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MFA Thesis

Grandpa?!

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Master in Fine Arts
Imaging Arts / Film Production
Rochester Institute of Technology
March 2010

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Abstract

"Grandpa?!" is a short film produced and shot in Taiwan. It tells the story of a traditional Taiwanese family recovering from the death of its patriarch. Certain family relationships come to the forefront, demanding attention. This film is about not only family issues but also addresses Taiwanese culture. Shot with an HD camera, Taiwanese and Mandarin are the languages spoken by the actors, with English subtitles.

This thesis report provides an overview of the filmmaking process, including writing the script, the proposal, pre-production, film shooting and post-production.

Introduction

The setting of this short film is Taiwan, a country in Asia. According to traditional Taiwanese religious tenets, the spirit of each person exists and continues to exist after death. To comfort a deceased person, funereal rites are conducted by mourning family members over an extended period of time. The official funeral ceremony is complicated and lasts forty-nine days. Most elder Taiwanese still observe this tradition, believing it is the only way to respect the dead. The younger generation does not share their solemn belief in such rituals.

Because of their belief in the spirit, surviving family members will flip two coins to ask the deceased relative for instructions. For example, the family will ask the dead person what the date of burial should be; based on several different dates chosen, one by one. After asking, the family flips the two coins. If one of the coins is heads and the other is tails, it means that the deceased's response is "Yes". If the dead family member has no conflicts or problems, he/she is free to ascend to heaven, leaving the family with an answer concerning the funeral date. If the family cannot get a "Yes" instruction, they

must find out what the conflict is and resolve it in order to comfort the dead. Most Taiwanese also believe that the dead person's spirit will come back because of concern for the problem.

The main characters are the Lee's, a traditional Taiwanese family. Upon the death of its grandfather, the family must reunite for the funeral arrangements. Whether the family is close or not, a reunion is required. During the funeral, no one can escape from the family with any excuse.

The Lee's, then, must deal with the complex ceremony while being forced to confront a long-kept family secret. Devoting all of their attention to the funeral and comforting their grandfather, they fail to understand that the livings are also in need of comforting. The secret family conflict has to be settled. Therefore, the spirit of Grandpa returns to help correct the problem and liberate the family from its broken relationships. His funeral is the vehicle that provides the opportunity for the Lee's to reach understanding and forgiveness, and to remember how much they love each other.

Script

-The beginning idea

The beginning idea came from my early childhood experience at my own grandfather's funeral. I recall having so many questions about his death and the funeral itself. I loved my grandfather but I did not feel sad. Even today, as I get older that weird feeling lingers. I still question why I was not sad. Was I too young to understand the concept of death? Was it that I could not comprehend that my grandfather had already left us forever?

This childhood experience inspired me to write "Grandpa?!" My goal was to write about death from the point of view of a child. How does one so young deal with death and separation? Children, I believe, can be more sensitive than adults, seeing things in different ways. Their thinking is totally different from that of adults. Those differences may serve as a reminder to adults to find - or rediscover - something they have lost.

-Devolving the script

The story begins in a traditional Taiwanese family. I established the main character as a six-year-old boy, Yo-yo. Raised by his grandparents, Yo-yo is very close to his grandfather. Without warning one day Grandpa dies suddenly. Having no idea about death, the adults in the family are preoccupied with the funeral and oblivious to Yo-yo's feelings about what is happening all around him.

While I want Yo-yo to come to an understanding about his grandfather's death, I want to show it in a subtle way. If someone is to tell Yo-yo the message about death, this person should be very close to Yo-yo and have his complete trust. Because of the Taiwanese belief in the spirit, it is Grandpa's spirit who is to tell Yo-yo. I wrote the running scene, the small journey of Grandpa and Yo-yo, with this in mind. They go down to the riverside where they usually go together. When they get there, Grandpa disappears. This is the way Grandpa says goodbye to Yo-yo. He lets his grandson know that he is gone.

The main storyline concerns Yo-Yo's relationship with his grandfather. There is a secondary plot running simultaneously that focuses on Yo-Yo's youthful mother, Lin-yah, and Grandpa - her father. In sharp contrast to the

close relationship Yo-Yo enjoys with the same man, a rift between Lin-yah and her father is evident at once. A resolutely traditional and stubborn man, his daughter Lin-yah shares his stubborn streak. Lin-yah has never been married. Her single-mother status is an unacceptable, unforgiven scandal in her father's eyes, accounting for the six-year gap between them. Both Lin-yah and her father are complex figures. They love each other but are bewildered, too proud and helpless to mend their relationship. Had she broken their six-year wall of silence to communicate with him, they might have resolved their differences. Now upon his sudden death, Lin-yah realizes she has missed any chance at peacemaking. She is left with regret and sorrow for his loss.

Despite the fact that Yo-yo's birth was the source of conflict with her father, it is ironic that Lin-yah and her son are not very close. Rather, in the Lee Family Lin-yah and Grandpa, Yo-yo and Grandpa, and Yo-yo and Lin-yah have their own parent/child relationship triangle. Deeply concerned for his daughter and grandson, Grandpa's spirit comes back for his family. Having lived his life in quietness and integrity, Grandpa's spirit maintains a low

profile, showing himself only to his grandson. Thus, Yo-yo becomes the conduit for his grandpa's message.

Grandfather sends his decisive message to Lin-yah and Yo-yo in the running scene. He takes Yo-yo down to the riverside, prompting Lin-yah to think Yo-yo is missing. When Lin-yah finds Yo-yo by the river, she scolds him for causing her so much anxiety about his safety. Lin-yah and Yo-yo have their first quarrel.

The river scene is important, featuring the running, the movement and discord against the backdrop of the river. It allows the characters to clear and open their minds to new insights. After all of this, they experience their own versions of release, especially Lin-yah. Like never before, she comprehends her monumental responsibility as a mother and begins to appreciate what her parents did for her. Most importantly, she releases herself from the guilt she has carried for disappointing her father.

