence against women is hidden from the eyes of society, my goal with *In the Eyes of Others* is to advocate the end of violence against women and to promote discussion that will lead us to gender equality.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and siblings, who offered their unconditional support during the past three years; to my committee members and to Professors Jay Needham and Hong Zhou, who assisted me in the completion of this thesis work; and to all friends who helped me in the making of *In The Eyes of Others*, I hope they feel proud to be part of it. Finally, I dedicate this work to all women survivors of domestic violence, may they lead a happy and safe life.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE HEART OF A THESIS: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The story of this thesis starts in the fall of 2009, when I started to pursue the Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. At that time, I had absolutely no idea that the first paper I would write for a graduate class would eventually lead me to a series of other papers and creative works that became the basis for my final film and thesis. Just as in a love story, what was at first an interest in a subject – horror films – developed to become something else, a true passion for exposing a serious problem: domestic violence. Unlike most cases of domestic violence, I hope that my film *In the Eyes of Others* along with this thesis “Narratives of Abuse: A Glimpse into the Lives of Battered Women and the Making of the Film, *In the Eyes of Others*” will have happy endings by fulfilling their goal: to combine art and social conscience to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence against women that is so intrinsically hidden by the paternalistic society. But I do not wish to get ahead of myself. This is the story of how it all began.

The inspiration to write the paper *An Introduction to Historical and Psychological Aspects of Horror Movies* (Herrmann, 2009) – written for MCMA 550: Seminar in Media History, Dr. Jordy Jones – came from my interest to understand the popularity of horror films among its spectators. There is not only one answer to that inquiry. Aristotle in his work *Poetics* (335BC) used the concept of Catharsis –

an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament,



the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions (Aristotle, 1449, p. 23).

to explain the interest of the spectators in watching dramas that made them have emotional responses such as fear, for example. He believed that by watching something that made them suffer, the audience would be led to a state of Catharsis, that way they would feel relieved and purified (Aristotle, 1967). I manifested my interest in understanding the spectator's interest in horror a few years later during my thesis proposal defense in 2011, and Dr. Susan Felleman recommended to me the article "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess", by Linda Williams, for its relevance to my research on horror. Williams investigates the relationship between the audience and three distinct film genres: horror, porn, and melodrama, and concludes that spectators experience the reproduction of the sensations they see on the screen for each genre (respectively violence, sex, and emotion), therefore experiencing sadomasochistic pleasure when watching horror, sadistic pleasure in porn, and masochistic pleasure in melodrama (Williams, 1991). Williams links the three genres by suggesting that the female body is what attracts the gaze and causes the emotional response from the audience. I frequently tie Aristotle's and Williams's concepts with my creative work, as they help me theorize my pieces and are often a source of inspiration to me.

In *An Introduction to Historical and Psychological aspects of Horror Movies*, I also discussed the part media plays in popularizing the macabre, by exploring tragedies and inciting the spectators' voyeuristic instincts of viewing growing incidences of real-life massacres, butchery, and cruelty on their television and computer screens.

It is important to note, however, that this is not a new technique used by today's media to increase viewership. As a matter of fact, Vanessa Schwartz, in her book *Cinematic Spectatorship before the Apparatus: The Public Taste for Reality in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*, tells an interesting account of the peculiar nineteenth century Parisian taste for morbid visual material. She points out that the population started to look for life-like reality-based entertainment, and the so-called 'precinema' gave them what they were clamoring for. "Spectacle and narrative were integrally linked in Paris's burgeoning mass culture: The realism of spectacle was in fact often contingent on the familiarity of supposed real-life newspaper narratives" (Schwartz, 1995, p. 298). Paying a visit to the Paris Morgue became a very popular activity, a simple way to see the reality that, before then, was only written about in the newspapers. According to Schwartz, the Paris Morgue was built in 1864 and was opened to the public seven days a week as a place where people would go to recognize their dead. Instead, morgue visitation became "celebrated as public theater (...) one of the most popular sights in Paris. The identification of dead bodies was turned into a show" (Schwartz, 1995, p. 299). The most notorious case of "morgue theatre" was the display of the body of a little girl in 1886. It is estimated that 150,000 people lined up in front of the morgue in order to see the 'enfant'.

In August 1886, the cover of *Le Journal Illustré* featured a doyen of the Morgue, the "Enfant de la rue du Vert-Bois" – a four-year-old girl found on 29 July 1886 in a stairwell at 47, rue du Vert-Bois, near the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers. The corpse, which was transferred to the Morgue, showed no apparent signs of injury except a slight bruise on the right hand. (...)

Each night, the corpse was put in a refrigerated case to preserve it. In order to avoid altering it in any way, attendants simply strapped the corpse to the red velvet chair and deposited the complete display in the refrigerator.

Because of the state of decomposition, Morgue doctors decided to perform an autopsy on 6 August. *Le Petit Journal* reported the sentiments of the crowds that had gathered that day, only to “have had the disappointment not to have caught sight of the child displayed on its little chair”. After the autopsy, doctors concluded that the child had died a natural death, having suffocated by choking on an earthworm. (...) She was buried on 17 August, and, although her photograph remained on display at the entrance, the child went unidentified (Schwartz, 1995).

The newspapers at the time used to write about those morbid events, consequently, some readers felt compelled to go to the morgue and see the dead for themselves. Hence, Schwartz concludes that the morgue was a spectacle for an audience that was hungry for the real-life experience of horror, (the still images and articles about shocking deaths in the newspapers were no longer enough), making of them pre-cinematic spectators.

Schwartz account on the Paris Morgue triggered me to reflect on my real-life experience growing up in Brazil, where the media frequently uses violent crimes to increase their viewership rates. Interestingly, before I moved to the United States, I never realized how intensely the Brazilian television networks expose violent crimes, even interrupting their regular programming to report them. In “Information, Crisis, Catastrophe”, Mary Ann Doane makes an interesting analysis of the medium, as she points out that television’s *modus operandi* is to organize itself around different types of events, which she classifies as information, crisis and catastrophe. It is possible to categorize brutal crimes, at least in Brazilian television, as catastrophes. Even though they do not necessarily involve multiple deaths at once, they “interrupt most of the television’s regular daily programming, disrupting normal expectations about what can be seen and heard at a particular time” (Doane n.d., 259). In fact, Doane broadens the

concepts of catastrophe in a 2003 postscript of her article where she adds O.J. Simpson car chase and the death of Lady Diana as examples of catastrophes. Television stations repeat incessantly these images of death and destruction (and if they do not have any images, they use the account of eye witnesses and recreation of the crime scene for that matter) in order to increase their audience levels, however, they are only able to do so because people are interested in watching the atrocities they have to show.

The result of my investigation into the psycho-social experience of watching horror films as a form of entertainment and spectacle, along with my real life acquaintance with the Brazilian fascination with violence in the media inspired me to create a multimedia art piece in 2009, in which I attempted to recreate the overwhelming feeling I had when exposed to the constant bombardment of the horrifying images of real crimes in everyday sensationalistic Brazilian television networks.

*New Monsters* (Appendix A) is an installation composed of eight drawings, four projectors, and background music. Each drawing is in the middle of a three by nine roll of white paper and made with a simple technique of projecting an image on the paper and drawing the silhouettes of the people in it using black washable paint. Every two drawings work as a pair representing the same crime. I represent a total of four crimes, which were notorious in Brazil due to their brutality and mass media interference. Each pair of drawings was hung from the ceiling to the floor, creating four walls, a box in which people could go in. The walls were illuminated by the projection of what television in Brazil had broadcast over and over again about each specific crime at the time they happened (all between 2000 and 2008) – in two of the cases, the events were caught

live on camera; in the other two, the TV stations created simulations of the crime. I appropriated and manipulated the news by getting the videos from YouTube, gave them a drawing-like style, such as in my hand drawings, in order to make a parallel of the stillness of the hand drawings with the movement of the manipulated TV news (I further developed this idea of stillness versus movement in my later piece *A Envenenadora*). I also created an original soundtrack for *New Monsters*, by using a royalty free horror theme from the Internet combined with ambient diegetic sound from the crime scenes such as screams and gunshots, to give the spectators the dubious sensation of being somewhat in between reality and fiction. Projections and soundtrack were looping while people navigated in and out of the box to see the piece. This work could be seen from both sides, but when someone entered the box, their body stayed in between the projection and the paintings, which allowed them to see clearly the drawings behind the projection, but that action also cast their silhouette over the painting and they became the new screen for the projections. A video from the presentation can be seen at <http://mypage.siu.edu/elisash/works> (Herrmann, 2012).

The four crimes I chose to work with were particularly brutal and were widely broadcast on television. However, what shocked me most was not the violence of the crimes, but the incessant repetition of the tragic images, which caused the crimes to become banal. In *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (1980), Andy Warhol says:

If I'm going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night before, I don't want it to be essentially the same – I want it to be exactly the same. Because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel (Warhol & Hackett, 1980, p. 50).

Warhol's Death and Disaster series was my greatest inspiration for *New Monsters*.

Andy Warhol understood that the repetition of images made them meaningless.

Daniel Herwitz believed Warhol used this concept in his Death and Disaster Series.

The repetition of the single images, along with the amount of different images Warhol made of death and disaster, are also paradoxically ways of deadening the power of these images. (As Warhol said, when you see too many they don't mean anything – and look how many he made.) Through repetition he can distance himself from the topic he also wants to project (Herwitz, 1993, p. 269).

Repetition is a tool of television. But if repetition makes things meaningless, an important question to ask is: by repeating images of violence against women incessantly on TV, is the medium contributing to the desensitizing of the spectator, therefore causing violence to become acceptable?

The name of my piece, *New Monsters*, refers to what the Brazilian media transformed those crimes into: horror movies. Words such as “monstrosity”, “brutality”, “psychopath”, “horrifying”, “absurd”, “terrifying”, “madness”, “tragedy”, were used to describe the murderers and the crimes. I am not saying that these terms do not fit the situation, but they were definitely used to reinforce the idea of horror show that the media tried (and succeeded) to create.

