

CAMPUS CARRY FILM

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

JOSHUA SAMUEL

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Dr. Jason Harris

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ABSTRACT

Campus Carry Film

Joshua Samuel
Department of English and Performance Studies
Texas A&M University

Research Advisor: Dr. Jason Harris
Department of English
Texas A&M University

How can film be used to explore political polarization surrounding the issue of Campus Carry? I explored this polarization by fictionalizing a shooting on the Texas A&M campus committed by a schizophrenic student. The shooter has a mental illness to absolve him of blame for the incident. The audience will empathize with him and understand why he commits the shooting. This way he is not an antagonist. Instead he sets off a chain of events that uncovers the underlying polarization on our campus. The main point of the film is to depict how people on both sides of the issue react to Campus Carry laws both before and after the shooting. My goal was to cause viewers on both sides of Campus Carry to view this issue in a different light, and hopefully to understand why the other side believes what they believe.

I also wrote this paper about the film following its completion. Here I discuss the writing process and the filmmaking process. It includes the pre-writing I did before the actual writing of the screenplay in the character list, plot synopsis, and scene-by-scene treatment sections. I also explain how I incorporated secondary research into the script in the annotated bibliography.

SECTION I

REFLECTION

Inspiration

I had the idea for this screenplay during the summer of 2016 while I was working as a news reporter for *the Battalion*. Campus Carry went into effect on August 1st of that summer, and I was assigned to write the news article about it for the back-to-school issue. Normally, I try to stand aloof from the big political debates of the day, but writing this article forced me to spend time considering the issue. However, I did my best to maintain an objective stance in my analysis. Rather than pick a side, I observed the effect it had on people around me, and I paid close attention to the discussions other people had about the issue.

What fascinated me most about the issue was how polarizing it was. While most of the people I worked with at *The Battalion* that summer were strongly against it, there were a few people working there who were strongly for it. I even found that my doctor was pro-Campus Carry when I told him about my job at *The Battalion*. A large part of the discourse surrounding the issue concerned this question: “What if a crazy person tries to shoot up campus?”

The pro-Campus Carry people believed concealed carry would prevent a shooting from occurring or would at least minimize the damage done because a concealed carrier could stop the shooting. On the other hand, the anti-campus carry people believed campus carry would make a shooting more likely because people could legally bring guns on campus. They also believed that concealed carry would make a shooting even worse because instead of bullets only coming from one source, there would also be stray bullets from the people trying to stop the shooter.

One night, in the small hours of the morning, I was struck by an idea for a story. I wasn't trying to come up with a story, but it just came to me. Essentially the story would attempt to answer the question everyone had been posing: "What if a crazy guy did try to shoot up campus?"

In my mind, it would be a student with schizophrenia. I could make the inner workings of his mind available to the audience through dialogue with a hallucinated alter-ego that follows the schizophrenic student around and gives voice to his paranoid thoughts. While schizophrenic people are lucid most of the time and are no more likely than anyone else to commit a crime, watching many movies and T.V. shows that involved schizophrenic criminals conditioned my mind to view the issue in this way. However, I didn't come up with an evil schizophrenic character. I wanted him to be someone the audience could empathize with. I wanted him to be a catalyst for exploring the political polarization on our campus rather than an antagonist to be feared and hated. This way polarization would be at the center of the story rather than violence.

The first way I sought to prevent the schizophrenic character from being a villain was by making the entire reason he brought a gun to campus in the first place be because he was afraid of the other people who might also have guns. This was a common fear amongst many anti-campus carry people, so it was one I thought at least a portion of the audience might be able to empathize with.

The second way I sought to remove the antagonistic aspect from the schizophrenic character was to give him a failed love interest. This is why I introduced the Sarah character. The schizophrenic character would fall in love with a girl who has a boyfriend. This way the audience feels bad for him. During the development phase of the writing process, I also made

Sarah's boyfriend an abusive one, so that the audience would further empathize with the schizophrenic character.

The main part of the story that came to me that night was that the schizophrenic character would see his love interest from afar arguing with her boyfriend. Then he would assume that the boyfriend was going to shoot her. In an attempt to save her, the schizophrenic character would bring out his gun and attempt to shoot the boyfriend, but then he would accidentally shoot his love interest. Afterwards other people with guns on campus would shoot the schizophrenic character, but also accidentally shoot innocent bystanders in the process. Then people on campus would become polarized over the issue.