In devolving the script, it is necessary to point out that some visuals used in the film are deliberately circular and involve movement, like rolling bicycle wheels, the smoke of incense. They serve as hints, little signs

that life never ends, but passes down to the next generation. I chose the riverside because most Asian people believe the river is where all life begins. It is my hope that these small elements will enhance the audience's understanding of the story.

-After writing

This is my first effort writing a script in my native language, telling a story set in my own culture. My concern about explaining traditional culture and the Taiwanese funeral ceremony to a universal audience led me to a decision. I decided that the culture must be understood first, before the audience can get into the story. This required showing Taiwanese culture visually, not just a matter of translating Chinese to English. During the script-writing process, I worked carefully to *show* the cultural themes because it was not my objective to teach the culture. I wanted to help the viewing audience to understand the whole story.

After developing the entire script, it actually diverged from my beginning ideas. It evolved more into a family relationship story and not just a child's perception

of death. Yo-yo's character became the key to bring about the reunion of estranged members of the family. If I revisit this script in the future, I will expand the child's role and build more in-depth components within the relationships between Lin-yah and her father, and Yo-yo and Lin-yah. This will make the turning point at the end of the story a stronger, more compelling experience for the viewer.

Pre-Production

The whole film was shot in Taiwan. The overseas shooting was a major undertaking for me because it meant I could not avail myself of substantial support from school, like crews and equipment. I worked the whole pre-production in Taiwan in a short time-frame. Although I shot the film in my hometown, the production in Taiwan presented challenges that would not have come up in Rochester.

-Crew and equipment

At the beginning, I planned to rent the equipment in Taiwan and have the director of photography and assistant camera from school. When I went to Taiwan, the plan did not go well. First, I had to deal with the communication barrier among the crew. Most Taiwanese don't speak English so I had to find a producer or an interpreter to speak English and to translate successfully between the crew and the actors. I didn't have sufficient time to run the pre-production work because finding a bilingual producer was difficult.

Second, renting equipment in Taiwan usually is a package plan. The package included the equipment and crew,

like Ac, gaffer, and sound person. The crew from the rental house had worked together for so long they were very familiar with each other. The package also included a notable discount. It was a quality offer for a low budget student film. For me personally, it was also more convenient because I did not have to invest more time and money recruiting an entire crew.

After considering the time constraints for pre-production and budget, I gave up the original plan. I really wanted the DP from RIT whom I had worked with previously. However, in order to shoot this film in a short time, I decided to work with the complete Taiwanese crew.

-Location Scout

There were two main locations in "Grandpa?!" One was the Lee family's house and the other was the riverside. The Lee family's house had to be an old, traditional house because the older buildings have a specific look. They are dwindling in number, and most of the remaining ones were located in the countryside. Many of the homeowners were of an older generation. The main scene is a funeral, which is a taboo for most Taiwanese. They believed the funeral scene

would bring them bad luck. Consequently, I spent a lot of time persuading them to change their minds. I found old houses suitable for shooting, but owned by individuals who objected to filming a funeral ceremony in their homes. In frustration, I sought vacated houses but they were in poor condition. Finally, I found an acceptable house, somewhat smaller than desired. Fortunately, the household members supported our shooting very much. After scouting the location, we decorated the rooms, put artworks in place, and set up the funeral altar. After all the set work, the house actually looked good, and was ready for shooting.

In order to save transportation time, we found the riverside closest to the house. Many big power fans surrounded the river. Although not a part of my original vision, the fans looked awesome in the film's riverside scene. The fans not only intensified the visualization but also added to the inner connection with the turning bicycle wheels.

-Casting

There are seven characters in "Grandpa?!". The main character is a six-year-old boy. People in the business of

acting are known to say, "Never work with children and dogs because they're difficult to work with." Casting the role of Yo-Yo presented a dilemma. The six-year old actor must speak Taiwanese well, but most children of the contemporary generation speak very little Taiwanese. It made the casting difficult.

After interviewing many young actors, none were native Taiwanese speakers. Therefore I cast a child actor who was talented and adept at learning language. Before the shooting, his mother and I taught him the dialogue word for word. He proved to be very smart, and his acting worked well in the film.

-Schedule

It took us five days to shoot "Grandpa?!". For a twenty-three minute short film, five days should be enough. The location people, crew, and actors completely supported the five-day shooting, which made scheduling relatively easy and efficient. Our only concerns were the weather and the child actor's working hours.

-Finance

In the proposal, the budget was around 30,000 dollars. When I returned to Taiwan and started pre-production, I didn't have time to raise funds or apply for any film aid. I had to shoot this film in a limited time so I decided to get a loan from my parents. My parents were very supportive of me. I got some money from my parents to add to my own savings. I also received 1,000 dollars from Callahan-Rennalls production grant. In total, I had around 10,000 dollars for this film. It was not even half of the original budget so I had to cut many of my expenses.

The major expenses involved renting equipments and recruiting crews. At first, I planned to shoot in Red-One camera but the rental and post-production would have cost me too much. After talking with my DP, he suggested that we shoot in Sony HDW-F900, record on betacam tape and not do rental tracks, dolly and cram. In order to deal with the budget, we revised the equipment list to a great extent.

Then, I talked to managers of many the rental houses. One of them offered me a student package. That included the equipment and crews, 1st AC, 2nd AC, gaffer and boom operator. Also, the rental house had a postproduction studio so I would be able to transfer the tapes to digital after the

shooting. I made a deal with the rental house about the equipment, crew and postproduction. The overall amounted to around 5,500 dollars.

To cover the other expenses, I got some sponsors for the location expense, traveling expense, food and props. The actors and actresses in "Grandpa?!" were very supportive during the shooting and didn't charge me the full price. I had family members and many friends to help with the shooting. This was a great help and also saved me a lot of money.