After the completion of *New Monsters*, I looked back and noticed that three out of the four crimes I chose to represent in my work were crimes of passion. I was unsure at the time why I had chosen three crimes with the same subject instead of others, but after reflecting on the results, I realized that my choice was influenced by what I had grown up hearing and watching on Brazilian television. Brazil has a history of crimes of

passion, and even though more restrictive laws against domestic violence (Lei Maria da Penha, 2006) have been created and harsher punishment is being imposed for this type of crime since the 1980s (Lopes), crimes of passion are still recurrent in Brazil, and the press continues to use them as means to capture audience attention.

Killing for love has always been an issue dealt publicly and quite explicitly in Brazil. According to author Jose Gabriel de Lemos Britto in his 1933 book, *Psychology of Adultery*, Brazilians were the people who most killed for love then. In her article "Crimes of Passion: The Campaign Against Wife Killing in Brazil, 1910-1940", Susan K. Besse (1989) describes how a patriarchal and sexist Brazilian society in the beginning of the twentieth century dealt with adultery:

Crimes of passion were by no means a new phenomenon in Brazil; according to Portuguese law (to which Brazil was subject during the colonial period), a married man who discovered his wife in the act of committing adultery had the legal right to kill both her and her suitor, and the social custom of doing so did not die with the formal abrogation of this "right" (Besse, 1989, p. 653).

In the 1940s, the situation grew out of control. Not only did the rate of women victims in crimes of passion rise, the popular press also contributed to the sensationalism of the situation in order to boost their sales. Other segments of the press, on the other hand, started a campaign against that barbaric situation. "The progressive newspaper *A Esquerda* concurred that Rio de Janeiro was living through a period of "authentic savagery," and urged women to unite to protect themselves against "masculine cowardliness [which] stalks to kill". (Besse, 1989, p. 653) However, not only did women start to protect themselves, they also started to retaliate. As a result of the initial wave of violence against women, the opposite started to happen and women

began committing crimes of passion. In order to minimize the problem that only seemed to worsen with time, the Brazilian Penal Code was revised in 1940 so that “emotion or passion no longer excluded criminal responsibility. After 1940, concern over wife killing waned” (Besse, 1989, p. 655), which does not mean that the problem was solved.

I was familiar with this information before I started studying photo theory in the fall of 2010. It is important that I list a series of things that started going through my mind, which eventually led to another creative project, *A Envenenadora* (The Poisoner). My first, and possibly the most important, inspiration for this piece is the photograph *Chimney Sweeps Walking* (Charles Nègre, 1852). I was introduced to this photo when reading an essay written about it by Mary Warner Marien (Howarth, 2005). What most interested me was not the image itself, even though I find the faded colors fascinating, but how Nègre composed the photograph in a way that simulates movement. I must confess that if it had not been for Marien’s essay, I would probably not have thought about it. The photographer is from a time when it was necessary to stand still in front of the camera for a long time for the photograph to be taken. Therefore, capturing movement on a photograph without blur was virtually impossible. What Nègre did then, was to ask the three men to stand as if they were walking, and they had to stay still for a long time, simulating the movement. I thought that was a very intriguing paradox: in Nègre’s time, it was imperative that the subjects stayed still to appear to be moving. If the subjects were actually moving, Nègre might only have captured a blur, which would be the actual movement; and then the movement would be trapped in the stillness of the photograph.

One second of movement in cinema is composed by 24 sequential photographs,



which trick our eyes and make us believe we are looking at a moving image when we are actually looking at a rapid succession of still frames. For me, the fact that both film and photography are composed of still frames makes them essentially the same thing. That was the initial idea I needed to make my photographic film: *A Envenenadora*. Still #1, Appendix B.

The last photograph analyzed in Howarth's book, Jeff Wall's *A View from an Apartment* (2004) (Howarth, 2005), also influenced my work by inspiring me to think about what the *mise-en-scène* of a photograph is. I was not familiar with Wall's work before I read Sheena Wagstaff's essay, but I became a great fan of his work afterwards. I find it inspiring how the artist directs his photographs, by creating sets, deciding costumes, controlling the whole *mise-en-scène*. I loved the fact that his photographs imply narratives and are staged, in tableau style. Laura Mulvey's description of *A Sudden Gust of Wind* (1993) inspired the technique I decided to use in my piece:

(...) the photograph seems to go, in a strange way, beyond the instant it represents. It seems to be too visually complex, and too theatrical in its gestures. (...) The scene is staged, as though in a tableau, and its details further perfected through digital enhancement. (...) As Wall brings simulation to the aesthetic of reality, he gives the picture a theoretical dimension reflecting a transitional moment in which both technologies coexist, (...) The aesthetics of the past meet the aesthetics of the present, bringing, almost incidentally, new life to the cinema and its history (Mulvey, 2006, p. 21).

Once I was clear on my technique, which was to suggest movement in a photograph, I needed to decide what to represent in my photo/film. Roland Barthes gave me an insight of what to depict in his quintessential book, *Camera Lucida*:

Photography transformed subject into object, and even, one might say, into a museum object: in order to take the first portraits (around 1840) the subject had to assume long poses under a glass roof in bright sunlight; to

become an object made one suffer as much as a surgical operation; then a device was invented, a kind of prosthesis invisible to the lens, which supported and maintained the body in its passage to immobility: this headrest was the pedestal of the statue I would become, the corset of my imaginary essence (Barthes, 1981, p. 23).

A little later in the book, Barthes says that photography is like death of the subject of the photo. He/She becomes a specter when the photographer uses his instrument of murder, the camera, and his finger pushes the trigger, the shutter. Considering this thought, my previous knowledge of crimes of passion, and strongly inspired by a class I was taking in the fall of 2010 (MCMA 552: Photography Theory in the Light of Cinema, Dr. Walter Metz), where we contrasted the theories of cinema and photography, I decided to represent dualities in my piece: love and hate, life and death, stillness and movement, photography and cinema.

When I read the above passage in Barthes' book, I immediately recalled a notorious crime of passion that happened in Portugal in the late 1800's. Appendix C. According to the news article from *Almanaque Palhares* (Santos Junior, 1897), Virginia Augusta da Silva had her husband poisoned so she could marry her rich lover. The article does not say much, but we know that it was not a perfect crime, since Virginia was arrested and died in jail. This was the oldest recollection of a crime of passion I found in newspapers. The time of the crime coincides with the invention of the pre-cinematic apparatus, fin-del-siècle XIX, when the audiences became hungry for movement (Schwartz, 1995).

I initiated the making of the photograph by choosing the actors to represent Virginia and her husband. Then, after researching online about the time frame of the crime, I decided the costumes, the set and the two positions, one that would represent

the time of love/life, and the other position the time of hate/death. In a completely dark environment, I had the actors stand still in the first position while I pressed the shutter of the camera, which stayed open while my assistant painted the scene with a flashlight. Then, the lights were off again, the actors moved to the second position, where they were painted once more with the light from the flashlight. Only when the whole process was finished did I release the shutter button.

The result was one photograph that captured two different moments in time. This image was taken with a digital still camera. I later transformed the photograph into a film. I made a twelve-minute-sequence of the photograph by repeatedly copying the photograph next to itself in the timeline of the editing software. Later, I added a flickering effect and single frames of other photographs taken in the same photo shoot, but in which the actors are in a slightly different position, which gives the viewer the sensation that the characters are suddenly moving. Still #2, Appendix B.

Very little is known about the life of Virginia Augusta da Silva. Thinking about the situation women faced at the time makes me wonder if there were reasons other than wanting to marry a rich man that would make her think that murder was the only solution for her problem. It is not very hard to connect all the dots and think that women in the late XIX century were treated as inferiors, and many times suffered violence quietly. I do not know if that is the case of the poisoner, but in my research I found that most crimes of passion are preceded by a history of domestic violence. That piece of information intrigued me to the core, and that was when I decided to pay a visit to the Women's Center in Carbondale, in January of 2011.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHEN HORROR STORIES DON'T HAPPEN JUST IN THE MOVIES – OR – THE SHOCKING REALITY I LEARNED AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

In my first visit to The Women's Center in Carbondale, IL, I met with the Domestic Violence Program Coordinator, who gave me an initial insight into their work in the center, recommended that I take their volunteer training (which I did in the fall of 2011) and invited me to help with Art4Empowerment, a weekly program that encourages survivors of domestic violence to use creative expression to empower themselves.

The program, launched in 2004, serves women survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault by giving them a voice through art-making, which can be very beneficial, especially for those who have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally. "The creative process is a means to reflect on the self, life and to reconnect with emotions that have been numbed in order to survive the trauma, abuse or violence" (Art4Empowerment, 2012).

With that in mind, I went to my first meeting of the Art4Empowerment program just as a spectator, but I ended up being part of the group. That day, we were doing the "healing sheet" activity, where the women are given a white bed sheet and paints, to express whatever they want. Some women painted happy environments, while others wrote meaningful sentences, mostly with words of peace.

In my next visits to the center, I noticed that the current coordinator of the art program offered a warm and safe environment, where women could feel free to talk

about their problems if they wished to do so. Sometimes they did, but most of the time they used the sessions to unwind through artistic expression. After talking to the coordinator about the work I do with new media, we decided it could be a good idea to do something with digital photography, that way, once the women left the Center, they could keep working with that method, as nowadays mostly everyone has access to point-and-shoot cameras, or cell phone cameras.

Bringing a camera to a place where confidentiality is a must is a tricky business. Most women in the center are hiding from their abusive partners, or do not want their friends and family to know where they are out of fear or shame. For safety reasons, making still or moving images of the women in the Center is not allowed. I needed to devise a concept that could be completed in one hour because some art class participants might have left the Center before the next weekly class. This constraint led me to focus more in the artistic concept than in the technical aspects of the camera. I wanted to show them that even by using cameras in auto setups, they could still find their artistic voice through photography.