Development

At the time when I came up with the idea discussed above, I had very little experience with creative writing. I had written a couple of poems and three short stories, but that was it. As I originally envisioned it, the campus carry story would be a stage play that I would do as my English and Performance Studies senior project. For this reason, I decided to take a screenwriting and directing class while studying abroad at the University of Sydney during the Spring 2017 semester. They did not offer a stage play writing class, but I figured I could use the same skills I learned in the screenwriting class for the stage play. However, I at some point realized it would make no sense to attempt to create a set designed to look like the Texas A&M campus, when the actual campus was right at my fingertips. For this reason, and the fact that I was taking a film class rather than a theatre class, I decided to make this story idea into a film instead.

From the time I came up with the idea during the summer of 2016 until the fall 2017 semester, the idea had not changed much. I knew I wanted people to become polarized about the

shooting, but I didn't know exactly what that would look like. However, I knew I had the entirety of the fall semester to write the screenplay before putting it into production during the Spring 2018 semester. I decided to ask Dr. Jason Harris to be my faculty advisor for the project because he has experience screenwriting, and I had taken a class with him before.

Over the course of the fall 2017 semester, I began developing the idea to turn the inspiration I had during the summer of 2016 into a fully realized screenplay. I had a lot of difficulty coming up with how the story would progress after the shooting because all that came to me that night was that people would become polarized over the issue. Then, on a Saturday morning during the fall 2017 semester, the idea came to me that the story would follow a group of students in an organization as they became polarized over the issue both before and after the shooting. The group would have disagreements initially, but after the shooting they would split into two separate factions: an anti campus carry faction and a pro-campus carry faction. Then at the end, a politically neutral character, whom I could use to voice my own feelings on the subject of polarization, would give a rousing speech in an attempt to bring the group back together. I also decided that morning to make the group a Church group. This was not to indict nor advance religion, but rather to show how even an intimately connected group of students might become divided over such a serious issue.

The next step I took toward writing the screenplay was to make a character list using the guidelines in *The Screenwriters Bible* (Trottier). I decided to make more of the characters pro-campus carry than anti-campus carry for a variety of reasons. Firstly, Texas A&M is a very conservative campus over all, and while I do not know the exact numbers on every single student's opinion on Campus Carry, it is very likely that our student population would come out more conservative on this issue than the national average. However, the main reason I decided to

have more conservative students was to balance out the screenplay as a whole. Even though arguments are made for the pro-campus carry and anti-campus carry sides of this issue in the screenplay, the plot of the story is inherently anti-campus carry. Only a few weeks after Campus Carry goes into effect, a shooting occurs on campus and multiple people get shot. Some people even get shot by a concealed carrier.

The reason for the inherently anti-campus carry stance of this film is two-fold. First of all, there would be nothing to write a story about if a shooting never occurs. There is no drama or drive to the plot without an inciting event. Secondly, as much as I try to remain aloof from political debates, I have developed a rather liberal stance on this issue. When I first heard about campus carry during my freshman year, the conservative argument instantly popped into my head. Maybe a crazy person would decide not to shoot up campus if he thought other people might have guns. However, by the time I came up with the idea during the summer before it was implemented, I became very uncomfortable with the fact that my peers could now legally bring their guns to class with them. While I can see the argument for both sides of this issue, the one that wins out in my mind is that campus would be safer if concealed carry was not allowed. I do believe that the presence of guns on campus might deter a potential shooter, but I believe it is the University Police Departments job to keep campus safe, not civilians.

Despite my views on the issue, I wanted to prevent at all costs making the film a protest film. I wanted to explore the issue of polarization instead. This is why I had more conservative students in the film. I also did my best to make the arguments put forth by the conservative students just as strong as the arguments put forth by the liberal students. As to whether or not I was able to accomplish this task is a matter of opinion, but it was my goal in writing this screenplay.

After completing the cast list, I wrote a plot summary when I knew exactly how I wanted the events to unfold. At this point I did have a scene in mind in which the shooting would actually take place on screen as I described it above in the inspiration section. However, my performance studies professor Dr. Ball suggested I remove the actual depiction of the shooting for logistical reasons. With guns actually being allowed on campus, it would be too great a risk to stage a fake shooting. If someone a concealed carrier walking by thought it was a real shooting then, in a grand irony, an actual shooting might take place. Instead, I came up with the idea to describe the shooting through news reports. This had the added benefit of showing how news reports can be slanted. Also, this makes it so that the audience only sees what the characters in the church group would have seen. It is implied that the pro-campus carry students only saw the conservative news report while the anti-campus carry students only saw the liberal news report.

The next step was to write a scene-by-scene treatment, which is a description of what will occur in each scene without dialogue. At the time when I wrote the treatment, I wasn't sure exactly how the group would respond to the rousing speech at the end of the film. Would they be able to put aside their differences and come together or would they remain divided over the issue. The truth is, I don't know how they would react. As someone who does his best to stand aloof from political arguments don't know how people who have strong views on gun control would react to a speech like that. This is why I have two separate endings in the treatment. One in which they remain divided and one in which they humorously put all their differences aside immediately and everything ends in happiness and sunshine and rainbows.