Finally, I finished the film and didn't go beyond the budget that I had. Because it is a low budget student film, I asked for a lot of help and sponsorship. I knew it's not the best or appropriate way to shot a film. I should learn how to do the fund raising and apply for film aid in the future.

Director

I'm tremendously fortunate to have a wonderful team to work with and many people who were generously supportive. Because of them, I really enjoyed the shoot and was free to focus on being a director.

-Working with director of photography

This was my first experience working with a director of photography who had been working in the film business for a long time. I was the lucky beneficiary of his wealth of talent and experience. He taught me much about filmmaking and shared his knowledge with me. Before the shooting, we scouted the location and talked about the script many times. I made the storyboards but didn't show them to my DP because I didn't want to limit the frame. The storyboards were only for me to organize my thoughts. I wanted to hear more of my DP's opinion. It helped me to consider alternative possibilities for shooting this film. We discussed the visual style, idea, mood and so on extensively. For example, I wanted to focus on the child's point of view so we took many shots from the child's height. Those shots compelled the audience to look

at the world from a kid-high level. That became our methodology. We communicated ideas a lot but did not frame it before we shot it.

Because of the budget and location, we decided not to use the dolly and crane shoot. The old location house was very small, which made it difficult to fit such equipment in. I didn't want to have excessive camera movement in the interior shoot, so I was good without that equipment.

Compared to the interior shooting, we spent more time on the exterior shooting. Most of the exterior shooting was Yo-yo's running scene, a very important part of this film. I wanted to play with some experimental elements in this scene. Before the shooting, it was hard to explain the visual look to my DP. I told the DP about the idea but those ideas were abstract. My experienced DP gave me many good suggestions about the running scene, which helped me to picture this scene. We decided to shoot this scene in fixable and free style. We used a lot of handheld shooting. We also put the camera on a bicycle, truck, and motorcycle to follow the running kid. We spent almost two days to shoot this short scene. It was worth it because in the

process we captured many unexpectedly interesting shots and I was really happy about it.

-Working with actors

Working with the child actor was not easy. During the shooting, we had to create and maintain a happy environment for him to keep him in the mood to act in the film. Communicating with him was also a challenge for me because he could not really understand the abstract aspects of the plot. I simplified the process for him by telling him alternative stories - like fairy tales - to illustrate what is happening. Then I demonstrated what he needed to do in each scene, after he understood the emotions to be conveyed. Even though we had many rehearsals, I still could not control him. Working with him demanded enormous patience on my part. Nevertheless, I attained many surprising performance scenes and awesome shots from this child.

Post-Production

-Editing & Music

Time to work on post-production was extremely brief. During the editing, ideas were in my mind for most scenes, especially the running scene and the Lee-family argument scene. I was faced with much editing work to be done on these two scenes.

There are four characters present in the family argument scene, engaged in an emotionally charged conversation. I worried about two things. One was how to cut the conversation appropriately. This scene was the turning point of the film in which Lin-Yah spoke her feelings candidly to her mother, in the presence of her aunt and uncle. To build the tension between them during this conversation, I chose predominantly mid-shots and close-ups. I believed that mid-shots and close-ups were the most effective way to reveal the inner feelings of every character. In editing these particular shots, I focused on how to cut and how to establish a quick but smooth pace throughout the conversation. The other thing that concerned me was the screen direction. In the rough-cut version, most of the screen direction was onerously confusing. I showed

the rough-cut to my advisor, Malcolm Spaul, who offered many helpful suggestions. His expertise enabled me to correct the screen direction problems. I will always be grateful for his valued feedback, which provided the guidance I needed in the editing.

For the running scene, I was overflowing with enthusiasm and wanted to play creatively with the editing of it. I had much footage to work with, opening the door to many possibilities. On the other hand, deciding which cut to use was not easy. Everyday I came up with fresh ideas, so I edited many versions for this scene. As I edited this scene, I collaborated with my composer. The scene has no dialogue, so the music bore a critical role in telling the story. I sent several different cuts of the scene, plus some sample reference music to my composer. I had worked with him before, but this was the first time I sent him music samples. As I was editing, a Taiwanese song played repeatedly in my mind. I sent the song to him as a reference, thinking it might be helpful for composing original music for the scene. I also talked with him frequently about what the music should add to the scene. Surprisingly, the music clips he composed for me were a dramatic departure from the Taiwanese reference song.

Actually, his music was better and inspired me with new ideas for my editing. We worked back and forth up to the last minute on this scene, and it was worth the time and labor. Our frequent communication was the main ingredient of our success in achieving the right music for the film.

The post-production for "Grandpa?!" centered around translating the languages. Taiwanese and Mandarin were the languages spoken by the actors in the film, so English subtitles were necessary. Because the topics of religion and culture are sensitive and potentially volatile, devising a fitting, yet accurate approach for translation became an exercise in diplomacy. I sought the advice and assistance of some friends for working on the subtitles. They are bilingual, native English speakers. In the end, we were pleased with the appropriate tone and results of our translation.

Screening and Conclusion

The debut screening of "Grandpa?!" took place in June of 2009 before an audience at RIT. Because "Grandpa?!" is totally a Taiwanese-shot film, I began having doubts prior to the screening. Misgivings on whether the film could cross the language and cultural differences were disconcerting to me. Would the audience understand my story? The many comments from the audience, following the screening, gave me great relief. Although there were not many questions, I valued all of the feedback. Some viewers thought the last scene was not necessary, that the film should end with the river scene. Others suggested a longer-edited version. Their various recommendations gave me more ideas to continue working on the film.