To create a theme for the photo, I looked back to photographic series I produced in 2009 called *The Break Up*. The photographs represented couples that had ended their relationships. The images showed a happy couple, but the men were physically cut out of the photographs, leaving only their silhouettes on a black background. Appendix D.

The series was initially inspired by the blank silhouettes created by Naomi Uman in her video *Removed* (1999), where the artist erased the women in a soft-core porn movie from the 1970s. For my work at the Women's Center, I started to test how to fill

up a silhouette, instead of blacking out the man, as in my own work, or bleaching out the women, as in Uman's work. The purpose of the silhouette created at the women's center was not erasure after all, it was concealing what is outside and showing what is inside. And then it hit me: different kinds of material (fabric, beads, magazines, newspapers, etc.) could be used to represent feelings, ideas, opinions, and those could fill the silhouettes of the women in the photographs, therefore expressing their ideas, but covering their identities.

So I went to the Women's Center with the idea, a simple point-and-shoot camera, some material to create a background and my computer. Some women were hesitant at first, but soon they all got involved and worked as a team to produce a photograph that would express how they felt that day. One of them volunteered to be the model, then together they chose the kitchen to be the background, as they felt that the kitchen was a place they wanted to be freed from, they decided the angle of the picture and the pose of the model. Later they chose the materials that would represent their feelings. We used Photoshop to substitute the silhouette of the woman with the mash of materials that represented how they felt. Finally, they decided to write an artist statement that went with the picture. Appendix E.

This kind of work is not without precedent – Elka Kazmierczak, the founder of the Art4Empowerment program at the Women's Center, edited a book in 2006 with a compilation of the work done by the Art4Empowerment program in The Women's Center. Besides showing artwork created by the women in the Center, the book also presented essays written by invited authors, which reflect on art and how it can be used as a healing method. In her own essay, Elka says:

Art making is one of the ways to create intelligible order in our lives. (...) Making art expresses a human desire to make sense of life and the universe. It is a method for interpretation through meaning making. It is a way of thinking that bridges our rationality and emotionality (Kazmierczak, 2006, p.11).

It was a terrific experience for me to witness this healing process through art, and how involved those women got in expressing their thoughts through a photograph. The following week, I brought a print of the picture produced and donated it to the Women's Center. Some of the women from the previous week were still there, and were very proud of the result. One of them asked me if she could paint the artist statement in a healing sheet she was producing. She was very empowered by her own words.

In the fall of 2011, I completed the 40-hour comprehensive training on crisis intervention and advocacy with survivors of domestic violence at The Women's Center, Inc.. The primary goal of this training is to educate as many people as possible about the problem of domestic abuse, and the secondary goal is to gather volunteers to help at the center. The training is very extensive and complete, it goes from teaching the history of the Center, basic concepts of feminism, the services provided at the shelter, to how and why domestic violence occurs, and ways to prevent and end the problem.

The goals of the Center are to eliminate domestic abuse, provide a crisis hotline, emergency shelter, and professional counseling, help in obtaining community resources and employment skills. They also "expose the roots of domestic violence, with primary emphasis on the institutionalized subservience of women" (The Women's Center, 2011).

In her book, *Freedom from Violence: women's strategies from around the world*, Dr. Margaret Schuler, the Founder and President of Women, Law, & Development

International, expounds on the idea that gender violence is caused by power and gender relations. Societies that see women as property of men are bound to be more violent toward females.

Gender violence is embedded in the context of cultural, socioeconomic, and political power relations. These relations, in which male power dominates, reduce women to economic and emotional dependency, the property of some male protector. Societies organized around gendered, hierarchical power relations give legitimacy to violence against women. In such societies gender violence takes shape not only as physical abuse, but as emotional abuse through threats and reprisals, as exploitation, as discrimination, and other forms of control and coercion (Schuler, 1992, p.11).

For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on gender violence in two countries: Brazil, where I was born, and the USA, where I currently reside. But first, a little overview of what constitutes domestic violence.

Domestic abuse is a taboo subject, therefore, many wrong assumptions are held on the topic, creating myths that need to be refuted. The first myth is that family violence is rare, or that it only happens in lower class, uneducated families. Data shows that “domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women” (Domestic Violence Statistics, 2012), and that it occurs “at all levels of society, regardless of their social, economic, racial or cultural backgrounds” (BUPD Online, 2012). Another myth is that battered wives could leave anytime if they wanted to. That is not true. Many studies show that women who have undergone continuous abuse from their partner may suffer from Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS), which causes the following symptoms: avoiding people, activities or emotions that may cause the abuser to become violent; body image distortion, victims come to believe that they are weak, incapable of change, ignorant, invaluable; often the abused believes the violence was her fault; the woman



thinks that the abuser is omnipresent and omniscient. Those symptoms, among others, lead the woman to conclude she has no way out of the abusive relationship, and then, for fear and shame, she stays with the violent partner, which often leads to her own death. As a matter of fact, “42 percent of female murder victims were attacked by abusers” (The Women's Center, 2011). Another erroneous assumption is that the use of drugs and alcohol cause domestic abuse. It is true that some abusers act under the influence of those substances, however, as not everyone that drinks or uses illegal drugs is a batterer, a batterer is not always an alcoholic or a drug addict.

The Duluth model was developed in the early 1980s in the small community of Duluth, northern Minnesota. The model proposes that a community should work together to end domestic violence by, among other things, sharing “policies and procedures for holding offenders accountable and keeping victims safe across all agencies in the criminal and civil justice systems from 911 to the courts” (The Duluth Model, 2011). The Duluth model has been adopted in many communities across the United States. Their “Power and Control Wheel” is used to show how domestic violence operates and gives examples of eight types of abusive behavioral patterns. For example, the wheel section on “economic abuse” lists the actions of keeping one from getting a job, making her ask for money, taking her money, not giving her access to family income. The wheel can be seen at

<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf> (Power and Control, 2012).

The wheel shows how patterns of domestic violence are common in most cases of abuse. Through the wheel, I was able verify that even in cross-cultural situations, in my

case comparing the USA and Brazil, the patterns are the same, and then do some further research on how each government is dealing with this problem.

The United States started the fight against domestic violence in the early 1970s, when the first shelters were created as a form of emergency solution for a woman who needs to escape a violent household. Many improvements have happened since then, previous laws which forbade police officers from making an arrest in cases of what they called 'home disturbance', were overturned. Prior to this time "Officers considered domestic calls a nuisance, dangerous and not "real" police work" (Chapman & Roberts, 1992, p.265). By 1987, over 50 percent of the police departments had adopted a pro-arrest policy, which did not solve the problem, but in fact, caused more concern. Dual arrests started to happen (man and woman were arrested), and the mandatory arrests caused women to be less willing to call the police for not wanting their partner to go to jail, as very often, their partner was the one who provided for them financially and without whom they believed they could not have means to survive.

Nowadays, Civil Protection Orders are guaranteed by law in the USA, they can be issued based on past cases of violence and threats of future violence. Even though a protection order is just a piece of paper that cannot really protect women,

Advocates and researchers estimate that for perhaps one-third to one-half of abusers, the mere presence of an order deters abuse (women tell stories of men who waited an entire year, and then beat them the day the order expired) (Chapman & Roberts, 1992, p.270).

As we can see, the options mentioned so far are only temporary solutions. The problem itself is not solved.

In Brazil, the battle against gender violence started in 1985, with the Brazilian Women's Movement, that fought for woman equality. Prior to this time "Women had been burned, beaten, raped, mutilated, and murdered on a scale much greater than one could imagine. And the attackers circulated freely, with no punishment in most cases, even though their acts were defined as crimes carrying stiff penalties" (Eluf, 1992, 202). This problem was finally addressed when, with the help of the National Council on Women's Rights, women started to organize and publicly demonstrate their indignation. Violence was an urgent matter, but simply encouraging women to seek police help would not do. Most women were afraid to talk to a male officer, as they felt they might not only underestimate the problem, but it was also humiliating and could make their situation even worse. The solution was to create Women's Police Stations. In 1985, the first Police Station for the Defense of Women was established in São Paulo, Brazil.

The professionals who worked in this jurisdiction would have to be women, eliminating the reluctance to present complaints, and facilitating the access of female victims to competent police authorities. It was important to make clear that violence commonly practiced against women was not merely a question of domestic disputes, but more importantly, a question of public safety (Eluf, 1992, 204).

As in the USA, the measures taken in order to end the violence against women in Brazil were somewhat effective, but are still far from solving the problem. It is clear that the solution is beyond law enforcement on batterers. Chapman and Roberts suggest that the solution is in achieving gender equality and social justice.

The simple truth is that if women had more equal power in the world, they could escape violence. But this requires addressing the conditions of race, gender and class bias that make women and their children the majority of the world's poor. (...) If we want nonviolence for women, we must work for economic justice (Chapman & Roberts, 1992, p.289).

I believe that to achieve the equality proposed by Chapman and Roberts, it is imperative that we expose the problem and discuss it openly. Domestic violence is still a taboo subject, that is not exposed publicly for shame or fear. By making a thesis film about this theme, based on what I learned at the Women's Center, I hope to open discussions on the matter, raising awareness on a problem that, even now in 2012, continues to exist.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE MAKING OF *IN THE EYES OF OTHERS*

I have been a narrative filmmaker for many years. However, when I started to pursue the Master of Fine Arts in 2009, I chose to experiment, creating with other media, such as photography and installation. Interestingly, I gradually returned to making narrative films, but in which I incorporate some of the experimentation I did in the past, thus making narratives that break with the traditional story telling structure.

My initial effort at dealing with the topic of domestic violence resulted in a five-minute narrative film with touches of experimentation called *A Day in the Life of Margaret H.* (Herrmann, 2011), which influenced the eventual thesis film *In the Eyes of Others* (Herrmann, 2012). Thus, it is imperative to talk about both movies in chronological order.