However, after discussing this alternate endings idea with Dr. Harris he pointed out that this would be to cast an unwarranted humorous tone on a very serious issue and undermine the goals of the film. I agreed with him, which is why I decided to leave the ending ambiguous in the

actual screenplay. The audience will never find out whether or not the group is able to put aside their differences and come together. They will be left to decide for themselves how they would react in the situation. Ending the film on a question mark will leave the audience member to fill in the gaps, which is another way of saying that they would have to decide how they themselves would react in this situation. Would they be able to put aside their opinions on gun control for the sake of unity?

SECTION II

CASTING

To cast this film, I pitched the idea to three large lecture classes and a small acting class taught by professor Anne Quackenbush. The large lecture classes were not acting classes, but I figured real Texas A&M students would not have any trouble playing fictional A&M students regardless of acting experience. I also enlisted the help of a student in my PERF-481 Senior Project class, who played a role herself, had her friend play a role, and put me in contact with a videographer.

I learned a lot about polarization regarding the issue of Campus Carry through the casting process. First of all, I was astounded at how many of my actors and actresses were pro-campus carry. While writing this film, I assumed that most females were anti-campus carry. That is why my original character list (displayed below) has mostly female anti-campus carry students. My secondary research discussed in the annotated bibliography showed that gender is not a significant determining factor for stance on gun control as well. For these two reasons, and the fact that I had a mostly female cast, I decided to make some of the previously male characters into females.

I also decided to ask some of my cast members to play characters that are at odds with their actual views on Campus Carry. For example, the actresses that played the anti-Campus Carry students, Carla and Sally, are actually pro-campus carry in real life. I decided to do this for two reasons. In terms of practicality, I had many more pro-campus carry cast members than anti-campus carry cast members. However, I also thought it would be beneficial to the theme of my film to have people put aside their own beliefs for the sake of the film. One of my main goals in

creating this film was to have my viewers see the issue of Campus Carry through the lens of a character with a different opinion than their own. This way they could come to an understanding of why people on the opposite side of the issue believed what they did. I hoped that having some of my cast members play parts that were in opposition to their actual view on the issue would help carry across this theme even though the audience will have no idea of the actual views of the cast members.

I also discovered an anomaly during the casting process. The character Kelly Westwood was the most requested character by both pro-Campus Carry and anti-Campus Carry actresses volunteering to act in the film. In the end I had an anti-campus carry student play the part even though Kelly is a pro-campus carry student. I believe the reason Kelly was such a popular character was that she represented a powerful feminine voice, and actresses liked her regardless of her stance on campus carry. This taught me that, in some instances, having different viewpoints on Campus Carry does not necessarily mean people will dislike each other.

The actresses who played Clarisse and Sally also led me to the conclusion that having different viewpoints on Campus Carry does not necessarily mean people will dislike each other. In real life the actress that played Clarisse is anti-Campus Carry just like her character, but the actress that played the anti-Campus Carry character Sally is pro-Campus Carry in real life. However, these two actresses are best friends. The fact that they find themselves on opposite sides of this issue has no effect on their relationship.

SECTION III

PRODUCTION

Because I am not good with cameras, I enlisted the help of a videographer named Carlos Carrillo. He also co-directed the film with me because he knew what would look best on camera. Essentially, he directed the actors as far as movements on screen, and I directed the actors for line-delivery. One interesting thing that occurred during the filming process was that virtually none of the lines were delivered verbatim. All of the actors took liberties when delivering their lines. I didn't mind, however, because this made it more realistic. I wrote most of the dialogue as I would have said it, but the actors each had their own interpretations of the script, which added diversity to the speech patterns used in each piece of dialogue.

Most of the scenes were filmed in and around the Liberal Arts building. The group meeting scenes were filmed in room 126, the music rehearsal room. The dialogue between Sarah and Phillip, and the first dialogue between Sarah and Bill occurred in the first floor hallway. We filmed the Campus Bench Scene in the main lobby because it was too windy to film the scene outside. The shooting scene was filmed in the courtyard. The reason I had most of the scenes occur in this building is that it is a very aesthetically pleasing building, and I have access to some of the rooms through my performance studies major status. Phillip's Bedroom Scene and the final scene were filmed at my house.

The most difficult part of production, and the film as a whole, was finding a time that worked for all of the cast members in each scene. College students are incredibly busy people and finding a time that worked for everyone was nearly impossible. We filmed all of the group meeting scenes in one day, but Jeff and Sally had to be spliced in later because they could not

make it to that filming session. The final scene was filmed in three parts. One day we filmed Trevor's epic speech, one day we filmed the conservative students, and on another day we filmed the liberal students. I can honestly say that organizing everyone's schedules was the most difficult thing I have ever had to do as a college student.