"Grandpa?!" is my third and last student film. I came to Rochester to study for three years. As an international student, I discovered that filmmaking in a different culture and language is not easy. Looking back at my first and second year films - both written and shot in English - I realized I am not happy with them. I wondered, what is the problem? Why am I stuck? My experience of writing and shooting "Grandpa?!" in Taiwan answered these questions for

me. It is all about the language and the way I told the story. Working the creative process in my first language is the way to begin my career as a professional writer and director.

I have always believed that a good story is universal and has the power to cross languages and cultures. It is why I decided to make a film about my native culture. This was my goal in making the film "Grandpa", to tell a story that could resonate in any national or cultural environment. The whole process of making my thesis film was an amazingly enjoyable passage, a journey. In every aspect, including the problems and quests for solutions, the shooting of this film was a positive experience. It gave me the opportunity to try most of the things I wanted to accomplish. Because of this experience, my passion for filmmaking has been revitalized. My work has just begun.

Appendix A

Still Photo







Behind the scene



Appendix B

Script - Grandpa?!

1.INT. LIVINGROOM_DAY

It's a Taiwanese three-section compound. In the living room, **GRANDFATHER (62)** is holding the joss sticks in front of the altar for Lee family's ancestry. **YO-YO LEE (6)** runs into the living room and **GRANDMOTHER (60)** follows YO-YO.

YO-YO
Grandpa, Grandpa, Let's go.

GRANDMOTHER
YO-YO, button your cloth.

YO-YO runs to Grandfather. Grandfather helps YO-YO to get dressed.

YO-YO
Grandpa, can we ride farther today?

GRANDMOTHER
Sure, let's dress first, okay?

The phone rings. Grandmother picks up the phone. YO-YO's mother, **LIN-YAH LEE (38)**, calls from New York.

GRANDMOTHER
LIN-YAH, We are fine. How about you?
...Do you come home during this
holiday break...still busy on
your work...OK...I understood...We got
the tickets. I'll talk to your
father...will see...YO-YO is here.
I'll let him talk to you.

YO-YO stands next to Grandmother and watches her talking to LIN-YAH. Grandfather pretends not to care but still overhears the conversation between LIN-YAH and Grandmother.

YO-YO
Mom. Mom.

GRANDMOTHER (to YO-YO)

Your mother is calling from New
York.

YO-YO (pick up the phone)
Mom, Mom...Are you coming home? I'm
good...Yeah...I'll ride my bicycle
with Grandpa later...Okay...Hold on...

YO-YO (to Grandfather)
Grandpa, mom wants to talk to you..

Grandfather refuses to pick up the phone and lets YO-YO
tell LIN-YAH everything is fine instead.

YO-YO (to LIN-YAH)
Mom, grandpa said everything is
fine...

CUT TO:

2.EXT. ALLEY_DAY_LATER

YO-YO walks with his bicycle on the way to the riverside.
Grandfather is behind him.

GRANDFATHER
Slow down. Wait for your
Grandfather.

YO-YO
Grandpa, hurry up...

YO-YO is excited and walks faster and faster. The
Grandfather's bicycle falls down. YO-YO hears the sound. He
turns back but doesn't see Grandfather.

YO-YO
Grandpa. Grandpa?

Grandfather doesn't respond.

CUT TO:

TITLE_WHERE IS GRANDFATHER?

3.INT. LIVING ROOM_DAY

The Lee family sets up the altar and holds a Taiwanese funeral for Grandfather. The Taoist priest is reciting scripture in front of the altar. Grandmother, the Lee family's relatives and neighbors do obeisance to Grandfather. YO-YO stands behind the people and looks at Grandmother and Grandfather's portrait. YO-YO has no idea what's happened.

CUT TO:

4.INT. YARD_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH comes home from New York. She stands in front of the Lee family's house and looks at Grandfather's bicycle in the yard. She is reluctant to walk into the house. YO-YO notices LIN-YAH and runs to her.

YO-YO

Mom! Mom!

LIN-YAH holds YO-YO. The Lee family members look at LIN-YAH from the living room.

CUT TO:

5.INT. LIVING ROOM_DAY_LATER

Grandmother holds the joss sticks in front of the altar.

GRANDMOTHER (to Grandfather's portrait)
LIN-YAH came home.

LIN-YAH kneels down in front of the altar and looks at Grandfather's portrait sadly. The priest keeps reciting scripture and the funeral ceremony continues.

CUT TO:

6.EXT. PORCH_DAY_LATER

After the funeral ceremony, LIN-YAH and Grandmother talks to LIN-YAH's **UNCLE (58)** and **AUNT (55)**.

YO-YO

Mom. Mom.

LIN-YAH

YO-YO, be good. Let mom talk first.

YO-YO walks into the living room.

LIN-YAH

Thank you. I really appreciate what you did for my father. I am home now. I'll take care of the funeral.

UNCLE

No worries. We're family. I should do that for my brother. You just came home. You should spend time with your mother. Don't worry about the funeral. I'll take care of everything.

AUNT

Listen to your uncle, Don't worry...
LIN-YAH-why did you come alone?
Where is your husband?

Anya looks at Grandmother and tries to explain something. Before LIN-YAH speaks, Grandfather's portrait falls down from the altar. Everyone hears the noise and turns to look at the altar. YO-YO stands next to the altar. Everyone runs to put the portrait back.

CUT TO:

7.INT. LIVING ROOM_NIGHT

Scripture music plays in the living room. YO-YO is curious about the decoration for the funeral. He walks around in the living room like he is searching for something. He stops in front of Grandfather's portrait. YO-YO hears the ring of Grandfather's bicycle. YO-YO looks out of the door.

LIN-YAH

YO-YO, time to sleep.

YO-YO

Okay...

LIN-YAH

Hurry up.

YO-YO leaves the living room.

CUT TO:

8.INT. BEDROOM_NIGHT_LATER

YO-YO and LIN-YAH lay on the bed.

YO-YO

Mom, will you go to New York
again?

LIN-YAH

Yes, but I want YO-YO and
Grandmother to go with me this
time.

