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# SWEATER

BY  
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MFA  
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May, 2014

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## ABSTRACT

*Sweater* is a 13 minute short film focusing on the relationship between a mother and a son. Molly, as a single mother, spends most of her time working to support her family but, meanwhile, it deprives her from being with her son, Eden. Gradually, there seems to be a gap between Molly and Eden, and neither of them can get close to each other.

However, Eden finds out accidentally that his father, Jacob, is actually alive, which forces Molly to tell Eden the reason why she lied to him. Thus, Eden knows that Molly is a lesbian and realizes that Molly hides the secret from him. Eventually, Eden forgives Molly and accepts her.

*Sweater* is shot on Canon 5D Mark II, recorded on Sound Device 702 recorder, edited on Adobe Premiere CS5.5, and color graded on Davinci Lite 10.

This essay will discuss my intention as the director about making *Sweater* and the mixed response it generated from the audience.

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## STORY

- INTENTION

*Sweater* is a story talking about a lie: a mother tells her son a lie to keep him from a brutal truth. However, this makes their relationship become worse. I chose the subject because I feel that, most of the time, there's a great distance between people today, even those people who should be the closest to each other, such as husband and wife, parents and children, etc. Furthermore, sometimes people build a gap unconsciously because they want to protect the people they love, which is sad.

However, why is *Sweater* about a mother and a son? I have met lots of people who share the same issue with their parents. Gradually, they stop talking to each other. Eventually, they don't know what their parents want from them, and their parents don't understand them at all. Therefore, it inspires me to make a film about this with a good solution in the end to comfort people who have the same issue as my film.

When I wrote the script, I was struggling with the reason why the mother forbade her son from seeing his father and why the father hated his wife and his son so much. In the meantime, a homosexual issue<sup>1</sup> in Taiwan had been discussed widely. I have some

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<sup>1</sup> The Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights proposed legislation of Marriage Equality, Civil Partnership System and Multi-person Family system to protect all kinds of intimate relationships and families in society in law, and which results in a fierce debate in Taiwan.

friends who suffer from making a choice between confessing their sexual orientation to their family. Thus, I decided to bring up the topic in *Sweater* also set in present, and wrote the mother as a lesbian who chose to be single to prevent her son from being too different from others because of her sexual orientation. I hope people who confront the similar problem as the mother in *Sweater* could realize that they must be accepted and loved by someone they really care about.

## ▪ CHARACTERS

### - About The Son, Eden

Eden is a troubled kid. In fact, he tries to attract his mother's attention by acting out. As a teenage boy, he does not know how to express what he feels to his mother. Therefore, he becomes a troubled kid which makes his relationship with his mother worse.

I had a tough time to write the character of Eden. First of all, I am not a teenager anymore. Therefore, I wrote dialogue not like a teenager would say in the beginning. I had to get rid of my personality in real life and imagine myself as a teenager. Then, I was able to create a believable teenager in the story.

In addition, with a cultural difference, it is hard for me to write his change when he knows that his mother is a lesbian. In my country, usually we do not express our emotion

directly. Therefore, I was worried that if Eden forgave and accepted his mother immediately would be too fast - he might need times to deal with the shocking news. However, after asking several native speakers, I thought it was believable to let Eden and his mother make up in the scene.

- About The Mother, Molly

A single mother hides the truth about why she separated from her son's father to prevent her son from getting hurt. However, because she chooses to be single, she has to support the family on her own. That is to say, she thinks that she makes a white lie that is good to everyone but, in fact, no one benefits from her decision.

Because I knew some people who I could use as a reference for Molly in real life, it was much easier to write about Molly than Eden for me. When I wrote her as a mother who protected her son excessively, I thought of my mother, who regarded my sisters as little kids even though they were already 16 years old and helped them doing almost everything, and I used the way my mother would behave and considered on the character of Molly. When I wrote her as a lesbian and struggling to hide it, I thought of my friends who dealt with it in their own lives. With the real experience surrounding me, I was able to create the role with the complicated elements and made it like a real person in life.

- About The Father, Jacob

He is a conservative Christian who regards homosexuality as a sin. Therefore, when he found out that his wife was a lesbian, he could not forgive her. Even though he knew his wife was pregnant, he still could not accept her, or the baby his wife was having. Eventually, he left his wife and kid, having a new family in another place.

I considered about showing that the father did not have a good life after he did such a terrible thing to his wife and kid, because I thought that the father would struggle between his beliefs and humanity. Or, the father's attitude to his wife and son might change after he saw his son. However, I decided to concentrate on the son and the mother in case the father in the short film would distract the audience. Therefore, the function of the scene with the father was to build up the climax rather than resolving the conflict.

#### - About The Girlfriend, Amy

Molly broke up with Amy because she was not able to provide a "normal family" to Molly's son. After she separated from Molly, she was seeing several guys to fulfill the empty part in her heart. However, once Amy met Molly, she knew she was still in love with her.

The character of Amy had a very clear goal: make up with Molly. The character made Molly confront the tough decision directly, so that the audience could see how difficult it was for Molly to leave her lover and how big the sacrifice Molly made for her son, which helped the film become more dramatic.

## **PRE-PRODUCTION**

- **CASTING**

Because the characters in my script were settled, I was able to do the casting before I finalized the script. I tried several methods to find actors:

- **Craigslist**

I posted an advertisement about an audition on Craigslist and got several responses from people who were interested in acting. Within those actors, I found Nick C. Nevinger, who had been acting since he was no more than ten years old, for the role of Eden; Annette Remorse, who had abundant experience in student films, for the role of Amy; Timothy Michael and Even Anderson, who were dedicated to acting, for the role of the father's son and young Eden.

- **Talent Agent**

I emailed a Talent Agent and described the characters I was looking for. However, the actors they recommended did not respond to my request.

- Actors in SoFA films.