SECTION IV

CHARACTER LIST

This character list was created with a template from the Screenwriters Bible (Trottier).

(Church Group Members)

1. Clint Simpson – White Male; Agriculture major; Extremely Conservative; Grew up on a farm; Has used guns since he was a child; Carries a gun on campus because it makes him feel more comfortable to have it on him;
Role, Purpose in story: Represents a positive view on carrying on campus
Occupation: Agriculture Major
Conscious goal: Learn how to farm better
Personal Motivation: Help his family
Inner Need: His own identity away from being a farm boy
Flaw Blocking Need: Reluctance to give up his farm boy values
Backstory: Grew up on a farm
Dominant, Core Trait: Unassuming
Other good and bad traits: friendly, open to new ideas
Imperfections, quirks: always wears boots and a baseball hat
Skills, Knowledge, props: has been using guns since he was a child
Point of view/ Attitudes: Conservative
Dialogue style: southern accent
Physiology: Tall
Psychology, sociology: A man of few words. Questions his beliefs

2. Colt Randers- White Male; Business major; Very Conservative; From Houston; Father was shot during a robbery when he was young; Carries a gun to protect the school.

Role, Purpose in story: Represents another positive view on campus carry

Occupation: Business major

Conscious goal: Protect the school

Personal Motivation: protect the people he cares about

Inner Need: To come to terms with his father's death

Flaw Blocking Need: Blames himself for his father's death

Backstory: Father was shot during a robbery when he was 13

Dominant, Core Trait: Strongly Assertive

Other good and bad traits: Genuinely cares about other people.

Imperfections, quirks: talks a lot; opinionated

Skills, Knowledge, props: a gun

Point of view/ Attitudes: Very Conservative

Dialogue style: loud booming voice

Physiology: tall

Psychology, sociology: quick to anger; very opinionated

Relationship with others: Best Friends with Clint Simpson

3. Jeff Handler- White Male; Moderate-Conservative; Boyfriend of Sally; Mechanical Engineering major; Pro-campus carry but does not carry a gun until after the shooting;
- Role, Purpose in story: Someone who decides to carry after shooting.
- Occupation: Mechanical Engineering major
- Conscious goal: Pass classes and find a good job
- Personal Motivation: start a family with Sally
- Inner Need: To keep everyone in his friend group happy
- Flaw Blocking Need: reluctance to intervene in situations
- Backstory: From a suburb of Dallas
- Dominant, Core Trait: Humorous
- Other good and bad traits: loves his girlfriend a lot
- Imperfections, quirks:
- Skills, Knowledge, props:
- Point of view/ Attitudes: pro-campus carry; doesn't carry until after shooting
- Dialogue style: smooth voice
- Physiology: average size
- Psychology, sociology: easygoing
- Relationship with others: Sally's Boyfriend

4. Sally Clyde- White female; Biology major; Moderate; Girlfriend of Jeff; doesn't take a side on campus carry at first; against campus carry after the shooting

Role, Purpose in story: Someone who changes mind about campus carry

Occupation: Biology major

Conscious goal: become a doctor

Personal Motivation: live up to her parent's standards

Inner Need: self-acceptance

Flaw Blocking Need: sets standards for herself that are too high

Backstory: dad is a doctor; from Houston

Dominant, Core Trait: Hardworking

Other good and bad traits:

Imperfections, quirks: always studying; always

Skills, Knowledge, props: knows a lot about medicine

Point of view/ Attitudes: neutral on campus carry at first then changes

Dialogue style: soft voice

Physiology: average female

Psychology, sociology: tries to interpret peoples minds

Relationship with others: Jeff's girlfriend

5. Clarisse Wallace- White female; Extremely liberal; Officer for an anti-campus carry group and many other politically-liberal organizations; Against campus carry; Sociology major. Also the leader of the Church group
- Role, Purpose in story: Represent an extremely liberal stance on CC
- Occupation: Sociology major
- Conscious goal: End campus carry
- Personal Motivation: disgusted by violence and guns
- Inner Need: control
- Flaw Blocking Need: living in a world that can't be controlled
- Backstory: from San Antonio
- Dominant, Core Trait: outgoing
- Other good and bad traits: talks to everybody a lot
- Imperfections, quirks: always on about some cause or another
- Skills, Knowledge, props: protest signs
- Point of view/ Attitudes: extremely liberal
- Dialogue style: very "matter-of-fact" tone
- Physiology: average female
- Psychology, sociology: gets frustrated easily; quick to argument
- Relationship with others: Best Friend of Carla Smith

