

www.VideoJournalismWorkshops.com



Video Journalism Workshop

Essential

Tips & Tools

by Backpack Journalist Bill Gentile

Video Journalism Workshop

Essential Tips & Tools

Thank you for signing up and downloading our Video Journalism Workshop Essential Tips & Tools book. Please check out our shooting and interviews tips, along with sample releases and resources from our workshops.

Video Journalism Workshops

The Video Journalism Workshops With Bill Gentile are intensive, four-day immersions in the craft of “backpack video journalism” defined as character-driven television/web productions with hand-held digital cameras by a single practitioner. The workshops cover the gamut of this storytelling craft from the genesis and shaping of story ideas, to shooting powerful images that drive the story, to the capture and use of sound, to script writing, narration, and editing with Macintosh computers and Final Cut Pro. These workshops are appropriate for beginners with some experience as well as existing practitioners who desire to sharpen their skills or acquire new ones. We welcome photojournalists, print and video journalists, aspiring documentarians, filmmakers and independent storytellers.

You will learn:

- To articulate your story idea.
- To use filmmaking equipment to effectively capture images and sound.
- To recognize and to cultivate dramatic story arcs.
- To conduct proper, in-depth interviews.
- To write powerful treatments and scripts.
- To narrate your story.
- To edit with Final Cut Pro for maximum effect.



See page for 16 for additional workshop details or Visit www.VideoJournalismWorkshop.com for more info.

Bill Gentile's Video Journalism Workshops are held in a relaxed, friendly environment in professional venues or at his home, in Washington, DC.

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Video Journalism Workshop Essential Tips & Tools

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Students get hand-on and in-the-field instruction from Bill Gentile and a staff of seasoned practitioners.

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Introduction

The tools for instant, global, visual communication now fit in your backpack: a video camera, laptop, editing software and Internet connection. The era of the backpack video journalist is here. It is revolutionizing the worldwide exchange of information and ideas -- and changing the way we live.

In a four-day intensive workshop you learn the full range of skills required for effective visual storytelling—from idea development and pitching to shooting, producing, scriptwriting, narrating and editing the final product. You also learn to market your work, using the latest and most effective social media tools. So join the revolution.

I began my career in the golden days of journalism when the craft still was about information as opposed to entertainment, and when the men and women who practiced the craft believed that information can make a difference. That belief has often taken me to places inhabited by the poor, the illiterate and the oppressed, places where journalists are so desperately needed. In all of these places, I have found people with the grace, the dignity and the generosity of spirit to allow me to tell their stories, to practice my craft. The work that you see here exists largely because the people depicted allowed me to work among them. I am deeply grateful for that privilege, and this work is a tribute to them. I hope it has made a difference.

In June of 2009 I gave a presentation on “backpack journalism” at the Harvard Club in New York City. Here’s part of what I said:

“We are, right now, at an extraordinary juncture in the history of mankind, technology and communication. Even more important than the Gutenberg press, the advances in digital cameras and the Internet provide us unprecedented opportunity. Ordinary citizens of the world now wield extraordinary power. We wield the power to communicate instantly, globally and in a language, the visual language, which supersedes both the written and the spoken word. This visual language knows no frontiers. It needs no translation. It is contingent on no corporate support. It is one of the most powerful tools of our time. . . . And backpack journalism is the embodiment of this visual language.”

“No matter what the new media landscape looks like after the current upheaval, backpack journalism will be an important part of it.”

After 35 years as a working journalist and the last 10 of those also teaching the craft, I still believe all this. And this is why I’m passing these tips and tools along to you. Benefit from my experience. Learn from my mistakes. Make the difference that I did not make.



Bill Gentile is an independent journalist and documentary filmmaker teaching at American University in Washington, DC. His career spans more than three decades, five continents and nearly every facet of journalism and mass communication. He is a pioneer of “backpack video journalism” and today he is one of the craft’s most noted practitioners.

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Bill Gentile's Rules On Shooting Video