I posted the advertisement on Craigslist for a while, and could not find good actors for Molly, Jacob and the owner of the restaurant where Molly worked. Apparently, I could not rely on the Talent Agent since I could not even get the actors contact information from there. Therefore, I started asking around if people knew any actors. Fortunately, some SoFA students passed me actors' information who were in their films. The good thing was I could see their performance to decide if I wanted to meet them in person. Eventually, I found Nicole Skelly, who took acting as her life goal, for Molly; Anton Zane, who was dedicated to acting, scriptwriting and directing, as Jacob; and Ryan Whalen, who was enthusiastic about acting, as the owner of the restaurant.

## ▪ LOCATIONS

The locations I needed for *Sweater*:

- Eden's Home

Before I started shooting, I thought the location that was hardest to reach would be Eden's home. Seldom people would allow a bunch of people to run into their house and ruin their weekend. However, I got an email, from an actor who I rejected for my film, mentioning that he was willing to provide his house as a shooting location. It was completely a big surprise for me. I sent him an email to set up a time for a location scout



immediately and got his kind response soon. His home was not very fantastic nor well decorated. It was a very simple house. However, my main character grew up in a single family and had a financial issue. Thus, the house was the right place to shoot my film.

In addition, I was supposed to shoot the last scene in the house, but the house owner forgot to leave his key in the mailbox. I knocked on the door, made phone calls, but still could not reach him. Since the light in the last scene were only candles, and I never really showed what the living room looked like clearly in the whole film, with the time pressure, I decided to find another place to finish it. Therefore, the last scene was shot in the house of my DP, Runze Zhou.

#### – The Restaurant

I found a restaurant called “Michelin’s Italian Restaurant” to shoot in early November. The owner accepted my requirement immediately and asked me to let him know about the shooting days earlier. I informed him of my shooting schedule a month before I needed the restaurant and reminded him a week before I shot. However, the day before shooting, he said he could only allow me to shoot in his restaurant for two hours a day. It was impossible to finish the restaurant scene in such a limited time. Thus, I tried to get another restaurant for the shoot. However, I could not get a new restaurant in time so I cancelled the shooting.

During the winter break, I found another restaurant called “Portofino Bistro & Bar.” I confirmed with the owner the availability of weekend and dinnertime because I know

they were usually busy in that period. The owner gave me a positive answer. I believed there would not be any miscommunication this time because the owner was Chinese. However, because of the problem I confronted last time, I asked another restaurant called “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant” for back up. The owner of “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant” was even willing to open the restaurant on Sunday morning for me.

I contacted the owner of “Portofino Bistro & Bar” as soon as I decided the shooting time. Nevertheless, Portofino’s owner suddenly rejected me to shoot on the weekend. I contacted the owner of “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant” immediately. Fortunately, the owner was still willing to offer her place so that I finally could finish the restaurant scenes.

– Jacob’s Home

For Jacob’s scene, I just needed to shoot in the front door of a house. Compared to get a location for Eden’s home, I believed it would be relatively easy to get permission to finish Jacob’s scene. Thus, I just drove around Rochester to see which house looked good and put mail in the mailbox. Fortunately, I got two responses from those mails. Although one of them did not answer my phone call, the other one, an old lady, was kind and allowed me to shoot at her house.

– David's Apartment

I was looking for a normal college student's living room for the scene but most students I knew here subleased the living room as a bedroom. Therefore, I posted an ad on Craigslist to ask if anyone was willing to offer a living room for probably half day with limited compensation. I got a response requiring \$150 for half day shooting soon. The price was too high for me so I just kept the house as a back up. I rethought of all people I knew here and made phone calls to people I barely saw for almost a year. Fortunately, I asked about a person who shared a house with a local American who was willing to provide his living room as my shooting location.

## **PRODUCTION**

- **DIRECTING**

With the language problem, I was afraid that I would take too much time communicating with actors while we shot so I decided to do the rehearsals for specific scenes with actors before shooting. I thought how to tell actors the situation and the emotion in scenes clearly before the rehearsal.

Here are scenes I did rehearsal ahead the shooting:

- **Eden and Molly's First Fight**

In this scene, I asked Eden to ignore Molly as an usual teenager would do to their mothers and get angry when he saw the present on a desk in his bedroom. When he got mad, he talked with Molly in a taunting way. Then, Molly's emotion became agitated because of Eden, which made the conflict between them more severe. However, Molly turned to feel sorry while she heard Eden say: "I'm on my own now." I thought both actors did a great job in the scene.

– Eden and Molly’s Second Fight

I thought the second part was more difficult than the first fight because it involved deeper internal emotions. Eden was still mad in the beginning, but he turned to be calm and told a silly joke to make Molly laugh out in the end. On the other hand, Molly confessed her sexual orientation to Eden and expressed her sorrow in the scene. I felt that the male character was good performing the kind of negative emotion, such as sadness and anger, but he was not that good in conveying happy or joking emotion. However, I thought the first take of the last part he said a silly joke was quite natural and it exceeded my expectation. On the other hand, the female actress was usually good, but she could not cry whenever she wanted. Thus, in this scene, she cheated crying by watching films. However, it turned out good.

– Eden Confronted with Jacob

In my imagination, Jacob was a calm person. Even though he confronted with his abandoned son, he was still cool. However, the male actor overacted sometimes, so it took me sometimes to explain the character to him. Besides, we had hard time on the line: “Lord help me.” It was odd when he said the line, so we decided to replace the line as “Oh my lord.” It worked much better than the original line. The problem was, I was worried that the audience could not get the sense that Jacob was an extremely conservative Christian. About Eden’s part, I was quite satisfied except the line: “How can I...” I felt it was awkward that he did not finish the sentence, so I asked the male character to interrupt him when he said the line. However, it gave me a hard time on

editing because of overlapping lines, but I still thought it was better that Jacob interrupted Eden.