*A Day in the Life of Margaret H.* focused on character development. The film was based on my initial conversation with the Domestic Violence Program Coordinator at The Women's Center, and also on websites, books, films and documentaries I found on the subject (see bibliography for full list). Some of the things I learned from those sources that were relevant to the movie were:

1) Women often stay because: their partners threaten to hurt/kill them, their children, or their pets; financial threat – the husbands usually have all control over the income of the house; women confuse the power and control imposed by their partners with love and protectiveness; the abuser promises he will change, buys her gifts and shows affection in order to excuse the violence. (Walker, 1984).

2) Some characteristics of the batterer are: very controlling, often deciding what women should wear or eat; sometimes those men come from abusive families and grew up in domestic violent environments themselves; the abuser is usually very friendly to other people and only aggressive towards his partner. “Batterers, described as having Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities, often show their violent side only to the woman, further reinforcing her thoughts that no one would believe he could do such things” (Walker, 1984, p.23).

3) Women often go back to their abusers even after seeking for help because: financial need; loneliness; false promises from abusive partner; religious beliefs; fear to raise their kids without a father figure; shame of what family and friends would think (Why do we stay?, 2003).

Based on this information, I developed the two main characters for *A Day in the Life of Margaret H.*:

Margaret H. (the battered wife):

- Insecure; anxious; fearful; ashamed; depressed.
- Does anything to please her husband in order to avoid setting him off.
- Low self-esteem, believes she has done something to deserve the violence towards her.
- Creates excuses for bruises and for missing appointments. Uses makeup and clothes to cover the marks on her body.
- Forgives him when he apologizes.
- Because of psychological abuse, she feels stupid and worthless, therefore incapable of escaping the situation she is in.

John (the abusive husband):

- Jealous; possessive; controlling.
- Calls her work to check on her.
- Knows and controls her schedule.
- Does not allow her to have friends, see family, talk to colleagues.
- Feels guilty after the beating incident and promises to change.
- Calls her names and diminishes her morale.
- Tells his wife someone is always watching her (surveillance).
- Accuses her of cheating.
- Threatens to hurt her family, pets, loved ones if she denounces the abuse.

The work I have done with the women in the Art4Empowerment Program described in Chapter 2 highly influenced some of the aesthetic choices for *A Day in the Life of Margaret H.*. The idea of showing what is inside by covering what is outside was transferred to the movie, as I wanted to show the lead character, Margaret H., as a woman who was ashamed of the violence she was subject to, therefore, she resorted to the use of makeup and clothes as forms of masks, but when she looked at her own reflection in mirrors and windows, the truth of her reality was exposed before her eyes and she saw a shattered version of her innerself. Appendix F.

Robyn Magowan, in her MFA dissertation from 2005, explores the idea of how battered women use clothes to mask their reality. "Social masquerade, as a means of disguise, allows a battered wife to perform the traditionalist fantasy of living 'happily-ever-after' in keeping with what she believes to be social and cultural expectations" (Magowan, 2005, p.9). In my movie, I show Margaret H. getting ready to receive guests

in her house; she wears long sleeves, a scarf and makeup to cover up the marks of her husband's physical abuse on her body, and is clearly ashamed when one of her guests notices a bruise she is hiding. Magowan interviewed three battered women for her dissertation work, and based on their conversations, she concluded that those women use masquerade to, when in public, be socially accepted and, when in private, to avoid more battering by not confronting the abuser with the signs of his own violent behavior.

My thesis film, *In The Eyes of Others*, is strongly based on the concept of hiding the traces of domestic violence to be socially accepted, and how that attitude can lead to a tragic outcome. Even though the central idea for the script came from *A Day in the Life of Margaret H.*, this thesis film is an independent piece and it stands on its own. I consider the first film to be a good practice for *In The Eyes of Others*, therefore, similarities in both can be found, such as several of the personality traits of the main characters. It was an important step for me to shoot *A Day in the Life of Margaret H.* before scripting my thesis film, as I was able to think about the earlier piece in depth and analyze what worked and what did not work before making the latter film. I believe the first film was successful in terms of presenting the characters' main traits, and the dialog succeeded in showing who those people were and how they behaved. However, for being a much shorter film (five minutes opposed to thirty minutes) the characters lacked a back story, a problem that was resolved in *In The Eyes of Others*; I wrote the script for the 2012 film after taking the training at the Women's Center which, with the new information I acquired, allowed me to create deeper characters, with stronger personalities and a life story, consequently being much more complex and closer to reality. Another change from the first to the second film was that, in the piece from 2011,



I attempted to show Margaret's inner feelings and thoughts by using mirrors as a tool to unmask them, nevertheless, that message did not come across to the audience as clearly as I had imagined it would, therefore, I changed the strategy in *In The Eyes of Others* by having the main character narrate the story as an omniscient and ominipresent entity in the movie, hence exposing her thoughts and feelings much more clearly than Margaret H. in the earlier movie. See Appendix G for the synopsis and Appendix H for the script of *In The Eyes of Others*.

The structure of the plot is based on the Walker Cycle Theory of Violence (1979), which proposes the existence of three distinct stages associated with recurring battering, they are called 'tension building', 'acute battering incident', and 'loving contrition'. In the first phase of the cycle, there is a gradual escalation of tension, in which, usually "the woman attempts to placate the batterer, doing what she thinks might please him, calm him down, or at least, what will not further aggravate him" (Walker, 1984, p.95). One example of tension building in my movie is when Amanda (the battered wife) agrees on getting pregnant, even though she does not think it's the right time, just so that Jack, the abusive husband, will calm down and become again the loving man she used to know.

Unfortunately, women's efforts to keep a batterer calm tend to fail, and the tension escalates to the point of the 'acute battering incident', in which the verbal and physical abuse happens. This phase "is concluded when the batterer stops, usually bringing with its cessation a sharp physiological reduction in tension. This in itself is naturally reinforcing. Violence often succeeds because it does work" (Walker, 1984, p.96). An example of this phase in my movie is when, Jack believes Amanda is going to

tell his sister about his difficulties to conceive, he verbally and physically abuses Amanda.

The third phase of the cycle also known as ‘the honeymoon phase’, follows the violent episode. In this phase the batterer apologizes, promises to change, showers his partner with gifts and love. In *In the Eyes of Others*, Jack often apologizes to Amanda by giving her jewelry, bringing her breakfast in bed, and promising to be good to her in the future.

The decisions to have Amanda kill Jack and to have her narrate the story were initial ones; accordingly, the rest of the plot evolved around them. I had been studying why people kill for love for a while, and as mentioned before, some of my art pieces were about that theme. However, the one thing my pieces had not dealt with yet were the motivations of women who killed their partners, which is something I was very curious about ever since I made *A Envenenadora*.

In my research I came across the book, *The Murderess: A Psychosocial Study of Criminal Homicide* (Totman, 1978), in which I found some interesting data. Totman reports that murderesses usually kill someone with whom they have an intimate relationship (like husbands, lovers, or children); the predominant murder weapons are piercing objects, followed by poison, and guns; and finally, women are less likely to flee the scene of the crime. In fact, very commonly, it was the women themselves who called for help for their victims (Totman, 1978). Totman goes on to exemplify some of the excuses women give for committing the crime:

The three most common responses seemed to be, first, self-defense, then, “It was an accident. I didn’t mean to do it,” and finally, what might be classified as “psychological reasons” – “I was depressed,” “I was under mental strain,” “I was desperate and desolate” (Totman, 1978, p.15).

Many of the murderesses interviewed by Totman reported that before the crime they used to live in a violent household.

*Defending Our Lives* (Lazarus & Wunderlich, 1994) is an Oscar winning short documentary that interviews four women who were imprisoned for having killed their batterer husbands. The documentary is accompanied by a study guide, which intends to help facilitate discussion with the film (Lazarus & Wunderlich, "*Defending Our Lives* Study Guide," 2004). I was very moved by this documentary; it exposes that domestic violence is the main cause of injury and casualty for women in America, and when some of those women cannot bear their cross anymore they end up attacking and killing their husbands, little is done by the system to protect them from being sent to jail. The testimonials of the women in the film are very touching and honest, and in several moments they cannot avoid sobbing when talking about the horror they lived with prior to the murder.

Each of these women tells her own horrific tale of beatings, rape and torture at the hands of her husband or boyfriend. They talk of being stalked, harassed and threatened with death, particularly after attempting to leave their abusive partners. They all testify to the failure of the criminal justice system to protect victims of domestic violence - from unenforced restraining orders, to reluctant law enforcement officials, to the courts' refusal to accept the special nature of their defense. And each woman's frightening account of the cycle of violence resonates with the stories of battered women everywhere.

These women were forced to defend their lives, and this documentary captures the cruel irony of putting them behind bars once they have finally escaped their abusers. They have chosen to share their stories, hoping to inspire creative strategies for ending this violence (Lazarus & Wunderlich, *Films that Challenge: Defending Our Lives*, 2004).

Thus, this documentary had a great influence on my creative work, and even though my movie is not based on a real story, I also hope to be able to stimulate

conversations on the topic, as I truly believe that the most powerful weapon we have against domestic violence is to expose it, make people aware of the problem, show that it is more common than we think, and that this silent war against women has to cease to exist.

The aesthetic choices for *In the Eyes of Others* were carefully thought of based on the theory and artistic inspirations that have been influencing my work for the past few years. The film is done realistically, as I felt it was important to represent as closely as possible the reality of battered women in order to stimulate discussion on the subject. The lighting and camera angles help to set the mood of the scenes – the gun shot scene, for example, was scripted to happen during the day, but ended up being shot at night to increase the tension and give a gloomy tone to the end of the film.