YO-YO

Really. I want to go to New York
with mom...But can we wait for
Grandfather to go together? Where
has he been?

LIN-YAH

Grandpa...Grandpa has gone to a far
faraway place.

YO-YO

Far faraway place? Is it farther
than New York?

LIN-YAH

It's much father than New York.

YO-YO

Can we take an airplane to there?
Can we go to find Grandpa?

LIN-YAH

Why do you have so many questions?
Let's sleep. Okay...

After a while, LIN-YAH thinks YO-YO has fallen asleep. She leaves the bedroom. After she leaves, YO-YO opens his eyes.

CUT TO:

9.INT. LIVING ROOM_NIGHT_LATER

Scripture music plays in the living room. Grandmother holes the joss sticks and does obeisance in front of the altar
LIN-YAH walks into the living room.

LIN-YAH
Mom, are you still busy from the funeral? You look so tired. Go rest.

Grandmother sits down and folds the ghost money for Grandfather.

GRANDMOTHER
I'm fine. Has YO-YO slept yet?

LIN-YAH
Yes...he is sleeping.

LIN-YAH sits next to Grandmother and looks at Grandfather's portrait.

LIN-YAH
Mom, if I insist that you live in New York with me, Dad won't...

GRANDMOTHER
It's not you. It's your father. It's time for him to go with Buddha. Don't blame yourself.

LIN-YAH
Mom, I'm thinking that you and YO-YO should go to New York with me after the funeral. Dad has left us. You're getting old. I can't let you live alone in Taiwan.

GRANDMOTHER

Go to New York? How about your
father? Who will do the obeisance
to him?

LIN-YAH

Mom, we can bring father's ashes
to New York.

GRANDMOTHER

Burial brings peace to your father.
When he was alive, he made up
his mind not to go to New York.
Your father and I lived here for
our whole lives. Sometimes, I
don't understand why you like to
stay in New York rather than your
hometown.

LIN-YAH

Mom, I stay in New York for my
career. In New York, I have
better chances more than here.
And also, if I get a really good
offer, I can afford good life for
our family.

GRANDMOTHER

I'm not looking for be rich. I can
live here peacefully. I'll be
happy and satisfied. Don't worry
about me. You should take your
son with you. He is getting old.
YO-YO will need his mother to
grow up with him. All right,
tomorrow will be a busy day, too.
I would go to sleep. Stay the
night with your father.

Grandmother leaves the living room. LIN-YAH sits in the
living room and looks at Grandfather's portrait.

CUT TO:

10.EXT. YARD_NIGHT_LATER

YO-YO spies on LIN-YAH and Grandmother in the living room.
He sneaks to the yard. YO-YO walks to Grandfather's bicycle.

YO-YO
Grandpa. Grandpa, is you?

A noise comes from the grass.

YO-YO (looks down the grass)
Grandpa...

A jumping frog in the grass scares YO-YO. YO-YO runs away.

CUT TO:

11. INT LIVING ROOM_DAY

Grandmother turns on the scripture music and does the obeisance in the living room. She stands in front of the altar and hold a pair of the wooden divinatory blocks.

GRANDMOTHER (to Grandfather)
What do you think about it? YES or
NO?

Grandmother flips the wooden divinatory blocks. The blocks fall on the floor. One is on the positive side and the other one is on the negative side.

GRANDMOTHER (to Grandfather)
Yes...I got it. Don't worry. I'll
do whatever you want.

YO-YO walks into the living room.

YO-YO
Grandma, what are you doing?

GRANDFATHER
I'm asking something to your
grandfather.

YO-YO
How do you ask and know the answer?

GRANDMOTHER (point the blocks)

Flip the divinatory blocks. See,
if the blocks go like this. It
means "yes".

Aunt calls from the Yard.

AUNT (VO)
Hello...anyone home...

GRANDMOTHER
Grandaunt is coming.

Grandmother walks out of the living room.

CUT TO:

12. EXT PORCH_DAY_LATER

Aunt walks into the porch.

AUNT
Sis, the priest is coming soon. He
is on his way now.

GRANDMOTHER
Ok, let me call LIN-YAH to the
altar.

AUNT
Talking about LIN-YAH. Did her
husband come home yet?

GRANDMOTHER
He is still busy at work in
America. He has a big project
now. He should be home after two
or three days.

AUNT
How important his work is. Did he
ever think about LIN-YAH? She's
the only child. How can he let
LIN-YAH come home alone to face
everything? Does he take this
family seriously? They didn't
invite any family members to
their wedding in New York. That's

OK. But now, it's his father-in-law's funeral. Although he let YO-YO take your family name, you don't need to be treated like this.

GRANDMOTHER
Take it easy. I'll talk to him.

AUNT
If he doesn't listen to you, let me know. I can help to talk with him.

GRANDMOTHER
All right, let's go into the living room first. Wait for the priest.

Grandmother calls LIN-YAH.

CUT TO:

13. INT LIVING ROOM_DAY_LATER

While Grandmother and Aunt are talking, YO-YO stands in front to the altar and imitates Grandmother using the divinatory blocks.

YO-YO
Grandpa, where have you been?

YO-YO flips the blocks. The blocks fall down on the floor. One is on the positive side and the other is on the negative side.

YO-YO
What is it? I don't know.

YO-YO picks up the blocks and holds them in his hand.

YO-YO
Grandpa, when will you come home and ride bicycles with me?

When YO-YO is flipping the block, Grandmother and Aunt walk into the living room. LIN-YAH walks into the living room,

too.

GRANDMOTHER
YO-YO, what are you doing?

Grandmother stops YO-YO and takes the blocks away.

GRANDFATHER (to Grandfather)
He's just a kid. He doesn't
understand what he just did.
Forgive him.

LIN-YAH (hold YO-YO's hand)
Come here.

AUNT
YO-YO, the blocks aren't toys.