Except those scenes I mentioned above, I also wanted to do the rehearsal for the scene that Amy confronted with Molly. Nevertheless, I could not find a good time for all of us to do that before we shoot, so I wrote down some notes on the script and sent to the actress. It did save times while we're shooting. For me, the actress for Molly did a terrific job in the scene. She had a similar conversation with her boyfriend, and she took that in the scene, which worked out perfect for me. On the other hand, the actress for Amy usually overacted. Thus, all I tried to do on her was made her be normal. Besides that, the actress for Amy did a good job on expressing her excitement in the beginning of the scene and her sorrow at the end of the scene.

All my actors paid attention on me and figured out how to do a best take with me while we shooting.

#### ▪ CINEMATOGRAPHY

70 percent of the script took place in Eden's home. The problem we confronted in the house was the limited space, which made us have a hard time putting up lights.

I had two birthday scenes in the script. In the first birthday scene, we put three one K with CTB outside the window as night-light, and some smaller lights in the house as candlelight. However, I felt it made light outside much brighter than light inside. Thus, for the second birthday scene, I asked my DP to forget about the light outside and focus on candlelight. I thought it turned out better than the first birthday scene.



- The lightings outside were brighter than inside. Thus, Molly's face was getting dark when I reduced the brightness in this scene.



- Without lightings from outside, it became more authentic than the first birthday scene.

Besides, I shot in the winter, so I had to struggle with the sunlight. For example, Eden's bedroom was on the second floor and it was hard to put the light outside the house as daylight, so I shot the scene in the second floor first to make sure it was bright enough. Then, I shot the scene on the first floor and put lights outside the window as daylight. However, we could tell that we were losing light in the scene if we paid attention.



– We were losing light when we did those scenes in Eden's home.

On the other hand, for the restaurant scene, we had to deal with blocking light. It was difficult to get permission to shoot in nighttime in the restaurant. Thus, we had to shoot in daytime and figure out how to make it look like nighttime. We used sound blankets and curtains to block the lights. However, curtains did not work as well as sound



blankets. We still could see daylight in the corner of the shot. Since most of the audience focused on the actors' performance, I did not take it as a serious problem.



- We could see the daylight at the pillar far away from the camera.

The scene Eden and Molly made up happened in Eden's bedroom. My DP thought it was a very dramatic scene, and he did not want to make the shots look dull, so he put about three CTO gels on the light when we shot the close up of Molly and Eden. It made the shots more interesting and dramatic. However, we did not put as much CTO gels on the lights



- The lighting was redier in the CU than WS.

when we did the wide shot, so I had a hard time when I did the color correction.

Besides the interior scenes, I also had some exterior scenes. I shot the scene that Eden confronted Jacob in the middle of November, and fortunately the weather was awesome. The problem we got that day was the harsh sunshine, which made some shots overexposed so we lost the detail on the actor's face. Also, some close ups were too close. Otherwise, the shots in that day were great. I was planning to finish all exterior scenes with Eden that day, but it took me a much longer time than I assumed. Thus, I had to schedule another day to finish the rest of the shots. Unfortunately, the snow came after the weekend. Then, the main character had a haircut. For the continuity, I had to wait until April to finish it.



- The shot was too close framing as 1:2.3.



- The sunshine was too harsh that we lost the detail on the actor's head.

It was also a good day when I shot the remaining exterior scenes. However, when I was at the parking lot of the restaurant, I found out the sun was in the back of the restaurant, which made the parking lot in front of the restaurant dark. On the other hand, the parking lot of the restaurant called “Shanghai Chinese Restaurant” did not have the light issue. The “Shanghai Chinese Restaurant” shared a building and a shop sign with “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant.” I didn’t think people could tell if I shot in the parking lot of “Shanghai Chinese Restaurant” rather than “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant,” so I decided to shoot at the parking lot of “Shanghai Chinese Restaurant” and asked the owner for permission later. It was a gamble. The good thing, however, was I got the owner’s permission and did not need to redo the scene.



- The parking lot of “Tokyo Japanese Restaurant” was too dark so I shot in the parking lot of “Shanghai Chinese Restaurant” instead.

I thought I finished shooting, but I felt it would be better if I had a shot where Eden drove to Jacob’s home. I decided to grab this shot even though screening was coming. Finally, three days before submitting my film, I wrapped.



- The shot that Eden drove to Jacob's home.

#### ▪ SOUND RECORDING

I thought I would have a sound issue while I shot scenes in Eden's house because the house was close to the airport. Nevertheless, it was pretty quiet except a few cars that passed by sometimes. Unexpectedly, I did have a sound issue in almost the rest of scenes. As I mentioned, when I shot the scene where Eden confronted Jacob, it was a beautiful day. Thus, people flew airplanes all the time and winds were quite loud. We spent a lot of time on waiting for airplanes. In the restaurant scene, I dealt with the noise of heater and refrigerator. I could not ask the owner of the restaurant to turn off the heater and refrigerator just for me, so I finished the scenes in such a horrible sound situation. The last scene I had terrible sound was Molly at the parking lot. A train horn blew, airplanes flew and cars passed. There was nothing I could do to fix those problems.

## **POST-PRODUCTION**

- **EDITING**

I started editing before I finished shooting and I spent more time on editing than I had expected. There were two reasons that made me have a hard time on editing:

- Actors were in frame in the beginning

It would be better to let the actors walk into a frame rather than standing in a frame and walking forward. For example, I had a shot that Molly walked to the door and knocked. I was limited because she was in the frame rather walked into the frame. I found myself limited while editing because of this reason. It was too simple to remember but important.