The casting of the main actors was an important part of the pre-production, as I wanted Amanda to show through her looks a strong personality at first, that eventually is forced to conform to Jack's rules. It's possible to tell from the beginning of the film that she is a focused student and yoga practitioner who is cheerful and surrounded by friends. Also, she is white, middle class, and educated, not at all the stereotype of a battered woman. For the part of Jack I searched for someone who could be at the same time charming and threatening, to represent on screen as much as possible the "Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde" personality of the batterer. Even though Jack drinks alcohol in the movie, I did not want to represent him as an alcoholic, again, to avoid the stereotype of batterers being violent only when under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Amanda, as the narrator of the movie, talks to the camera, but stylistically, I did not intend it to be documentary-style. As a matter of fact, in the first drafts of the script, I

had Amanda writing her memories in a journal, as her narrations are meant to be her thoughts, something very intimate to her. After talking to my committee about my intentions for Amanda's character, they suggested me to watch two films that made all the difference in the way *In the Eyes of Others* was narrated: Ingmar Bergman's *The Hour of the Wolf* (Bergman, 1968) and Germaine Dulac's *The Smiling Madame Beudet* (Dulac, 1923).

Bergman's choice of having Alma (Liv Ullman) be the narrator of his movie was a last minute decision. The director himself confessed that the story was extremely personal and agreed with the criticism that it was incoherent. Therefore, "conceding its failure on formal grounds, he sees the problem as one of narrative perspective. When the filming was almost complete, Bergman unsuccessfully tried to shift the point-of-view from the mad artist, Johan Borg, to his wife, Alma" (Buntzen & Craig, 1976-1977, p.24). However, what interested me the most about Alma being the narrator of the film was not if it was successful or not for the coherence of the story, but it was the way she talked to the camera, not as if being interviewed in a documentary (when traditionally the director is sitting by the side of the cameraman, asking questions, so that the interviewee does not look directly into the camera), but staring into the camera, as if she were confessing her thoughts to the audience, hence breaking the fourth wall. This intimate setup created by Bergman was exactly what I wanted to create between Amanda and the audience. I attempted to deepen the sensation of intimacy by having close up shots of Amanda confessing her thoughts to the camera, which also allowed me to conceal the fact that she was in jail until the end of the movie.

Amanda tells her story, and at certain points, her past and present selves meet, which intends to show how deep inside of her thoughts we are, and that this is her point of view. For this same reason, we do not see explicit violence in the movie: Amanda would not want to relive those horrific moments, however, the sound of the aggressions is present to help us understand what she went through. Even though I had the idea of the two Amandas appearing in the same scenes before I watched *The Smiling Madame Beudet* (credited as the first feminist movie), the film imagery helped me solidify that concept. Germaine Dulac's 1922 film "recounts the fantasy life of a woman married to a boorish merchant in a small provincial French town, yet who dreams, through music and poetry, of another life" (Mayne, 1981, p.35). There are two significant parts of *The Smiling Madame Beudet* with which I traced a connection with my movie: 1) Madame Beudet projects an image of herself, imagining a better life; Amanda sends out an image of herself to the past as an observer of her own memories. 2) Madame Beudet's husband liked to scare her with an unloaded gun, pretending he would commit suicide, until his wife decided to end his game by loading the gun without him knowing. In my film, Jack buys a gun to threaten Amanda into staying with him. Nevertheless, in a moment of desperation, while trying to protect her life, Amanda uses that gun to shoot Jack. As I said, I had not seen Dulac's movie previously to writing the script, but I cannot say I was surprised by the coincidences. Unfortunately, it is very sad to notice that almost a century has passed since Dulac's feminist film was made, and still women remain being treated as inferior to men, as property that they can control and abuse if they want to. Gender inequality still affects many women worldwide, which explains why many women, not only I, keep making movies to promote social justice among all.

Women Make Movies, established in 1972, is a non-governmental organization that supports female moviemakers, whose subject matter is also women, to produce and promote their films worldwide. Currently, the NGO's collection counts with more than 500 titles, and many of those are award-winning works. They believe that

women's media, in both traditional and non-traditional forms, presents social, political, and aesthetic visions of women that are not generally available in mainstream media. Reflecting an understanding of women's experience, women's independent films and videotapes reveal the complexity and diversity of women's lives and artistic visions. We remain steadfast in our belief that media can inform and engage, inspire action and challenge reigning perspectives (Women Make Movies, 2012).

I share Women Make Movies' beliefs, and hope that my thesis film about domestic violence will inspire its audience to deliberate on the topic, and perhaps even take action to help solving the problem. As a female artist, I feel that my attempt to fight for women's right to a life of equality and non-violence, and giving them a voice through my film was somewhat achieved. However, there is much more to be done, and especially, much more I can do. I plan to donate a copy of my thesis film to The Women's Center in Carbondale, IL, and to any other Center that would like to use it for their volunteer training as a form of educating what domestic violence is, and promoting a paradigm shift in the role of women in society. In conclusion, I hope that by making *In the Eyes of Others* I have taken a step forward into advocating the end of violence against women and the advent of gender equality.

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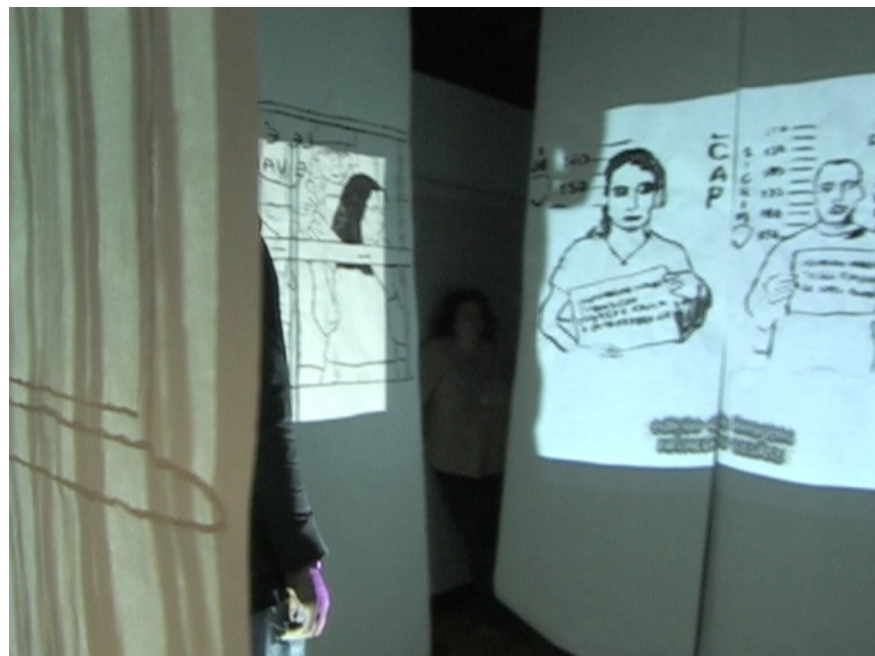
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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A



*New Monsters*. Elisa Herrmann, 2010.



*New Monsters*. Elisa Herrmann, 2010.

## Appendix B



Still #1 from "*A Envenenadora*". Elisa Herrmann, 2010.



Still #2 from "*A Envenenadora*". Elisa Herrmann, 2010.

## Appendix C

Virginia Augusta da Silva, celebre criminosa que, depois de haver abandonado o marido mandou envenenar-o [sic] por um seu cunhado, em S. Pedro do Sul, com o ambicioso fim de casar com um amante, homem rico para assim poder viver com a sonhada grandeza, crime muito fallado e que teve cumplices. Morreu na cadeia de sua terra S. Pedro do Sul.

Vide *Galeria de Criminosos Celebres*, pag. 31, II vol. Vende-se e assigna-se na casa editora Papelaria PALHARES, r. do Ouro, 141 e 143 (Santos Junior, 1897).

### **Translation:**

Virginia Augusta da Silva, famous criminal that after abandoning her husband had him poisoned by her brother-in-law, in S. Pedro do Sul. The reason behind the crime was her ambitious plan of marrying her lover, a rich man, and lead a wealthy life. This was a notorious crime, which had many accomplices. She died in the jail of her hometown S. Pedro do Sul. More in *Gallery of Celebrated Criminals*, page 31, vol. II. It can be purchased at Palhares Stationary Store, 141/143 Ouro Street (Santos Junior, 1897, free translation by Elisa Herrmann).

## Appendix D



*The Break Up #1.* Elisa Herrmann, 2010.



## Appendix E



*"Not Only A Woman"* by A. A. and girlfriends. Photograph and Collage, 2011.

### Artist Statement

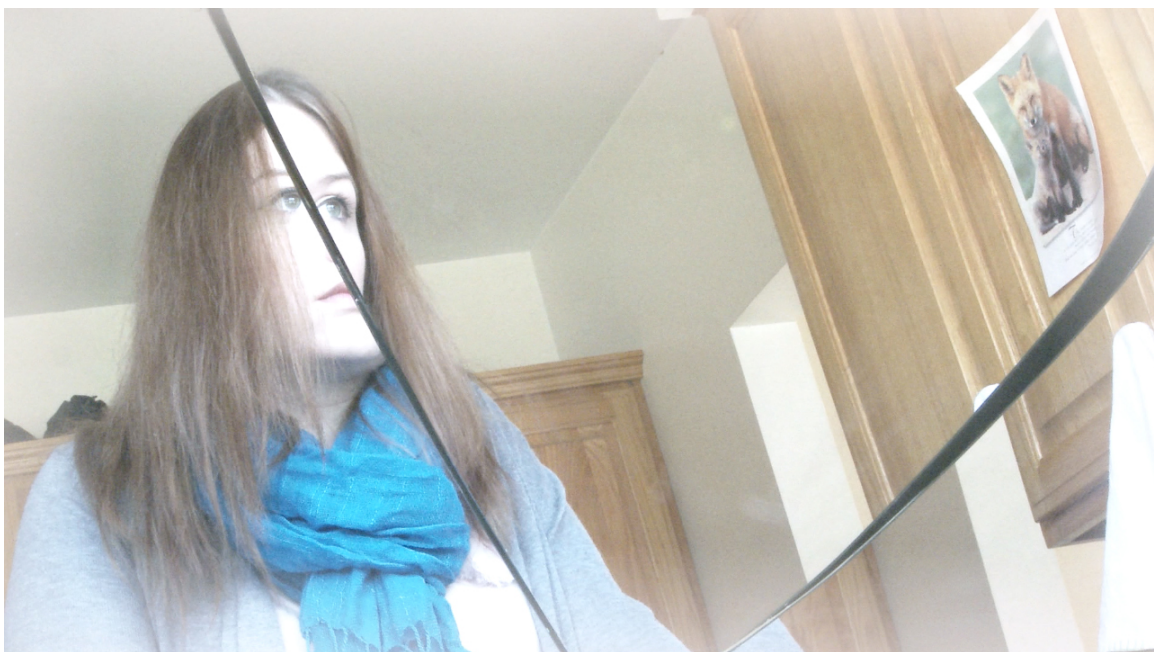
A woman is not only just a person deemed by man as a typical maid mother. She is much more than that. She is Beauty, she is power, she is what she expresses herself to be. A phenomenal, brave, God-fearing woman. She is Me.