6. Carla Smith- Minority female; best friend of Clarisse; also a member of all the groups

Clarisse is in;

Role, Purpose in story: represent a liberal stance on CC

Occupation: Sociology major

Conscious goal: to find herself

Personal Motivation: desire for acceptance

Inner Need: gain her own identity apart from Clarisse

Flaw Blocking Need: submissive personality

Backstory: only child; from Houston area

Dominant, Core Trait: Submissive

Other good and bad traits: nice

Imperfections, quirks: quiet

Skills, Knowledge, props: none

Point of view/ Attitudes: liberal

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others: Best Friend of Clarisse Wallace

7. Kelly Westwood- White female; Moderate-Liberal; English major; against campus carry when with her friends but admits to seeing the logic to campus carry in private.

Role, Purpose in story: Represents a moderate stance on Campus Carry

Occupation: English Major

Conscious goal: Avoid conflict with friends

Personal Motivation: To be accepted

Inner Need: To speak about her beliefs freely w/o fear of offending people

Flaw Blocking Need: Her reluctance to argue with people

Backstory: From Houston suburb

Dominant, Core Trait: non-confrontational

Other good and bad traits:

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes: Moderate-liberal

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others: good friends with other liberal students.

(Other Characters)

8. Phillip Mayfield- White male; Schizophrenic; paranoid about getting shot because of campus carry; brings his own gun to protect himself; Psychology major;
- Role, Purpose in story: He is the catalyst for the story; not the antagonist.
- Occupation: Psychology major
- Conscious goal: not to get shot
- Personal Motivation: His paranoid schizophrenia
- Inner Need: medical help for his disease.
- Flaw Blocking Need: his reluctance to admit that he needs help
- Backstory: Always socially awkward, but misdiagnosed as ADHD
- Dominant, Core Trait: extreme paranoia
- Other good and bad traits: genuine desire to protect and help other people
- Imperfections, quirks:
- Skills, Knowledge, props:
- Point of view/ Attitudes: fear
- Dialogue style: very quick and filled with stuttering
- Physiology:
- Psychology, sociology: schizophrenic and very socially awkward
- Relationship with others: in love with Sarah Tass

9. Unnamed alter-ego – White male; Phillip’s imagined alter ego; gives voice to Phillip’s paranoid thoughts; convinces Phillip to bring a gun to school and constantly assumes that people around him have guns.

Role, Purpose in story:

Occupation:

Conscious goal:

Personal Motivation:

Inner Need:

Flaw Blocking Need:

Backstory:

Dominant, Core Trait:

Other good and bad traits:

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes:

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others:

10. Trevor Glass- Philosophy major; White or Minority male; stands outside of political ideology; much more interested in other peoples opinions on hot topics than forming his own; hangs out with both groups of friends; Best friends with Mark Sanders;

Role, Purpose in story: Represents a neutral stance on Campus Carry

Occupation: Philosophy major

Conscious goal: to mend his broken church group

Personal Motivation: He cares for everyone in his group

Inner Need: to understand his fellow group members

Flaw Blocking Need: his overly intellectual approach to life

Backstory: From Dallas Suburb

Dominant, Core Trait: Very observant and analytical

Other good and bad traits: fails to see the emotional side of things

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes: extremely neutral on politics

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others:

11. Professor Jackson; late-thirties; white male; psychology professor;

Role, Purpose in story: provide factual information about Campus Carry and dispel

Myths about the disease.

Occupation: Psychology Professor

Conscious goal:

Personal Motivation:

Inner Need:

Flaw Blocking Need:

Backstory:

Dominant, Core Trait:

Other good and bad traits:

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes:

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others:

12. Sarah Tass –

Role, Purpose in story: Phillip's love interest

Occupation: Psychology major

Conscious goal: to make new friends

Personal Motivation: stuck in a rut from high school

Inner Need: to find a better man

Flaw Blocking Need: her reluctance to give up on what is familiar to her

Backstory: has been dating Bill since high school

Dominant, Core Trait: very friendly

Other good and bad traits:

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes: unknown

Dialogue style:

Physiology: very beautiful

13. Bill Stevens

Role, Purpose in story: To make Phillip think he is a dangerous shooter (even though he is not)

Occupation: Business major

Conscious goal: fix his broken relationship with Sarah.