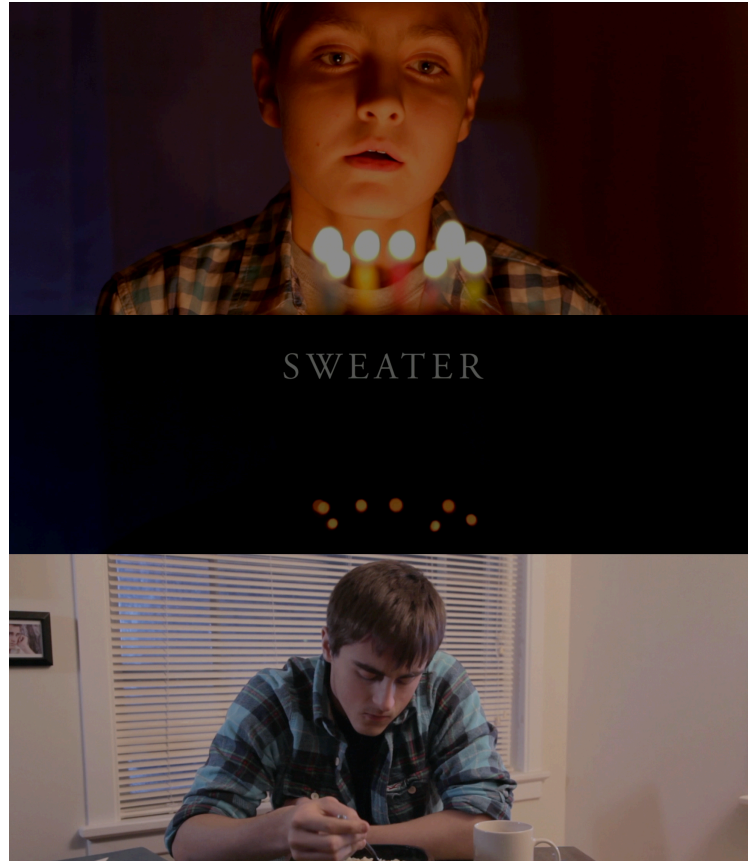
- Actors took too long time on processing their emotion or doing something

For example, in the scene that Molly calculated living expense, she should do it fast, rather than spending time looking at the envelope and the check. It still could work after editing, but it would take unnecessary time to make it work. Besides, in the scene that Eden and Molly made up, both of characters took too much time on processing their



emotions and I had to trim a lot. However, it was my fault to direct them like this. I thought it was a big moment and they were supposed to take some time to deal with the problem. However, when it was shown on the screen, I knew it was too long and it risked the chance of boring my audience

After all, I removed the scenes when Eden shook the present and quickly glanced at the birthday card because I did not think it was shot well. After I showed the film to my friends, they said the information about Eden was too less to convince them that Eden was the main character. I thought the problem of misleading the audience was more serious than ugly shots. I used the word “ugly” because I did not think the frame and the lighting were good in that scene. Thus, I decided to put the scene back. Considered about the connection between young Eden and teenage Eden,



- I connected young Eden and teenage Eden by editing two similar shots together.

I moved the shot that Eden had dinner alone forward because the composition of the shot was similar to the last shot of young Eden’s birthday scene. It made the sequence of the

story became: Young Eden's birthday – title – Eden has dinner alone – Molly in a restaurant – Eden shakes the present.

Also, I felt the rhythm in the part where Eden finds out the check and Amy confronts Molly was not that good. One of my friends suggested to do it as a montage, which meant intercutting Eden finding out the check and running to Jacob during Molly and Amy's had conversation. I tried it and it worked for me, so I kept it.

Even though I did have a shot list before I shot, the film did not edit like I thought most of time.

#### ▪ COLOR CORRECTION

I was planning to do the color correction with Davinci Resolve. Because I never used it before, I started to see tutorials in December to get familiar with the software. I did not have too much trouble learning how to use it and started doing some color correction pretty early. I thought with the memory function of Davinci Resolve, I could memorize how I did color correction on each shot and apply it to the sequence of the final cut. However, I could not export a XML file with Premiere. It showed there was an error and would not export the XML file with all sequence. It was a day before the screening, and I did not have time to figure out what happened or fix the problem. Thus, with limited time, I did the color correction in Premiere with the RGB curve.

It turned out okay. However, I will try to export a XML file and import in Davinci even after screening because I want to fix the problem of the lighting issue in the first birthday scene and the restaurant scene.

- SOUND

- Adjust sound levels, filled empty parts with room tone

Adjusting sound levels was the first part I worked on in order to make sure the volume of lines was from -12 dps to -20 dps, and the volume of sound effects was no more than 3 dps. Also, I filled empty parts between characters' lines with room tone so that it would not sound like the sound suddenly disappeared and suddenly showed up. However, the volume of some lines was still to low. If I made it as loud as requirements, the background noise would be super loud. It would sound weird, so I just left some of lines under -20 dps to made it at least not sound awkward.

- ADR, ambience and sound effect

I was not thinking about doing ADR for the film before. However, the sounds in the scenes when Eden was at the front door of Jacob's house and behind the garage were too terrible. For example, a sound of an airplane just came up while the characters were



talking. Thus I did ADR for the scenes where Eden and Jacob at the front door of the house, and Eden and Jacob talking behind the garage.

If I decided to do ADR for a scene, it meant I had to rebuild a new environment sound or it would not sound real. Therefore, I had to add sound effect such as a door opening and closing, footsteps according to characters' movements, and other kind of sounds to make the scene feel authentic. Eventually, I put one audio track with the clear room tone I recorded while I shot the scene, and added the sound of birds, an airplane and a car in the scene. Overall, I thought the ADR for the scene sounded realistic. However, the ADR in the scene behind the garage did not sync well. I listened to the sound we recorded in the scene again, and I thought it was not as terrible as the scene at the front door so I kept it.

I also used the ADR for the scene in which Eden had dinner alone, as well as the beginning of the scene when Amy confronted Molly because the heater was too loud in both scenes. There were no lines in those scenes so I could simply do it myself. In addition, I added the sound of dog barking and a car passing in the beginning of the scene that Eden woke up in his friend's apartment to help the transition.