A. A., 2011

## Appendix F



Still #1 from *"A Day in the Life of Margaret H."* Elisa Herrmann, 2011.



Still #2 from *"A Day in the Life of Margaret H."* Elisa Herrmann, 2011.

## Appendix G

**Title:** *In The Eyes of Others*

**Tagline:** In the eyes of others they were the perfect couple...

**Synopsis:**

Inspired by an extensive research on domestic violence, *In the Eyes of Others* tells the story of Amanda and Jack from their meeting as graduate students to the fateful day that ends one of their lives. While focusing on the two characters, the film also challenges stereotypes about batterers and their victims. The film explores the line between love and control, between what others see and what can happen behind closed doors in a relationship.

## Appendix H

"In the Eyes of Others"

Final Version

By

Elisa Herrmann

01. EXT. SIUC - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

Beauty shots of the university: library, music building, student center, bridge from towers to the university, garden behind fanner, campus lake. Theme music on background.

02. EXT. CAMPUS LAKE - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

It's a beautiful sunny day, some people are sitting by the lake, others run around it. AMANDA and KELLY are practicing yoga together. They are ending the sun salutation sequence. They do the "namaste" gesture, and start to leave, Amanda grabs her yoga mat, says goodbye to her friend and walks away.

FADE OUT/IN

03. TITLES

Titles come in. CU of objects on a dresser that have been knocked over and are fallen or out of place: hairbrush, necklace, perfume, nail polish, picture frame, lipstick.

04. INT. DORM - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

CU of lipstick, Amanda grabs it and puts it on. She is in front of a different dresser, where everything is neat and organized. She finishes using the lipstick, puts it back carefully on the sink, grabs her backpack, and goes out of the door of her dorm.

05. EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda arrives at the university, she looks at her watch, sits on the bench outside, opens her backpack, grabs a book and starts reading it. Some people pass by, entering and leaving the building, always in a hurry.

06. INT. PRESENT TIME

CU of older AMANDA looking at camera, we can only see her face, coming out of shadows. (\*Maybe make of this a VO of Older Amanda). Also shoot this with a CU of Amanda's hand writing on a diary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

2.

OLDER AMANDA

I remember the day I met Jack very  
clearly.

07. EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda is sitting on a bench concentrated reading. CU of the book. 22-year-old JACK RAWLINGS approaches the bench from behind. He jumps the bench and sits next to Amanda, startling her.

JACK

Is that what we need to read for  
today's class?

He grabs the book from her hand in a charming way and starts turning pages. Amanda looks at him not knowing whether to laugh or be angry, but backs off a little, as he sits really close to her.

AMANDA

Ummmm...

JACK

I'm Jack, we take design 330  
together.

He offers his hand for a handshake, Amanda takes it.

AMANDA (*POINTING TO THE BOOK*)

Oh, yes... This is it.

JACK

Would you mind telling me what the  
reading is about? I didn't have  
time...

Jack gives Amanda a charming smile, she hesitates for a couple of seconds, but then smiles back. She gets the book back, opens it to the right reading.

AMANDA

Sure. It is about the Bauhaus  
school of design...

LS of Amanda and Jack interacting.

08. INT. AUDITORIUM - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda is talking to her friend KELLY inside of an almost full classroom, Amanda seems to be describing Jack to her, they giggle. Jack enters the room, Amanda sees him, and discretely shows who he is to Kelly, he takes a seat not too far from them. He notices the two girls staring at him. Amanda seems embarrassed, Kelly looks the other way. He waves to Amanda, she timidly waves back. Kelly giggles, the professor starts the class. Everyone stops talking and looks at the professor.

PROFESSOR

Good morning, everyone. The TA is going to hand you back your tests. If you would like to discuss your grades with me, come to my office hours.

Jack hands a note to Amanda that passes through a few students. The note reads "How about a movie on Saturday?". Amanda reads the note, looks at him and smiles.

09. INT. LIBRARY - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

Many people quietly study at the library. Some are on computers, others are checking books out. Amanda is looking for a book in the shelf, she finds it. She walks to a table where Jack is studying.

AMANDA

Found it.

JACK

Cool! I'm ready.

Amanda opens a book.

AMANDA

OK, so tell me: Why was the Bauhaus closed?

JACK

Ummm... Because of the Nazi regime?

Amanda smiles and nods.

AMANDA

And what year was that?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

4.

JACK  
1933.

Camera pulls back to show people studying in the library.

10. EXT. CAFETERIA - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY

People are having lunch at the cafeteria (outside of Student Center). Some are talking, others buying food, etc. Amanda and a couple of other friends, ADAM and KELLY, are having lunch together, talking and laughing. Kelly is showing Amanda a guide of New Orleans.

KELLY  
I heard Bourbon Street is the best.  
We should go there every night.

AMANDA  
Yeah! I can't wait to see the  
French Quarter too.

Jack arrives with a tray of food.

JACK  
French Quarter? In New Orleans?  
When are you going there?

AMANDA  
Oh, for spring break, with the girls.

Jack looks upset, but speaks jokingly.

JACK  
And when were you planning to tell me?

ADAM (TO JACK)  
Man, I'm going to visit some  
friends in Florida. Why don't you come along?

AMANDA  
Yeah, you should go. I've been  
planning this with the girls for a while.

JACK  
I see you are ditching your  
boyfriend to hang out with the girls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5.

AMANDA

I'm sorry, baby... I promise next holiday I'll spend only with you.

KELLY (*JOKINGLY*)

Don't worry, Jack, I will take good care of her.

Jack takes a sip of his drink.

11. EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - 7 YEARS AGO - DAY People walk around campus.

12. INT. DORM - 7/6 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda walks around her room, cleaning up, folding clothes, washing dishes, working on her computer, with different clothes. There is a photo board in Amanda's room. There are many pictures of her with her friends, family, pets. Time lapse of the pictures changing for photographs of Amanda and Jack in parties, hiking, making funny faces, graduation day, etc. Camera goes from her to the board, back to her, back to board, etc.

13. EXT. SUBURB HOUSE - 6 YEARS AGO - SUNSET

LS of a suburb, sun is setting. A "just married" car is parked in the garage in front of the house.

14. INT. COUPLE'S BEDROOM - 6 YEARS AGO - SUNSET

Jack carries his bride on his arms and puts her on the bed, the sun is setting and a little bit of light falls on the couple, coming from the blinds. He gently kisses her. (OR Camera pans from wedding clothes on the floor to couple fast asleep on their bed.)

15. INT. PRESENT TIME - SUNSET

CU of Amanda's older face, illuminated by the sun as if she was in her bedroom. She smiles as remembering the scene.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

6.

OLDER AMANDA

I was so happy to be married...

(pause) All I wanted was to be with him, all the time...

16. INT. LIVING ROOM - 6 YEARS AGO - EVENING

Amanda is alone in the house, which looks impeccable. She is sitting on the couch, looking at the job adds in the newspaper, circling the ones she likes. She looks at the clock on the wall, it's 6:20 pm.

17. EXT. DRIVEWAY - 6 YEARS AGO - EVENING Jack's car arrives on the driveway.

18. INT. LIVING ROOM - 6 YEARS AGO - EVENING

Amanda sees the car arriving, closes the newspaper, puts it nicely on the coffee table, and walks towards the door. She opens the door and smiles, Jack comes in.

AMANDA

Hi!

They give a little peck.

AMANDA

How was it?

Amanda grabs his briefcase from his hand and they walk towards the couch. Jack has a serious face, as if something went wrong, Amanda looks worried. He loses the frown and grins. She notices the joke and grins as well.

JACK

It was great! I can't believe I got  
this job! I've heard people can  
grow in this company really fast if  
they show good work.

AMANDA

I'm so happy for you! This is a  
wonderful opportunity.

Jack smiles. Both sit on the couch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7.

AMANDA

I was just now looking at some interesting positions in today's newspaper, here, let me show you.

She starts to walk to get the newspaper, but Jack stops her.

JACK

Wait... You know what I was thinking today? Now that I have a stable job, I'd like for us to focus on having a family...

AMANDA

You mean having babies?

JACK

Yeah, what do you think?

AMANDA

Well, I wanted to be a mom eventually, but for now I think I prefer to focus on my career.

JACK

Honey, now that I have a good job you could devote your time to take care of our home and kids. When they are older, you can think about finding a job.

AMANDA

I don't know... *(pause)* I found some really nice positions today, I wanted to show you

Jack looks a little crossed and interrupts her. He stands up.

JACK

You're doing that selfish thing again, Amanda.

Amanda looks offended. She stands up.

AMANDA

I'm not being selfish, I'm just saying...

Jack interrupts her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

8.

JACK

Let's not talk about this now.

Jack changes his attitude and becomes his charming/flirting self again.

JACK

I bought you something.

Jack pulls a pearl necklace out of his pocket. Amanda looks surprised. He starts to tease her with the necklace.

JACK

This is just to show you that from now on you don't need to worry about money anymore. Just promise me that you will think about this.