Personal Motivation:

Inner Need:

Flaw Blocking Need:

Backstory:

Dominant, Core Trait:

Other good and bad traits: Obsessive and a bit stalkerish

Imperfections, quirks:

Skills, Knowledge, props:

Point of view/ Attitudes:

Dialogue style:

Physiology:

Psychology, sociology:

Relationship with others: Boyfriend of Sarah Tass

SECTION V

PLOT SYNOPSIS

(Act One)

This film begins on the day before the first day of school of the 2016-2017 school year. Each of the church group members are at a bible study, and they discuss their views on the newly implemented Campus Carry laws after it is over. Despite the diversity of their opinions, this does not cause much quarreling because the situation has not been aggravated yet. Meanwhile, Phillip Mayfield gets into an argument with his alter-ego over the new Campus Carry law. The Schizophrenia makes Phillip extremely paranoid about getting shot on campus. His alter-ego convinces him that he needs to bring a gun to school in order to protect himself. Phillip protests at first because he is not old enough to carry on campus, but he eventually gives in. Also happening at this same time, Bill Stevens and Sarah Tass become involved in a non-violent domestic dispute.

During the first day of school, a few members of the church group, Phillip Mayfield (and his alter-ego), and Sarah Tass all find themselves in the same abnormal psychology class. Phillip disrupts the class when he attempts to get his alter-ego to stop distracting him. Because only Phillip can see the alter-ego, it appears to other members of the class that he is just mumbling to himself. Meanwhile professor Jackson gives a lecture on Schizophrenia. The contents of his lecture can be used to correct some misconceptions about Schizophrenia that we have in our society. After the lecture, Phillip Mayfield meets Sarah Tass and falls madly in love with her. Despite finding out that she has a boyfriend he vows to protect her from any danger she might encounter due to Campus Carry.

At this point I will include a few filler scenes to give the impression that everything is business as usual on campus.

Later, Phillip sees Sarah Tass and her boyfriend Bill Stevens from afar as they are engaged in another non-violent domestic argument. Immediately, Phillip's alter-ego becomes convinced that Bill has a gun and intends to shoot her. He urges Phillip to act immediately or risk losing Sarah forever. As Bill reaches into his backpack to retrieve something, Phillip shoots his gun, but he accidentally shoots Sarah dead. Suddenly another student pulls out his own gun and shoots Phillip dead, but he accidentally also shoots two other students. A police officer arrives on the scene at this very moment, and shoots the second shooter dead, thinking that he was the initial shooter.

(Act Two)

A week after the shooting, school is set to resume again. The day before school starts the church groups meets for bible study. However, heated argument ensues because of the recent shooting. Half of the group believes Campus Carry should be repealed, while the other half believes that without Campus Carry many more people would have been shot. Both sides believe that god is on their side. Eventually the group decides to split into two separate bible studies: a pro-Campus Carry faction and an anti-Campus Carry faction. Personal relationships between the group members are heavily strained as best friends and significant others find themselves on opposite sides of the debate. Some group members even change sides in response to the shooting.

Here I will include a few scenes that depict the polarized responses of the student body to the shooting, such as a small campus protest in which both sides show up with signs. There is

much talk amongst the student body as to whether or not the university will repeal Campus Carry. Eventually, an email gets sent out from the university explaining that Campus Carry will remain in effect because Campus Carry is statewide legislation that only the Texas state legislature can repeal.

Distraught by the division and fighting between his church group members, the politically neutral Trevor Glass invites all of the church group members from both factions to a meeting. During the meeting, Trevor gives a rousing speech on unity and urges everyone to put aside their differences and come together in this time of peril. Afterwards, everyone leaves without saying a word, not convinced by his speech. One of the more moderate group members stays behind and explains to Trevor that his actions, while well intentioned, were doomed to be fruitless because of the hyperpolarized nature of the society we live in. The End.

SECTION VI

SCENE BY SCENE TREATMENT

Film begins with news reports explaining the new Campus Carry law. A liberal news network describes it as a dangerous and ridiculous law, while a conservative news network describes it as added security to college campuses in Texas.

The church group ends their meeting with a prayer on the day before the first day of the semester. Clarisse, the leader of the church group brings up campus carry laws during the prayer and asks God to protect the campus. After Clarisse ends the prayer, Clint explains that he thinks campus carry will help add to campus safety, and that he plans on carrying. Colt agrees. Carla and Kelly both express their dislike of campus carry laws. Clarisse, realizing the potential for an argument, closes the meeting.

As Jeff and Sally leave the meeting together, Jeff expresses that he is pro-campus carry, even though he does not plan on carrying on campus. Sally becomes uneasy about it, but expresses that she doesn't really care about the campus carry laws as long as nothing bad happens.