#### – Music

My first approach to finding a composer was to use my friend's roommate. I met him about two years ago. He studied in Scoring for Film and Multimedia in NYU then. He worked in LA as a composer for film after graduating. I knew it must have cost a lot if

I asked him to compose for me. However, I took a shot and talked to him about my film. As I thought, he said it would cost me about \$500 to \$1000 to compose music for me. I did not think I could afford it so I tried to find someone else to help me with the music. Then, one of my friends recommended his composer who composed for his stage drama in college. Though he never composed for a film, I thought he could figure out how to do it with the experience of composing for stage drama. However, after the few times we talked about the music he made for me, I did not think his music would fit in my film. Again, there was not too much time left. I browsed the website where I could have the option of purchasing music with copyright and listened to hundreds of music samples to find if there was any music that would be good for my film. Eventually, I decided to use some classical music in my film.

## SCREENING IN RIT

I got some positive responses and negative responses after screening. Most of people agreed *Sweater* was a meaningful film and approved of my hard work. The audience also mentioned the actors' solid acting made the film more touching.

However, some of them were bothered by the music. For example, they did not think I needed music in the montage scene because the music gave them a sense that something sad was going to happen which deprived them from engaging in the scene to see what would happen next. Also, the music "Moonlight" by Beethoven was so famous that distracted the audience from the scene.

On the other hand, some audience thought the change of the main character, Eden, was too fast. He was angry, unforgiving in whole film, but accepted the shocking news that his mother was a lesbian immediately. Maybe there should be something happened between the scene when Eden and Molly made up and the last scene of Eden's birthday so that the character's change would be more convincing.

Overall, I thought the audience regarded *Sweater* as a nice short film but still could be better.

## CONCLUSION

It was a long year. Making a short film was much more difficult than I could ever imagine. I thought after doing few short films at RIT in the past two years, it would be easier. At least, would not be confronted with too much trouble. But, no. I felt that I got trouble in each part: getting locations, getting actors, getting crew, shooting, editing, sound, color, etc. However, with all of problems I met, I learned, a lot.

The winter in Rochester was very severe. Every weekend, I was at the loading dock, putting heavy light kits and other equipment in my car. I felt so cold and so tired. Sometimes I judged myself if I was capable of making a film and doubted if the script was good. Sometimes I felt I did not work hard enough. Sometimes I even wanted to quit. However, I stayed here and made a short film eventually.

I knew *Sweater* was not a perfect film, there were some problems I needed to fix, and some problems I could not fix. At least, I did not feel sorry after making the film. Although I had a hard time on *Sweater*, I hope I can spend my life making films.

However, there is no way I could make it alone. I have many people to thank.

## APPENDIX

- PROPOSAL

# TBD

Fictional Narrative

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

Approved for Submission by:

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Advisor: Peter Kiwitt

Committee: Jack Beck

Skip Battaglia

## Synopsis

This is a story about a single mother, Mamie (45), and a son, Henry (17), who are in a distant relationship. Henry believes that his father is dead. However, one day, he finds out that his father, Eason (45), is actually alive. Henry is already upset about Mamie's absence from his life for working, and now he is mad because he is deprived of a right of being with his father by Mamie.

After the fight with Henry about his father, Mamie is tired of hiding secrets. Therefore, she admits that she leaves Eason because she met someone else. Also, she lets Henry to meet Eason. At first sight, Eason seems to be a good guy whom people treat with respect. However, he is a very conservative person who regards a homosexual as an evil. Therefore, when he knew Mamie and an affair, and, further more, Mamie was seeing a woman, he couldn't forgive Mamie. Eventually, he abandoned her and Henry.

In Henry's mind, Eason is dead again. In addition, he realizes that Mamie forbids herself from seeing anyone else because she doesn't want Henry to grow up with people's judgments. Thus, Henry is not only forgives Mamie, but also accepts that Mamie is a homosexual.

## Rational

In contemporary society, lots of families face the problem of distant relationship between parents and children, and this is the issue I want to explore a lot. Normally, family should be the closest people in life. However, it's not difficult to see that families treat each other unfriendly, and even treat as strangers.

For children, parents are the most important people and closest friends in their life. They tell their parents everything, and let their parents know their happiness and sadness. However, with time passes by, children are involved in a bigger world. They have school life, they have new friends, and they even have a relationship with somebody. Gradually,

their top priority in life is not family. Gradually, they don't talk too much to their parents.

Why does it happen? Except some extreme cases, such as domestic violence, I think it's because that people are not candid to each other. Sometimes we hide a secret to protect people we love. However, it makes everyone be suffered from the truth, no matter people who has a secret or people who are kept from a secret.

As my story, the single mother doesn't want her child to be too different with other kids, so she makes up a lie for the absent father. She gets rid of her past, and forbids herself in a relationship with anyone. She assumes that her child can live better with a single mother. However, she is wrong. For support her child alone, she has to work very hard, and even deprives her time of being with her child. On the other hand, her child doesn't tell her why he is mad at her, and doesn't let her know that he is actually wants her to have a happy life rather than being suffered from the reality.

Sometimes we assume that people will be happy because of our big sacrifice, but which is actually a torture for each other. Through my story, I want to tell the audience that we should let people we love know how we feel, not matter it's positive or negative.

## Treatment

On his birthday, Henry (17) sits at a dining table, alone. He sees a note Mamie leaves which mentions that Mamie needs to work and she will be back soon.

Mamie is a waitress in a restaurant. She is supposed to leave, but a waiter who should shift with her doesn't appear yet. Then, there come a man, Bob (45), and a woman, Amy (45), and Mamie has to serve them. Coincidentally, Amy is Mamie's old friend and they haven't met for a long time. Although Mamie and Amy try to talk to each other nicely, and they even change their phone numbers during their conversation, the atmosphere between them is actually a little bit awkward.

Mamie finally finishes her job and goes home. However, Henry is already gone. Mamie walks to her bedroom, and takes out of a gift from her closet. She stares at the gift sadly for a while.

In the afternoon, Henry wakes up in his friend's apartment. His friends are all still asleep. Bunch of bottles of drinks are around the ground. He leaves the apartment. On the other hand, Mamie gets a phone call from school when she works. Via the phone, the staff tells Mamie that the vice principal wants to talk about Henry's problem of skipping too many classes with Mamie in person.