YO-YO
I just wanna ask Grandpa when he
will come home ?...

LIN-YAH
That's OK...Come with mom.

LIN-YAH holds YO-YO's hand and they walk out of the living
room.

CUT TO:

14. EXT LIVING ROOM_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH
YO-YO, the blocks aren't toys.
Don't do this anymore.

YO-YO
I just wanna ask Grandpa when he
is coming home. I wanna ride
bicycles with him.

LIN-YAH
I see. After the ceremony, we will
go bike riding. OK?

YO-YO

Really? Deal.

LIN-YAH

Deal.

LIN-YAH and YO-YO make a deal.

CUT TO:

15. INT LIVING ROOM_DAY_LATER

The priest comes to hold the funeral. The Lee family holds incense sticks in front of the altar and follow the priest's direction to do obeisance. LIN-YAH kneels down and uses the divinatory blocks to get the instructions from Grandfather. YO-YO watches the ceremony out of the door of the living.

CUT TO:

16. EXT YARD_DAY_LATER

The ceremony continues in the living room. YO-YO cleans his bicycle in the yard and waits for LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH leaves the living room and passes YO-YO.

YO-YO

Mom, can we go now?

LIN-YAH

Mom is busy with the ceremony.
Hold on.

LIN-YAH walks back to living room.
YO-YO sits on the bicycle disappointedly.

CUT TO:

17. INT. LIVING ROOM_DAY

After the ceremony, the priest is leaving the Lee house. The Lee family members put thing in order. YO-YO walks into the living room.

YO-YO

Mom, can we go now? I can't wait

anymore.

LIN-YAH

Go to get your bicycle. I'll be
right there. Okay.

LIN-YAH is done with cleaning and wants go out with YO-YO.
Uncle brings the obituary, walks into the living room and
calls LIN-YAH.

UNCLE

LIN-YAH, can you come over here?

LIN-YAH

Yes.

LIN-YAH gives YO-YO a sign to wait a second. YO-YO
disappointedly looks at her.

UNCLE

I brought the obituary draft here.
I talked to your mother about this.
before. You take a look.

LIN-YAH (take over the obituary)

Ok.

YO-YO walks out the living room.

UNCLE

If there's nothing wrong, I will
print it out and send it to
everyone.

CUT TO:

18. EXT. YARD_DAY_LATER

YO-YO walks to his bicycle angrily and kicks it over.

YO-YO

Liar, liar...

YO-YO notices that Grandfather's grandfather is gone.

YO-YO
Where's Grandfather's bicycle?

YO-YO hears the ring of Grandfather's bicycle.

YO-YO
Grandpa, grandpa...

YO-YO follows the sound and run out of the yard.

CUT TO:

19. INT.LIVING ROOM_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH reads the obituary and sees her husband's name as Peter Wang. She is shocked.

LIN-YAH
Mom, Who is Peter Wang?

Grandmother doesn't respond.

LIN-YAH
Mom, talk to me. What is this?

UNCLE
Is there something wrong with your husband's name? We don't really know about English. If his name is spelled wrong, let correct it right now. Don't be upset.

LIN-YAH
Uncle, there is no Peter Wang.

UNCLE
What are you talking about? You totally mess me up.

The relatives of Lee family start buzzing.

LIN-YAH
Mom, tell everyone the truth. I don't have a husband. I had a child without getting married.

Dad and you want to save face
so you lied to everyone.

GRANDMOTHEHR

How can you say that? Everything
we did was for you. We didn't
want people about gossip on you so
we covered it for you.

LIN-YAH

Mom, I'm never afraid of the
gossip. I'm just sad. Dad and you
still feel ashamed of me and are
still angry.

GRANDMOTHER

Do you really feel that about us?
Your father and I never felt
ashamed of you. We tried to
protect you, support you so we
helped you to raise YO-YO. If
we're angry with you, why would we
do that for you?

LIN-YAH

So tell me. Why did you make this
fake name? Why did Dad not talk to
me? Do you know how much I wanna
talk to him? I really wish I
could talk to him. Ask him to
forgive me.
Don't be upset with me.

LIN-YAH looks at Grandfather's portrait.

LIN-YAH

Now, I will never have the chance
to do this. He'll never forgives
me.

LIN-YAH walks out of the living room.

CUT TO:

20.EXT.PORCH_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH walks to the porch and sees YO-YO's bicycle on the

ground. She recalls the deal with YO-YO. YO-YO is gone.

LIN-YAH (panic)
YO-YO, YO-YO...

CUT TO:

21. EXT. ALLEY / COUNTRY ROAD_DAY

YO-YO hears the ring of Grandfather's bicycle. He runs to the direction where the sound comes from. He sees the shadow of Grandfather's bicycle.

YO-YO
Grandpa, grandpa...wait for me.

YO-YO keeps running.

CUT TO:

22. EXT. RIVERSIDE_DAY_LATER

YO-YO runs to the riverside. He sees Grandfather's bicycle. He yells to Grandfather. He looks around the riverside and doesn't see him.

YO-YO
Grandpa, Grandpa...Where are you?
Grandpa, Grandpa...

YO-YO looks around the riverside.

LIN-YAH (VO)
YO-YO...YO-YO...

LIN-YAH runs to YO-YO. YO-YO turns to LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH kneels down and holds YO-YO.

LIN-YAH
YO-YO, why did you leave by yourself? I'm so worried about you. Never do that again.

YO-YO
Mom, I'm not alone. I followed grandpa here. I thought that

grandpa came home to ride bicycles
with me.

LIN-YAH

YO-YO, listen to me. Grandfather
has left us. He can never come
home anymore.

YO-YO

Mom, it's true...I hear grandpa.

LIN-YAH

YO-YO, it's OK. You don't need to
lie to me. I promise I'll take you
to ride bicycles. Don't be upset
with me.