On the first day of school Phillip gets dressed as his alter-ego appears out of thin air. He asks his alter-ego how he got in, and his alter-ego explains that he came in through the window. Then the alter-ego asks Phillip if he is afraid because of the new campus carry laws. Phillip says that he hasn't given it much thought. The alter-ego then describes some gruesome hypothetical situations in which Phillip could get shot on campus. Phillip, becoming frightened, wonders if he should skip school the next day. His alter ego says that instead he should take his own gun to school even though Phillip isn't old enough to carry. Phillip agrees and tucks his gun into his waist.

Phillip's roommate knocks on the door. The alter-ego vanishes. The roommate mumbles something about hearing Phillip speaking to someone and looks around the room, but assumes he was just hearing things. Then he tells Phillip that he is planning on driving to school soon, and asks Phillip if he wants a ride. Phillip declines respectfully. When the roommate exits the room, the alter-ego comes out of the bathroom. He reminds Phillip to take his ADHD medication and encourages Phillip to take a few hits of weed to calm him down. Then Phillip goes to campus.

Trevor Glass sits on a bench on campus and watches two people get into an argument about campus carry. Then Kelly walks up to him and they begin walking to psychology class together. During the walk Trevor describes the argument he had just witnessed. Kelly asks Trevor what he thinks about campus carry. Trevor describes his fascination at how polarizing a topic it is. He also explains his theory that both sides are just as reasonable as each other in their viewpoint, but that they base their reasoning off of completely different premises, namely slanted news reports and their cultural upbringings.

In psychology class Phillip's alter-ego continually nudges Phillip and asks him if he thinks anyone in the class is carrying. The alter-ego points out a guy with a cowboy hat and asks if Phillip thinks he is carrying. Phillip asks his alter-ego if it wouldn't be profiling to assume that. The alter-ego explains that it isn't profiling because the guy with a cowboy hat is white. Meanwhile Professor Jackson lectures on Schizophrenia. Trevor and Kelly see Phillip talking to himself in a shot without the alter ego. As Phillip leaves class he sees Sarah for the first time. He instantly falls in love with her. He says hello to her, and she says hello back as they leave the building. Then Phillip runs away in a fit of nervousness. He tells his alter-ego that he vows to protect her.

Bill, who was waiting on Sarah to finish her class, asks who the guy was that she was talking to. He goes on to question her about why she hadn't been responding to his texts. She explains that it was because she was in class. Bill says that they should go home in a stern manner. Phillip sees Bill grab her by the wrist and steers her to the car.

The church group meets again. Upon exiting the meeting, members of the group talk about how the campus carry situation appears to be cooling down.

Three weeks later Phillip walks around campus with his alter-ego. Phillip looks more paranoid than ever. The alter-ego assumes just about everyone on campus is carrying. Phillip and his alter ego see Sarah and Bill arguing on from across a courtyard. The alter-ego convinces Phillip that he needs to protect her, or risk having her get shot by Bill. Phillip agrees and reaches into his waistband.

Two news reports describe the shooting. The conservative news network describes the shooting as a hero story about how a student, who was carrying on campus, stopped an active shooter, losing his own life in the process because a police officer unknowingly thinks he was the original shooter. The liberal news network describes the shooting as being the direct result of campus carry laws and explains that the "hero" from the conservative news networks story was responsible for the death of 2 students. The conservative news network only mentions the total number of students injured in the crossfire.

The church group closes their meeting. Clarisse says the closing prayer, asking god to repeal campus carry laws. After the prayer Colt and Clint argue to Clarisse that without campus carry many more people would have been shot. Clarisse and Carla argue against them. At the end of the argument the group decides to split into two factions.

Upon exiting the meeting Jeff expresses his desire to begin carrying on campus to Sally. Sally says that it would only make the situation worse. They get into a huge argument. When Jeff drops sally off at home they decide to break up.

Trevor witnesses a protest in academic plaza in which both sides show up including some of his church group members.

Both church groups meet and argue for why god would be on their side of the campus carry debate. Trevor shows up to both meetings but doesn't say anything.

Trevor invites all of the group members from both factions to a meeting and gives a rousing speech on why they should put aside their differences and come together in this time of peril. The group members all leave without saying anything. Jeff and Sally cast a longing glance at each other, but do not speak to each other. Kelly stays behind to discuss with Trevor why his efforts, while well intentioned, could never have worked because of the hyperpolarized nature of our society.

Alternative ending (to be played after the credits)

Trevor invites all of the group members from both factions to a meeting and gives a rousing speech on why they should put aside their differences and come together in this time of peril. Clarisse and Carla approach Colt and Clint, and each of them decides to put their differences aside and bring the group back together. Jeff and Sally get back together. Trevor and Kelly are also implied to become romantically involved. And everyone lives happily ever after. The End.