Meanwhile, Henry is home. He sees the gift is on his desk in the bedroom. He opens it. It's a homemade sweater. He doesn't seem to be happy with the gift. He leaves the sweater on the desk and goes to bed.

Later, Mamie wants to talk about his problem of absence from school. However, Henry refuses to talk. Gradually, it becomes the fight about Mamie's absence from Henry's life. Henry throws the homemade sweater toward Mamie and leaves the house with anger. Mamie wants to stop him, but she fails. She picks up the homemade sweater, folds it well, and puts it in Henry's closet.



In the night, Amy comes to the restaurant where Mamie works in again, alone. In fact, Amy has called Mamie several times, but Mamie always rejects to meet with the excuse of work. Amy tells Mamie that she will wait until Mamie finishes her job.

The house bell keeps ringing. It's Henry's friend. They urge Henry to be hurry. Henry wears clothes fast. He opens his wallet, and there's only few money. Henry runs to Mamie's bedroom and grabs some money from a draw. However, he also sees a check on the draw. He opens it. He sees his father's name – Eason (45) - is on the check.

The restaurant is close. Mamie and Amy talk inside. Amy tells Mamie that she has several relationships with some women and even some men since she left. Even though she meets Bob now, she still can't get Mamie out of her mind. Mamie also gives Amy positive response. However, as soon as she thinks of Henry, she rejects Mamie.

Henry sits on the couch, waiting for Mamie. When Mamie comes home, he gives Mamie the check he finds out. Mamie tries to convince Henry to forget about the check, the father, but Henry insists on knowing the reason why Mamie and Eason are apart. Eventually, Mamie tells Henry it's because she has an affair and she is a lesbian. However, Henry still wants to meet Eason. He wants to know why Eason never meets him during these years.

In the park, a little boy drops his ball. Eason picks up for him and treats him nicely. Henry sees it. He walks to Eason and tells Eason who he is. Henry always wants to go to the park with his father, so he chooses to meet Eason in a park. They sit on a bench. Eason explains that he can't meet Henry because has a family and he wishes Henry could understand.

Later, two men, with hand holding, pass by Henry and Eason. Eason shows his disdain on those men and even say something offensive. Henry can't believe his ear. Now he understands the reason why Eason leaves him and never meets him is he hates homosexual and everything related to them, even his son. Eason tells Henry that he was wrong, and he can provide more financial support to make up, but Henry doesn't care

anymore.

In Henry's bedroom, he notices the sweater is in the closet. He takes it out of the closet, and wears it. Mamie sits at dinning table, and waits for Henry to have dinner together. Then she sees Henry appears with the sweater. She smiles. The bell rings. Henry answers the door. It's Amy.

## Timeline

	2013							2014					
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Script													
Casting													
Location Scout													
Rehearsal													
Shooting													
Rough Cut													
Picture Lock													
Sound Mixing													
Color Correction													
Screen													

## Budget

	Description	Fee	Subtotal
<b>Story</b>			
Story and Script	1 Person	0	0
<b>Talent</b>			
Producer	1 Person	0	0
Director	1 Person	0	0
Lead Actors	4 People	0	0
Extras	5~7 People	0	0
<b>Production Personnel</b>			
Director of Photography	1 Person	0	0
Assistant of Camera	2 People	0	0
Gaffer	1 Person	0	0

Grip	1 Person	0	0
Makeup Artist	1 Person	0	0
Production Assistant	1 Person	0	0
Still Photographer	1 Person	0	0
Sound Recordist	2 People	0	0
<b>Travel and Locations</b>			
Cast and Crew Meals	7 Days	80	560
Location Fees	7 Days	0	0
Auto Mileage	600 km		200
Miscellaneous Expense	7 Days	20	140
<b>Production Equipment</b>			
Camera & Support	7 Days	0	0
Lighting	7 Days	0	0
Grip	7 Days	0	0
Sound Package	7 Days	0	0
<b>Art Direction</b>			
Props		500	500
Set Dressing		400	400
Makeup Supplies		100	100
<b>Sound and Music</b>			
Composer	1 Person	0	0
Sound Effects	1 Person	0	0
Sound Mix	1 Person	0	0
<b>Editing and Finishing</b>			
Editor	1 Person		0
Festival Fees	3~4 Festivals		200
<b>Contingency</b>			
Contingency			315
<b>Subtotal</b>			2415

- Script

Sweater

By

Pei-Chin Chien

1 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - NIGHT (EDEN'S BIRTHDAY, 2005)

A birthday cake and a present are on the dining table. Molly(35) and Eden(8) celebrate his birthday together. The candles on the cake is still not blown out yet. Eden seems to have something in mind.

MOLLY  
Come on, Honey, blow them out.

YOUNG EDEN  
My wish never comes true.

Molly looks at Eden with sadness. Eden faces to Molly.

YOUNG EDEN  
(thoughtfully)  
If I'm really good, will I see  
daddy in a heaven?

Molly gives Eden a bitter smile. She touches Eden's head gently.

MOLLY  
Of course. Now blow out the  
candles.

Eden blows the candles out. Dark screen with the title showing.

2 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - NIGHT (EDEN'S BIRTHDAY, 2013)

Eden's(16) picks up a gift from a dining table and shakes it. Then, he seems to lose the interest in the gift. He grabs an envelope which is attached on the gift. He takes out the birthday card. He sees the inside of the envelope, but there's nothing. A MICROWAVE TIMER BEEPS.

3 INT. KITCHEN - HOME - NIGHT

Eden takes out the TV dinner from the microwave.

4 INT. KITCHEN - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Molly(43) works on the credit card machine. MIKE(50), a manager of the restaurant, sits near to her and busy on some paper work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2.

MOLLY  
(yells)  
Is Mary on the way?

Molly wipes the card and press some buttons of the machine.

MIKE  
I couldn't reach her.