YO-YO points out grandfather's bicycle to LIN-
YAH.

YO-YO

Mom, I didn't lie. Look. Look,
grandpa's bicycle.

LIN-YAH stands up and looks at the bicycle. She is shocked.
She walks to the bicycle and looks along the riverside.

CUT TO:

23. EXT. RIVERSIDE_DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Grandfather places his hand on the bicycle for
support. Little LIN-YAH sits on the bicycle and sings. LIN-
YAH and Grandfather walk along the riverside to home.

CUT TO:

24. EXT RIVERSIDE_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH places her hand on grandfather's bicycle for
support. LIN-YAH tears. YO-YO walks to LIN-YAH and holds
her.

YO-YO

Mom, please don't cry. I'm not
upset with you.

LIN-YAH
I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

LIN-YAH and YO-YO walk along the riverside to home.

CUT TO:

25. INT. LIVING ROOM_DAY

The decorations for the funeral have been removed. LIN-YAH hold the joss in front of grandfather's portrait. YO-YO runs into the living room. Grandmother follows him.

YO-YO
Mom, Mom, I'm ready.

GRANDMOTHER
YO-YO, watch your step.

YO-YO runs to LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH helps YO-YO to get dressed.

YO-YO
Mom, let's go.

LIN-YAH
OK.

CUT TO:

26. EXT. YARD_DAY_LATER

LIN-YAH and YO-YO ride their bicycles out of the Lee family's house.

FADE OUT

Appendix C

Proposal-Grandpa?!

TITLE – WHERE IS GRANDFATHER?

SHOOTING FORMAT – HD

RUN TIME – 25 mins

Director / writer – Tzuhui Lin

ADVISOR- Malcolm Spaul

TREATMENT

It's a Taiwanese three-section compound. In the living room, **GRANDFATHER (60)** is holding an incense stick in front of the altar of Lee family's ancestry. **YO-YO LEE (7)** runs into the living room and rushes Grandfather to take him to school. **GRANDMOTHER (56)** follows YO-YO and helps him to get dressed into his uniform.

The phone rings. YO-YO's mother, **LIN-YAH LEE (35)** calls from New York. YO-YO and Grandmother are excited about LIN-YAH's calling. When they talk on the phone, Grandfather pretends to be careless and walks around in the living room. He notices that one of LIN-YAH's awards posted on the wall is not sticking well and stops in front of it to fix it.

YO-YO keeps talking to LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH asks YO-YO to pass the phone to Grandfather. Grandfather refuses to pick up the phone and lets YO-YO tell LIN-YAH everything is fine instead.

YO-YO walks and sings on the way to school. Grandfather walks with his old bicycle behind YO-YO and asks him to walk slowly. YO-YO is excited to go school and walks faster and faster. YO-YO notices that Grandfather doesn't follow him. YO-YO turns and yells at Grandfather. Grandfather doesn't respond.

TITLE – WHERE IS GRANDFATHER?

The Lee families hold a traditional Taiwanese funeral for Grandfather and set up the altar in the living room. Grandmother, the Lee family's relatives and neighbors do obeisance to Grandfather. The Taoist priest is reciting Sutra in front of the altar. YO-YO stands behind people and looks at Grandmother and Grandfather's portrait on the altar. In the portrait, Grandfather's facial expression is very serious. YO-YO has no idea what's happen.

LIN-YAH came from New York for the funeral. LIN-YAH stands in front of the Lee family's house. LIN-YAH looks at Grandfather's old bicycle in the yard and is irresolute to walk in to house. YO-YO notices LIN-YAH standing outside of the house. YO-YO runs to LIN-YAH, holds her and calls her mother. The people in front of the house look at LIN-YAH from the living room.

The Lees' relatives rush LIN-YAH into house and direct her to kneel down in front of the altar. Grandmother holds joss stick and tells Grandfather that LIN-YAH comes home. LIN-YAH looks at Grandfather's portrait and feels Grandfather almost looking through her. She feels uneasy and uncomfortable. The Taoist priest keeps reciting scriptures and the funeral keeps going.

LIN-YAH and Grandmother thank their relatives for helping with the funeral. LIN-YAH's UNCLE (58) and AUNT (55) tell LIN-YAH and Grandmother not to worry about the funeral ceremony. They'll take care of everything. LIN-YAH doesn't really believe the traditional Taiwanese religion, so she persuades the relatives to have a simple and solemn funeral instead of the traditional and complicated one. The old generations in Lee's family refuse her idea. They keep talking about how to hold the funeral.

Aunt asks about LIN-YAH's husband and why he didn't come home with LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH looks at Grandmother and tries to explain something. Before LIN-YAH speaks, the Grandfather's portrait falls down from the altar. Everyone hears the noise and turns to look at altar. YO-YO stands next to the altar. Everyone runs to put the portrait back.

Scripture music plays in the living room. YO-YO is curious about the decorations for the funeral and the ceremony. He walks around in the living room and looks like he is searching for something. He stops in front of Grandfather's portrait.

LIN-YAH calls YO-YO to go to bed.

LIN-YAH and YO-YO lay on the bed. LIN-YAH asks YO-YO if he wants to go to New York with her after the funeral. YO-YO says yes but worries about Grandfather and Grandmother. LIN-YAH tells YO-YO that she will ask Grandmother go with them. YO-YO asks LIN-YAH "How is Grandfather? Where is he?" LIN-YAH tells YO-YO that Grandfather went to a faraway place.

Scripture music plays in the living room. Grandmother stands in front of the altar and hold the wooden divinatory blocks. She asks something about the funeral and wants to get some instruction for Grandfather via the blocks. LIN-YAH walks into the living room. LIN-YAH doesn't take seriously about the block thing and wants to Grandmother to take a rest. Grandmother tells LIN-YAH she is fine and insists on keeping company with Grandfather.