Amanda takes the necklace and smiles, but still looks a little troubled.

AMANDA

OK, I'll think about it.

Jack smiles.

JACK

Good! Is dinner ready?

AMANDA

Yeah...

JACK

Let's eat then, I'm starving.

Jack walks towards the dining room. Amanda stays behind, looking down at the necklace she is holding.

19. INT. PRESENT TIME - SUNSET

CU of Amanda's face illuminated by the sun. She is looking down at the same position she was in the previous scene. She looks up.

OLDER AMANDA

I didn't want him to think I was selfish. I wanted our lives to be perfect...

Amanda turns her back to the source of light and her face is in the shadows.

20. INT. KITCHEN - 5 YEARS AGO - DAY Amanda is cooking cupcakes in the kitchen.

21. INT. LIVING ROOM - 5 YEARS AGO - DAY  
The house looks clean and tidy. Amanda is alone in the living room, practicing yoga on her yoga mat.

22. INT. KITCHEN - 5 YEARS AGO - DAY  
The kitchen is very clean, Amanda enters the kitchen, grabs a cupcake and starts eating, looking out of the window. She looks bored.

23. EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - 5 YEARS AGO - SUNSET Time lapse of the sun setting.

24. INT. DINING ROOM - 4 YEARS AGO - EVENING  
Amanda, Jack, TOM, and his wife JUDI are having dinner in the dining room. Amanda takes a sip of her wine glass.

AMANDA  
This is wonderful.

TOM  
It's from Chile, they make good  
wine there.

AMANDA  
I didn't know that, it's really  
good. Are you sure you don't want  
some, Judi?

Judi and Tom share a look and smile.

JUDI  
Well, actually, I can't...

She touches her belly.

TOM  
We're pregnant!

AMANDA  
Wow! Congratulations!

JUDI  
Thank you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10.

Jack shakes hands with Tom.

JACK  
Congratulations, man!

Jack doesn't seem too happy. He takes a big sip of his wine.

AMANDA  
How far along are you?

JUDI  
6 weeks now.

25. INT. KITCHEN - 4 YEARS AGO - EVENING  
Amanda is in the kitchen washing dishes.  
She turns around to see Jack staring at her. She is startled.  
She is holding a glass she was rinsing in her hand.

AMANDA  
Jack? How long have you been there?  
You scared me.

Jack comes closer to her, visibly drunk.

JACK  
A little while.

AMANDA  
I guess you had a little too much  
wine, huh?

Jack does not answer. He stares at her for a few seconds. He walks closer to Amanda.

JACK (RAISING HIS VOICE)  
So, Judi's pregnant...

AMANDA (A LITTLE HESITANT)  
Oh, yeah. That's nice, right?

Jack grabs her by the arm causing the glass that she is holding in her hand to fall and break.

JACK (YELLING)  
You think that's "nice"? That's  
nice for Tom, but what about me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11.

AMANDA (SCARED)  
You are hurting me!

Jack lets her go by pushing her against the sink. He points to the broken glass on the floor.

JACK  
Clean that up!

Jack leaves, Amanda is very scared and cries silently. She goes down on her knees and starts picking up the broken pieces of glass.

26. INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT  
Amanda observes Jack sleeping on the couch, with the same clothes on. She looks sadly at him. She turns the TV off leaves.

27. EXT. SUNRISE - 4 YEARS AGO  
A beauty shot of the sun rising in the neighborhood where Jack and Amanda live.

28. INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING - DAY  
Amanda opens her eyes to see Jack with a tray bringing her breakfast in bed.

JACK  
I'm sorry, baby. I got a little drunk and upset for no reason, I promise it'll never happen again.

Amanda sits on the bed, looks at the tray, and smiles.

AMANDA  
I'm sorry too... I know how much you want a baby...

29. INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY  
Amanda is sitting at the waiting room.

SECRETARY  
Mrs. Rawlings? Dr. Martin will see you now.

Amanda stands up and follows the secretary to the doctor's office.

12.

30. INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Amanda and Jack are playing scattergories sitting on the floor of the living room. The timer is running, Jack and Amanda are writing.

JACK

Time's up. What have you got?

AMANDA

I have 1. nothing, 2. Tennessee, 3. nothing, 4. teacher, 5. nothing, 6. nothing, 7. tequila, 8. the Beatles

JACK

Beatles is B.

AMANDA

Oh, shoots... 9. Target, and nothing for the rest. What do you have?

JACK

I have 1. tomato

AMANDA

Tomato is a fruit, not a vegetable.

JACK

Ah, thought I would fool you in this one. hahaha, OK. 2. Tennessee as well, 3. tomato

AMANDA

Hahaha, now that works.

JACK

4. Taxi driver, 5. TV, 6. Tom, from Tom and Jerry, 7. tea, nothing else.

Jack takes note of the score.

JACK

So it's 5 for me and 6 for you.

AMANDA

So anyways, the doctor said I am fine, and that sometimes it takes longer for a couple to get pregnant.

Jack reaches for the dice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

13.

JACK

So we just need to keep practicing?

AMANDA (LAUGHS)

Yes, but umm... He thinks you  
should do some tests too, you know,  
just to make sure.

Jack face becomes somber.

JACK

Are you suggesting I cannot have  
kids?

AMANDA

No, I didn't...

Jack hits his fist on the table making everything on it shake,  
the timer falls. Amanda looks startled.

JACK

It's your turn.

He throws the dice quite angrily at her. She fails to grab it on  
the air, it lands a feet away from her. Amanda looks at Jack in  
shock for a few seconds. Finally she reaches the dice and throws  
it on the table. It falls on the letter L.

31. INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Camera is positioned outside the bedroom door, which is slightly  
open. The bedroom is dark, but we see the silhouette of the  
couple. Jack is on top of Amanda, forcefully having sex with  
her.

The camera backs off a little and shows the silhouette of  
older Amanda observing through the door.

OLDER AMANDA

I remember closing my eyes and  
praying to get pregnant.

32. INT. PRESENT TIME - EVENING

DISSOLVES TO:

Same camera angle. The silhouette of older Amanda looking at a  
dark wall. She looks down.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

14.

OLDER AMANDA  
But I didn't.

33. EXT. HOUSE - 4 YEARS AGO - DAY

Jack is picking up the mail outside from the mailbox. He shuffles through envelopes and finds one coming from the doctor's office addressed to him. He opens it, and reads the words "slow sperm motility" and "difficulty to conceive". He gets angry and smashes the test results in his hands.

34. EXT. BARBECUE GRILL - 3 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda is coming out of the back door of the house carrying a tray with hamburgers to be grilled. Jack is taking care of the grill. Another couple is around the yard talking. They are Jack's sister CECILIA, her husband FRANK and their son Andy.

AMANDA (HANDING THE TRAY TO JACK)  
Here you go, baby.

JACK  
Thanks honey!

Jack gives her a peck.

CECILIA  
You guys are so cute!

FRANK  
Get a room, you two!

Everyone laughs at the joke and continue with friendly conversation.

JACK  
Hey Frank, want another hamburger?

FRANK  
I sure do!

Cecilia and Amanda walk into the kitchen. Frank is trying to feed his son some potato salad, but he is refusing it and making a mess.

JACK  
Do you want to give him some beans?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

15.

FRANK

Nah, he is just being fussy.

35. INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The women are carrying dirty plates and cups to the sink. Amanda suddenly feels lightheaded and dizzy. She reaches for a chair to sit down. Cecilia comes to her assistance.

CECILIA

Amanda, what's wrong?

AMANDA

I don't know... I'm dizzy.  
Cecilia gets her some water.

CECILIA

Here, have some water.

Cecilia hands the glass to Amanda. She drinks.

AMANDA

Thank you, I feel better. I guess  
it's hotter than I thought outside.

CECILIA

Or maybe you are pregnant.

AMANDA (LAUGHS UNCOMFORTABLY)

Oh, no, that's not it...

Jack appears right behind her.

JACK

That's not what?

Amanda looks as if she had seen a ghost.

JACK (SARCASTIC)

What were you going to say, honey?

CECILIA

Jack, don't just show up behind  
people like that! Amanda felt dizzy  
and I was about to tell her I felt  
that way when I was expecting Andie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16.

AMANDA

Yeah, but I feel better now, you should go outside. It's a beautiful day. I'll be right out.

CECILIA

Are you sure you are alright?

AMANDA

Yes, I'm sure. I'll cool off a little bit and will join you in a second.

CECILIA

Ok...

Cecilia and Jack go outside.

36. EXT. BARBECUE - 3 YEARS AGO - DAY

Cecilia sits down, Jack goes back to the grill, Frank is walking behind Andy, who is running around the yard, playing.

CECILIA

Ah, he's like that all the time. He is hyper just like you when you were his age, Jack.

JACK

C'mon sis, do not start with the childhood stories.

37. INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Amanda supports her weight in the kitchen sink and puts her head down. She breaths deeply, puts a smile on her face and goes back outside.

38. INT. BEDROOM - THAT SAME EVENING

Amanda is sitting in front of the mirror brushing her hair, getting ready for bed. Jack comes in the door.

JACK

So, what were you going to tell my sister behind my back?

Amanda doesn't dare to look at him, she keeps looking at the mirror.

AMANDA

Just that I felt faint because of the heat and not...

Amanda catches herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

17.

JACK  
You're such a liar.

He grabs her by the hair and pulls her to the bed. The objects that she had so carefully organized on the dresser are now knocked over (*montage from titles*).

AMANDA (V.O., CRYING)  
Please, I didn't do anything.

Jack holds her on the bed, she cannot move. Amanda struggles to get out.

JACK  
I love you so much and you hurt me  
all the time.

AMANDA (CRYING)  
Please, please...

JACK (YELLING)  
Stop crying! You make me do these  
things to you, you stupid bitch!

Jack gives her a final push, stands up and leaves the room. Amanda still cries. She lies on the bed, trying to silence her cry.