Molly faces to Mike.

MOLLY  
Mike, I really can't stay, it's...

Mike drops the pen, and turns to Molly.

MIKE  
(mad)  
I couldn't reach her.

A moment silence. Mike grabs the pen and back to his work.  
Molly suppress her anger. She grabs the receipt and walks out.

5 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - NIGHT

Eden has the TV dinner alone. The unopened gift and the birthday card are still on the dining table.

6 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

ROB(50) and AMY(45) sit at the dining table, facing each other. Molly, with two menus, walks toward them from Amy's back.

MOLLY  
Hi, here're menus for you two.

Molly gives menus to Rob. When she turns to Amy, she suddenly stops her movement. They look at each other for a while, then...

AMY  
Hey...

Awkward silence. Amy's aware of Rob.

AMY  
Oh, Rob, this is Molly Harrison.  
She's...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3.

MOLLY  
An old friend.

Molly smiles at Rob. Awkward silence.

AMY  
How are you?

MOLLY  
I'm... good.

Molly gives the menus to Amy.

MOLLY  
(faces to Rob)  
Can I get you guys something to  
drink?

ROB  
Water, please.

MOLLY  
(turns to Amy)  
Water, too?

Amy nods.

MOLLY  
(smile)  
Okay.

Molly's smile disappears while she leaves. Amy sees Molly  
walks away.

7 INT. HALLWAY - HOME - NIGHT

Molly turns on the light and hangs her key on hook which  
attached on the wall. Then, she browses the letters on her  
hand.

MOLLY  
(sees the letters)  
Eden! Sorry I'm late... Did you  
have dinner yet?

She looks at the letter with handwritten name - Molly  
Harrison - for a moment.

Molly suddenly notices it's too quiet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4.

MOLLY  
Eden?

8 INT. OUTSIDE OF EDEN'S BEDROOM - HOME - NIGHT

The door of Eden's bedroom is close. Molly KNOCKS THE DOOR.

MOLLY  
Eden?

Molly gets close to the door, and she doesn't hear anything.  
She opens the door.

9 INT. HOME - EDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Molly suspects, Eden isn't in his bedroom.

10 INT. HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Molly walks into the dining room with the cell phone on her ear.

MOLLY  
Where are you? It's late.

Molly takes a deep breath to calm down. Then, she sees the present and the card are still on the dining table.

MOLLY  
Happy Birthday, Eden.

11 INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eden sleeps on a couch. Several beer bottles are around the ground and the table. David (19), a college student, walks into the living room.

DAVID  
(sleepy)  
Harrison!

Eden wakes up with a headache.

DAVID  
I'm leaving. You need a ride to school or something?

Eden checks his cell phone.

(MORE)



(CONTINUED)

5.

EDEN  
Nah, I already missed a couple  
periods. Can I crash here a little  
longer?

DAVID  
(joking)  
Home school?

EDEN  
Shut up.

DAVID  
Just make sure it's locked when you  
leave.

David leaves the apartment.

Eden sees a voice message from Molly. He ignores it.

12 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - DAY

Molly writes down the living costs with receipt and sums up  
in her calendar with the calculator at the dining table. Her  
coat and bag are hung on the chair. She takes out the check  
from an envelope which is on the dining table. The amount of  
the check is \$200. She is worried and tired.

EDEN OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. She puts the check under the  
calendar in a rush. She walks toward to the door.

13 INT. HALL WAY - HOME - DAY

Eden is surprised when he sees Molly in the dining room, but  
he turns to be cold soon.

MOLLY  
Where were you last night?

Eden ignores Molly and passes her. Molly follows him.

MOLLY  
The school called.

Eden still ignores Molly.

MOLLY  
This is your second suspension!

Eden walks to his bedroom.

14 INT. EDEN'S BEDROOM - HOME - DAY

As Eden walks in his bedroom, he sees the present on his desk and gets upset. Meanwhile, Molly follows him to his bedroom.

MOLLY  
Don't walk away while I'm talking to you.

EDEN  
Or what? You gonna punish me?

Eden offers her the gift.

EDEN  
You wanna take this.

MOLLY  
It's your present.

EDEN  
(shakes the box)  
Yeah. Sweater, right? Every year!

Eden tosses the present back to his desk with anger.

MOLLY  
I'm sorry about last night. I just got the job, okay? I'll make it up to you. But, you can't keep acting out like this. You're not a little kid anymore. You're going to be on your own soon.

Eden doesn't look at Molly.

MOLLY  
Are you listening?

EDEN  
I'm on my own now.

MOLLY  
Eden, it's... god, I don't have time for this now. We'll talk about it when I get home.

15 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - DAY

Molly grabs the purse and her coat, puts all stuff on the desk in her calendar in a rush.

MOLLY  
(yells)  
There's food in the frig. Don't  
make a TV dinner. That's for  
emergencies.

Silence.

MOLLY  
(yells)  
Eden?

Silence. Molly is upset. She grabs the calendar and leaves. However, she doesn't notices the check is under the calendar.

16 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Molly picks up several dirty dishes from a table where customers just left. She sighs slightly. As she is going to leave the table with dirty dishes, she sees Amy.

They look at each other.

17 INT. DINING ROOM - HOME - DAY

Eden puts the TV dinner on the dining table. Before he sits down, he notices a check on the dining table. Eden picks up the check. He sees a name of Jacob Harrison on the check. Eden is shocked. Then, he's aware of the address on the check.

18 INT. HALL WAY - HOME - DAY

Eden grabs his key and a car key from the hook on the wall.

19 EXT. STREET - DAY

Eden rides the bicycle fast on the street.

20 EXT. PARKING LOT - RESTAURANT - DAY

Eden drops his bike on the side of the parking lot of the restaurant where Molly works. He finds out Molly's car, rushes into it and opens the car.

21 INT. CORNER BOOTH - RESTAURANT - DAY

Amy and Molly sit at a small table with two glasses of water.