LIN-YAH stays with Grandmother and talks to her about the idea that takes her and YO-YO to New York after the funeral. Grandmother refuses LIN-YAH's suggestion and is very unhappy about that.

Grandmother gets up very early in the morning and prepares for the funeral. She plays the Sutra music and is busy to do the obeisance in front the altar. YO-YO walks into the living room and sees Grandmother is folding the ghost money into a flower shape. He asks Grandmother what is it for. Grandmother explains to him that it's for Grandfather to help him to go to heaven. YO-YO asks Grandmother, where is heaven? Grandmother tells him that heaven is above the sky. Grandmother lets YO-YO help her fold the ghost money.

Aunt walks into the living room and tells Grandmother that a famous priest will come to help Grandfather's funeral today. Grandmother sends YO-YO to wake her mother to prepare for the funeral.

Aunt asks Grandmother about LIN-YAH's husband again. Grandmother lies to Aunt that LIN-YAH's husband is too busy to attend the funeral.

The priest comes to hold the funeral dramatically in living room. The Lee family holds incense sticks in front of the altar. LIN-YAH kneels down and uses the divinatory blocks to get the instructions from Grandfather. The Lee Family wants to know which dates will be the best to bury Grandfather. LIN-YAH follows the priest's directions and tries several times, but doesn't get a response. YO-YO stands outside of the door to look at the whole ceremony.

After the ceremony, the priest is leaving the Lee house. The Lee family walks out the house and asks the priest why they can't get any instruction from Grandfather. LIN-YAH persuades her family member not to stick to the traditional religion. The old generation in Lee's family thinks that she doesn't respect her father and religion.

When the adults talk about the Grandfather's funeral, YO-YO sneaks into the living room. He stands in front to the altar and imitates LIN-YAH to use the divinatory blocks. He would like to ask, Where is Grandfather? Grandmother walks into the living room and stops YO-YO.

The ceremony continues in the living room. No one notices YO-YO. YO-YO folds the ghost money into an airplane shape and throws them to the sky.

UNCLE brings the obituary and want LIN-YAH to check the names of the family member. LIN-YAH sees her husband's name on it. She is shocked and angry. She blames grandmother for why she lies to everyone. She tells the truth that she is an unmarried mother. YO-YO notices that LIN-YAH and Grandmother are arguing. Grandmother wants to save LIN-YAH's face, so she lies. Grandmother tells LIN-YAH that she uses the divinatory blocks to ask Grandfather and he agrees with her idea.

LIN-YAH thinks Grandfather and Grandmother always feel a shamed of her. Grandfather never forgives her about being an unmarried mother. LIN-YAH runs away. YO-YO follows LIN-YAH to get out of Lees' house.

YO-YO wants to follow LIN-YAH, but gets lost. He keeps calling LIN-YAH and is afraid that LIN-YAH is leaving him. YO-YO hears the ring of Grandfather's bicycle. He runs to the direction where the sound comes from.

YO-YO is running to the sky. He sees the sights of the heaven that grandmother describes to him. He sees Grandfather ride his bicycle. Grandfather gives YO-YO a ride. Grandfather leads him to find out LIN-YAH. He sees LIN-YAH run on the country road from the sky. He yells to LIN-YAH. Grandfather stops the bicycle.

YO-YO runs to LIN-YAH and holds her. YO-YO cries and asks LIN-YAH not to leave him. YO-YO tells LIN-YAH that he saw Grandfather and he isn't angry with LIN-YAH. LIN-YAH tells YO-YO that he doesn't need to lie to her and will go home with him. YO-YO points at Grandfather's bicycle next to them.

Grandmother sits in the quiet living room. She looks at grandfather's portrait and talks to him. She asks Grandfather what should she do to LIN-YAH. One of the LIN-YAH's awards posted on the wall falls down. Grandmother picks it up and tries to post it back on the wall.

LIN-YAH and YO-YO come home. They see Grandmother posting the award. Grandmother tells LIN-YAH that Grandfather insists on posting these certificates on the wall. He is so proud of LIN-YAH. He never feels a shamed of her because he helps LIN-YAH to raise YO-YO and take care of him very well. LIN-YAH looks at their Grandfather's portrait. In the portrait, the facial expression of Grandfather is still serious. LIN-YAH is relieved and feels sorry about her selfishness and irresponsibility to her parents. She walks to the altar. She holds the incense stick and tells Grandfather that she is home. LIN-YAH holds the divinatory blocks and throws it. The blocks fall.

TIMELINE

	2008				2009				
	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Script									
Location Scout									
Casting / Rehearsals									
Storyboard									
Principal Photography									
Editing									
Pick-up shot									
Music / Sound									

BUDGET

01-00 Script	50
02-00 Producers Unit	In Kind
03-00 Direction	In Kind
04-00 Cast	1,000
TOTAL ABOVE-THE-LINE	1,050
05-00 Production Staff	In Kind
06-00 Extra Talent	In Kind
07-00 Production Design	In Kind
08-00 Set Operations	2,500
09-00 Set Dressing	500
10-00 Property	In Kind
11-00 Wardrobe	500
12-00 Makeup and Hairdressing	100
13-00 Electrical	1,000
14-00 Camera	5,200
15-00 Sound	250
16-00 Transportation	1,750
17-00 Location Expenses	400
18-00 Accommodation Expenses	1,000
TOTAL PRODUCTION	13,200
22-00 Editorial	1,000
23-00 Music	500
24-00 Post Production Sound	500
25-00 Titles	500
26-00 Graphic Art Work	100
TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION	5500
27-00 Insurance	1,000
28-00 Travel Expenses	3,000
29-00 General & Administrative	2,000
TOTAL OTHER	6,000
Total Above-The-Line	1,050
Total Below-The-Line	24,700
Total Above and Below-The-Line	25,750
Contingency @ 15%	3,705
GRAND TOTAL	29,455