OLDER AMANDA (VOICE OFF)  
He never hit me in the face or  
where people would see it, he was  
too smart for that.

39. INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

CU of a bouquet of flowers and a gift box. MCU of Jack's hands covering Amanda's eyes, she opens her red, puffy eyes and sees the presents for her. She forces a smile.

AMANDA  
Thank you...

40. INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jack and Amanda are watching a movie together, eating popcorn. Amanda is resting her head on Jack's chest and he plays her hair tenderly.

18.

41. INT. BATHROOM - 5 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda is looking down at the sink, visibly nervous. She walks around the bathroom impatiently, and then go back to the sink and looks down. She grabs something from the sink, and looks at it. It is a pregnancy test. She stares at it for a few seconds and then looks happily relieved.

42. INT. DINING ROOM - 2 YEARS AGO - EVENING

The dining room table is beautifully set, lit by candle lights. Amanda is dressed nicely. Jack enters the room.

JACK

Wow! May I ask what the occasion  
is?

AMANDA

Well, I just wanted to do something  
nice for my husband. I made you  
that pot pie you love.

Jack sits down.

JACK

Wow, thank you!

Amanda sits down too. Jack starts eating.

JACK

Hmmm, it's delicious!

AMANDA

I'm glad you like it.

Jack keeps eating.

JACK

Mmmhummm!

Amanda is not eating, she is looking at Jack.

JACK

Aren't you going to eat?

AMANDA

There is something I want to tell  
you first.

Jack stops eating and looks at her. Amanda opens a big smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

19.

AMANDA  
I'm pregnant.

Jack keeps staring at her. He slowly puts the fork down.

JACK  
You're pregnant...

Amanda nods and smiles. Jack stands up and walks towards her. He gets close to her, and in an impulse, grabs her by the throat.

JACK  
And who is the father, you fucking  
bitch?

Amanda tries desperately to get his hand off her throat.

JACK (YELLING)  
Who is it? I'm going to kill both  
of you, you hear me?

He takes her out of the chair and pushes her against a wall. She falls down. Amanda cannot speak, she is breathless. Jack begins kicking her belly (slow motion).

DISSOLVES TO:

43. INT. HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hospital room, some flowers and a lamp decorate the bedroom. Amanda lies on the hospital bed, tears roll out of her puffy eyes.

DOCTOR (VOICE OFF)  
Mrs. Rawlings, I understand this is  
a hard moment for you, but I must  
say that your injuries and bruises  
do not seem to match your story.

Amanda does not respond. The doctor has a clipboard on his/her hands.

DOCTOR  
Please know that you are in a safe  
environment and that we can help  
you. Is there something else you  
would like to tell us?

Amanda does not react.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

20.

DOCTOR

Have you heard of the Women's  
Center? They offer counseling and  
other services, we can call them if you'd like.

Amanda shakes her head. The doctor shakes his/her head as if  
disapproving her decision.

DOCTOR

Would you like us to call someone?  
Your parents, maybe?

AMANDA (IN A FAINT VOICE)

No, thank you.

The conversation pauses for a few seconds. The doctor looks  
pitifully at Amanda.

DOCTOR

Your husband has been asking to see  
you...

Amanda tears up and looks away from the doctor's stare.

DOCTOR

Well... I'll tell him you are  
resting and cannot be disturbed. Please consider  
what I said. (pause) I'm sorry for your loss.

The doctor turns the lights off and leaves the room. MS of  
Amanda lying on the bed.

Older Amanda walks into the scene stands next to the bed and  
starts caressing young Amanda's hair.

44. EXT. HOUSE - 2 YEARS AGO - DAY

Amanda walks out of the house with her yoga clothes and yoga  
mat.

OLDER AMANDA (VOICE OFF)

I told Jack I wanted a divorce. He  
yelled, threatened to have his  
lawyers leave me with no money,  
begged for me to stay. He convinced  
me he would get counseling and  
change, and allowed me to look for a job.

Amanda gets in the car and drives away.

45. INT. YOGA STUDIO - 2 YEARS AGO - DAY  
Amanda is teaching a yoga class.

AMANDA  
Take a deep breath. Down dog.

All class assumes down dog position.

CUTS TO:

46. INT. YOGA STUDIO - 2 YEARS AGO - DAY  
The class is over, Amanda is organizing the room.

STUDENT 1  
Great class today, thank you!

AMANDA  
You are welcome! See you guys on Friday.

STUDENT 2  
See ya!

STUDENT 1  
Bye.

Amanda smiles with satisfaction.

47. INT. LIVING ROOM - 2 YEARS AGO - EVENING  
Amanda enters the house to find Jack sitting in the dark. She turns on the lights.

JACK  
You're late.

AMANDA  
Oh, I'm sorry... A student stopped  
me to ask questions.

Jack stands up and walks up to her.

JACK  
What kind of questions did he ask?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

22.

AMANDA (A LITTLE HESITANT)  
SHE (*emphasizing*) just wanted to  
know more about some new yoga moves  
I taught them today.

JACK  
I see...

Jack walks away towards the kitchen without saying another word.

48. INT. PAWN SHOP - 1 YEAR AGO - DAY  
Amanda is in the shop, she hands in her pearl necklace to the  
clerk. He looks at it.

CLERK  
100.

She looks hesitantly to the necklace. Finally she nods.

AMANDA  
OK...

He gives her cash, she puts it in her purse and walks out of the  
store.

49. INT. BEDROOM - 1 YEAR AGO - EVENING  
Amanda is sleeping on the bed.

CU of a gun touching Amanda's forehead. She wakes up scared and  
screams.

JACK (DRUNK)  
Look what I bought!

MS of Jack pointing the gun on her head with the right hand, and  
holding a beer with the left hand.

AMANDA  
Why?

Jack still pointing the gun to Amanda.

JACK  
To protect my little girl, that's  
why! So from now on, I'm gonna have  
it with me all the time, just in  
case someone tries to take you away from me.

Jack puts the gun on his belt, takes a sip of his beer, and leaves the room. Amanda is in a corner of the bed, shaking.

50. INT. KITCHEN - 1 YEAR AGO - DAY

Amanda enters the kitchen. She opens a cabinet and searches for an oatmeal can that is behind some other cans. She opens it, gets some cash out of her pocket and puts it in the can, that is already full of money. She puts the can back where it was and leaves.

51. INT. BEDROOM - 1 YEAR AGO - LATE NIGHT

Amanda stands up in her night gown. She puts her slippers on and starts walking towards the bedroom door.

JACK

Where do you think you are going?

He turns the lights on and reaches for the gun under his pillow. She looks at him.

AMANDA

I'm just going to the bathroom.

JACK

Come back to bed right now.

Amanda immediately obeys. Jack puts the gun back under the pillow, turns off the lights and spoons her.

JACK

You can wait until morning.

Amanda looks terrified.

52. EXT. DRIVEWAY - 6 MONTHS AGO - DAY

Amanda is looking at the trunk of her car, where there is a bag with clothes, a folder with documents, and the oatmeal can, where she is putting money in.

Amanda closes the trunk, looks to both sides, and goes in the house.

53. INT. LIVING ROOM - 6 MONTHS - AGO - DAY  
Amanda is dressed up and waits in the living room.

OLDER AMANDA (VOICE OFF)  
I remember it as if it were today.

Jack, wearing a suit, walks in.

JACK  
Are you ready?

AMANDA  
Yes.

JACK  
You look pretty, but go get the  
pearl necklace I gave to you.

Amanda looks startled. She starts walking towards the front door.

AMANDA  
Oh, that's fine, we are late  
anyways. Jack looks angry at her.

JACK  
Let's go get the necklace.

He grabs her by the arm and takes her to the bedroom.

54. INT. BEDROOM - 6 MONTHS AGO - DAY  
Jack throws Amanda on the bed. He goes to the dressing table,  
opens a jewelry box and looks angrily at Amanda.

JACK  
What happened to all your jewelry?

He throws the box at her. In an impulse, Amanda reaches for the gun that is under the pillow.

JACK  
I'm going to kill you!

Jack comes towards her. Amanda shoots him. Jack falls dead on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

25.

Amanda stands up still with the gun in her hand. She looks at the dead body. Older Amanda (now about the same age) wearing a prison uniform walks into the scene and also looks at the dead body.

OLDER AMANDA

It all happened so fast after that.

Amanda runs to the phone and dials 911.

AMANDA

I just shot my husband, please  
help.

Older Amanda continues to look at the body.

OLDER AMANDA (VOICE OFF)

I couldn't claim self-defense in my  
trial since he didn't have a weapon  
on him (*pause*)... and I never told the police or anyone else  
about the years of abuse.

Amanda sits on the bed and sobs.

FADE OUT/IN:

55. INT. JAIL CELL - PRESENT DAY - DAWN

We finally see that Amanda is in a prison cell. She looks at the camera. (Or she writes on the diary).

AMANDA

I'm here to tell you that I'm  
finally free,

Her face expression changes a little, she almost smiles.

AMANDA

and that now, after all these  
years, I can sleep unafraid.

FADE TO BLACK

## VITA

Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University

Elisa Salem Herrmann

elisa.s.herrmann@gmail.com

Federal University of Paraná – Brazil  
Bachelor of Science, Art Education, April 2001

Catholic University of Paraná – Brazil  
Specialization in Audiovisual Communication – 2003

Federal University of Paraná - Brazil  
Specialization in International Relations – 2006

Special Honors and Awards:

International Graduate Student Scholarship, MCMA, SIU, 2012.

The Gaze. Awarded for best narrative short film in the Little Muddy Media Arts Festival, 2011.

3 ½ Minutes. Awarded for achievement in motion pictures and media arts in film editing in the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SPC-TV Film and Television Awards, 2011.

Fulbright opportunity grant for academically excellent students, 2008.

Thesis Title:

Narratives of Abuse: A Glimpse into the Lives of Battered Women and the Making of the Film, *In the Eyes of Others*.

Major Professor: Lilly Boruszkowski