SECTION VII

CAST LIST

- Trevor Glass- Mason Hill
- Phillip Mayfield- Luke Maher
- Gary- Luke Maher
- Clarisse Wallace- Mia Gordy
- Colt Randers- Peyton Harrison
- Carla Smith- Courtney Calhoun
- Emily Simpson- Cheyenne Martinez
- Jeff Handler- Mason Boone
- Sally Clyde- Laura Bell
- Kelly Westwood- Kate Phuah
- Professor Jackson- Dr. James Ball
- Liberal Student- Jonathan Pham
- Conservative Student- Joshua Samuel
- Conservative News Reporter- Joshua Samuel
- Liberal News Reporter- Laura

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davis, Stephen F. and William Buskist. *21st Century Psychology : A Reference Handbook*. Edited by Stephen F. Davis, William Buskist. Los Angeles : SAGE Publications, [2008], 2008. EBSCOhost, lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat03318a&AN=tamug.2958620&site=eds-live.

- This source contained information on schizophrenia. The main point it sought to push was that not all schizophrenic people are violent criminals. In fact, people with schizophrenia are no more likely to commit a crime than anyone else. This stereotype is advanced by television and films, such as my own, that depict violent schizophrenic people. This is why I included the fact that schizophrenic people are no more likely to commit a crime than anyone else in my screenplay. This is also why I chose to have my schizophrenic character take a lot of drugs. Drugs can severely increase the symptoms of schizophrenia, so having my schizophrenic character be on drugs makes it more likely that he would act violently.

Hargrove, David S. and Roland P. Perdue. "A Broader Perspective of Gun Control." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, vol. 85, no. 3, May 2015, pp. 225-227. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1037/ort0000066.

- This source emphasized the importance of fear in causing polarization. The pro-Campus Carry students in my film are afraid that a gunman might shoot up the campus, so they feel that they need guns to protect themselves. The anti-Campus Carry students are afraid that allowing guns on campus will itself cause a shooting, so they believe Campus Carry to be a bad thing.

Howard, Ron, director. *A Beautiful Mind*. Universal Studios, 2001.

- *A Beautiful Mind* is the film that most inspired my project. The brilliance of this film is that the audience doesn't realize that the main character is schizophrenic until he finds out himself. I do not wish to replicate this in my own film, but it did give me the idea to not make it completely obvious that the schizophrenic character in my film is schizophrenic. I intend to reveal this fact subtly so as not to hand feed the audience.

Lewis, Rhonda¹, Rhonda.lewis@wichita.edu, et al. "College Students Opinions on Gun Violence." *Journal of Community Health*, vol. 41, no. 3, June 2016, pp. 482-487. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1007/s10900-015-0118-x.

- This source contained information about student opinions on gun control. I chose to ignore it entirely because the opinions of college students around the country as a whole are not likely to be indicative of student opinions on the historically conservative Texas

A&M Campus. Also, because the film can be interpreted as inherently anti-Campus Carry, I chose to have more pro-Campus Carry students than anti-Campus Carry students to even it out.

Mustard, David B. author. "Culture Affects Our Beliefs about Firearms, but Data Are Also Important." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, no. 4, 2003, p. 1387. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/3312935.

- This source described the influence of culture and data on beliefs about firearms. I learned from this source that many conservatives bolster their opinions on gun control by pointing to data that implies that areas with looser gun control have less gun violence. This is why I included the statistics argument in the dialogue of conservative students in the script.

Scorcese, Martin, director. *Shutter Island*. Phoenix Pictures, 2010.

- This film is also about mental health illness. What I wish to draw on from this film is how vividly it puts the audience in the mind of the mentally diseased character. In this film the audience empathizes with and believes the mentally ill character's paranoia because the audience also does not know that he is delusional. However, once it is revealed that he is delusional, the audience is made to understand why he became mentally ill in the first place.

Trottier, David. *The Screenwriter's Bible: a Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script*. revised ed., Silman-James Pres, 1994.

- This book is an essential text on scriptwriting. It has everything a beginning screenwriter needs to get started. I used it to create my character list and to smooth out the dialogue.

Wolfson, Julia A, et al. "US Public Opinion on Carrying Firearms in Public Places." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 107, no. 6, June 2017, pp. 929-937. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2017.303712.

- This source contained information about gun control opinions in the USA as a whole. One idea that it pointed to was that gender is not a significant determining factor on gun control opinion. Before reading this I thought females were more likely to be against guns. The experience I had casting the film corroborated the idea that gender is not a significant determining factor on gun control opinion. This is why I had no problem converting some of the formerly male roles into female roles. This source also pointed to the idea that political ideology is a significant determining factor on gun control opinion. That is why I had no problem naming the pro-Campus Carry students conservative and vice versa in the screenplay, even though technically identifying as conservative does not necessarily mean that one will be pro-Campus Carry