AMY

I can't believe you're here.

Amy stares at Molly.

MOLLY

I'm glad to see you with someone.  
Are you two serious?

AMY

He is. I thought I was.

Molly becomes nervous.

AMY

We broke up.

MOLLY

You should be with him.

AMY

I can't lie to myself.

Amy reaches Molly's hand on the table. Molly is surprised by Amy's behavior. Then, Molly looks their hand with sadness.

AMY

Molly.

Amy squeezes Molly's hand.

AMY

Be with me.

They look at each other in their eyes. Molly looks at their hands and frowns. She closes her eyes for a second, and pulls her hand back firmly.

MOLLY

I can't. Nothing's changed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9.

AMY  
Neither do I. Molly, think about  
yourself. Think about... us.

MOLLY  
It's not just about you and me.

AMY  
He's old enough.

MOLLY  
It's not that easy. Teenagers,  
it's... just so hard...

AMY  
I can wait.

Amy looks at Molly firmly. Molly avoids the eye contact with  
Amy and seems to lost in thought. After a second, she looks  
at Amy.

MOLLY  
Amy, it won't work.

22 INT. RESTROOM - RESTAURANT - DAY

Molly leans at the wall and cries.

23 INT. CAR - JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Eden checks the address on the check in the car.

24 EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is big and good. Eden is nervous. He stands at  
Jacob's house with hand hanging in front of the ring bell.

He rings the bell. ANDY(8) opens the door.

ANDY  
Hello!

Soon, Jacob(47) walks out.

JACOB  
Hey! I got it! Go to bother your  
mom.

Jacob pushes Andy back to his home. Eden is confused by what  
he saw.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

10.

JACOB  
What can I do for you?

EDEN  
Jacob Harrison?

JACOB  
Yeah.

EDEN  
I'm Eden. Eden Harrison.

JACOB  
(in a low voice)  
Lord help me.

Awkward silence.

EDEN  
Is that my brother?  
Jacob looks at Eden thoughtfully.

25 EXT. GARAGE - JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Jacob, with a coat on him, and Eden walk to the garage.

JACOB  
What do you want from me?

EDEN  
The truth. She said you were dead.

Jacob stops at the garage and faces to Eden. Eden also stops.

JACOB  
You should've left it at that.

EDEN  
How can I--

JACOB  
If it's about money, I'll send more.

EDEN  
I just want the truth.

JACOB  
I'm not talking about this. Okay?  
I've got another life now. I don't  
(MORE)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

11.

JACOB (CONTINUED)  
want anything to do with her... **Any**  
**part of her...** I'm sorry.

EDEN  
What did she do? What did I do?

Eden looks into Jacob's eyes. Jacob turns his head and considers seriously. He turns to Eden.

JACOB  
What do you want me to say? That  
I'm sorry for leaving? That's not  
gonna happen. I'll send more,  
that's it.  
(beat)  
You need to go now.

Eden stares Jacob with anger and incomprehension for a moment then leaves, tears in his eyes.

26 EXT. PARKING LOT - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Molly walks to where she parked her car. However, her car is not there. She looks around. She sees her car is at other space.

27 INT. MOLLY'S CAR - NIGHT

Molly opens the door of the car. She notices the check. She picks it up. She sees Eden's name.

MOLLY  
Shit.

28 INT. EDEN'S BEDROOM - HOME - NIGHT

Eden sits on the bed and uses his cell phone. MOLLY KNOCKS THE DOOR. Eden glances at the door but he doesn't answer. Molly still comes in anyway. Molly looks at Eden with worry.

MOLLY  
Did you see him?

Eden looks at her for a second but keeps using his phone.

MOLLY  
You should've talked to me first.

Eden puts down the phone and stands up.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12.

EDEN

Talk to you? And hear another lie?

MOLLY

**It was better than the truth.**

EDEN

What happened?

MOLLY

It's complicated.

EDEN

I deserve to know.

Molly struggles to tell the truth.

MOLLY

Your father caught me with someone else.

EDEN

You cheated on him? That's what you call "complicated?"

MOLLY

I was in love!

(beat)

I tried to convince myself there was nothing between us. But I couldn't. As soon as I met her, I knew.

Eden tries to absorb what Molly just said.

MOLLY

I shouldn't have married your father... I thought I could make it work. I thought I was doing the right thing.

Molly gets close.

MOLLY

I begged him for forgiveness. I said anything, everything I could think of. But, he left. It's just... the way he was raised, I guess... For him, we were tainted.

EDEN

That's it? He hates me because you're...

(MORE)



(CONTINUED)

13.

Molly looks at Eden without a word, then...

MOLLY

I tried to make it up to you. I  
stopped seeing her. I worked. Hard.  
I did the best I could. I'm so  
sorry.

EDEN

I thought... maybe I did something  
bad.

MOLLY

No, no, no. You didn't do anything  
wrong. It's my fault. All my fault.

Eden doesn't say anything. Molly waits for Eden's respond.  
After a second, Eden stares at Molly.

EDEN

You're my mom. The rest, I don't  
care about.

Molly smiles with tears in her eyes. She hugs Eden.

MOLLY

I love you.

Eden doesn't resist. Then, Eden grabs the present on the  
desk, and opens it. It's a sweater.

MOLLY

I'm sorry I couldn't get you more.

EDEN

No, it's... fine.

MOLLY

I'll make it up to you.

EDEN

(smiles)  
Yeah, you will. I got him to send  
more money.

Both of them laugh.

29 INT. LIVING ROOM - HOME - NIGHT

Eden sits at the couch. A birthday cake with candles on fire is on the table in front of him. He looks at the candles.

MOLLY  
Come on honey, blow out the  
candles.

Before Eden blows out the candles, Amy stops him.

AMY  
Hey, you haven't made a wish yet.

Eden closes his eyes.

EDEN  
I wish... I can have a sweater from  
mom every year.

Molly and Amy looks at each other with smile. Eden opens his eyes and blows out the candles.

END