- Position for stability. Left hand supports camera. Use your body as a tripod.
- Keep both eyes open.
- Compose as if making still photos.
- Use the Six-Shoot System.
- Shooting ratio:
 - cu or xcu (50%) (detail, cutaway.)
 - Medium (25%).
 - Wide (25%) Establishing or Master.
- Make each clip **at least 20 seconds** long. Count them.
- COMPOSE FIRST. SHOOT LATER. DON'T FRAME SHOTS WHILE ROLLING.
- Use the basic rules of Composition:
 - Rule of Thirds.
 - Multiple planes.
- Don't wide angle your subjects to death. Get close-ups.
- Let people walk into and out of frame.
- Shoot what you hear: Radio, music, engines. SHOOT THE SOURCE of sound.
- Shoot what the story is about. Ask yourself: "What's the story now? What's the story now? What's the story now?"
- Shoot the journey: Beginning, middle and end.
- Shoot interesting angles. Reflections in mirrors, windows, puddles. Shadows. Silhouettes.
- SHOOT WHAT INTERESTS YOUR EYES. Shoot THROUGH things. Spokes of a wheel, bars of a cell, the wire of a fence. Get "multiple planes of information."
- Be careful with zooms and pans.
- At first, shoot video stills. Later on, move, zoom or pan from still to still.
- Make subjects identify themselves: "My name is John Doe and I'm an electrical engineer."
- Engage your subjects. Elicit comments from them. Remember the Three Magic Questions: "What are you doing now?" "What did you just do?" "What are you going to do?"
- Make subjects speak in whole sentences. "Right now I'm working on ..."
- Get your subjects to talk about each other. This develops and enhances characters.
- Work with your partner. Be careful with eye contact and direction.
- ANTICIPATE your subject's movements and actions.
- ANTICIPATE changes in story.
- ANTICIPATE Dramatic Arc.
- Be careful when you approach subjects. Your body language sends a message.
- IF IT'S NOT ON TAPE OR ON THE MEMORY CARD, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN.
- NEVER SHOW YOUR SUBJECT THE UNFINISHED WORK.



Bill Gentile covers all aspects of the filmmaking process, starting with basics like proper use of the camera.

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Bill Gentile's Rules on Shooting the Interview

- Two types of interviews: INFORMAL, or on-the-run.
FORMAL, or sit-down.
- In either case, know what you want from the subject BEFORE you engage.

INFORMAL:

- Get subject to introduce him/herself.
- Engage your subjects. Elicit comments from them. Ask them the three magic questions:
“What did you just do?” “What are you doing now?”
“What are you going to do?”
- Make subjects speak in whole sentences. “Right now I’m working on ...”
- Get your subjects to talk about each other. This develops and enhances character.
- Work with your partner to ensure eye contact with the audience.



Bill Gentile uses the latest in technology and techniques to instruct students heading to the field.

FORMAL:

- The first thing you determine: Where’s the light?
- Make your subject look into the light, and into compositional space.
- Make eye contact.
- Get subject to introduce him/herself.
- One-on-One interviews.
- Two-on-One interviews. (you and a correspondent or producer).
- Get subject to speak in whole sentences. The audience (normally) will hear only the answers, not the questions.
- Composition and focus.
- Careful with background. (depth of field).
- Get clean sound.
- Save the hard questions for LAST.
- Get written releases FIRST.
- On-camera releases if you can’t get written releases.
- Your last questions:
 - “Is there anything I missed that I should be asking you?”
 - “What are your greatest hopes and concerns in relation to the subject matter?”
- NEVER, NEVER SHOW YOUR SUBJECT THE UNFINISHED WORK.

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Video Journalism Gear

Below is a list of suggestions, or parameters, regarding what you will need to properly practice the methodology of backpack video journalism with maximum, professional efficiency. These are only suggestions. You don't need the latest, best camera, or the most expensive Mac, or the most comprehensive version of Final Cut. Tools are only part of the craft.

My workshops, for example, are all about the visual storytelling process. Not equipment. I've seen terrific work produced with elementary gear – by people who understand the visual language. Having said that, reliable and user-friendly equipment can enhance your work by making your efforts more effective.

I recommend hand-held digital cameras with manual controls for shutter speed, aperture and focus. I prefer cameras with the three-pronged XLR connections for two channels of sound. Smaller “palmcorders” most often do not have the above capabilities, and I therefore recommend you not use them for work you hope to broadcast on professional outlets. However, some of my students with palmcorders have had very satisfactory experiences.

Especially now, when many practitioners are using HD SLRs and even iPhones, equipment preferences vary wildly. It's your job to figure out the end market for your work and what the requirements of that market are. Then you can go out and get the gear.

I always use a “directional” or “shotgun” microphone mounted atop the camera, as well as a wireless microphone that I place on the character I am following or in the immediate vicinity of a conversation that I want to record. And I suggest you always use a shotgun mic atop the camera, which generally provides better quality sound than the internal microphones that are built into most hand-held cameras.

I strongly suggest you get a set of inexpensive earphones, the kind you put into your ears. These allow you to retain the peripheral audio that would otherwise be lost with larger, ear-covering headsets. You can get these up for about \$12.00.

I very rarely use a tripod, and when I do it is almost exclusively for interviews. And the tripods I use are small and lightweight. I encourage you to get a portable tripod – and to not expect to use it an awful lot.

Below are some of the parameters, or basics, for computers you will need for the workshop. Again, these are suggestions:

Basic Equipment for Video Journalist

- 15” MacBook Pro with Final Cut.
- Processor: 2.4 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo.
- Memory: 2GB RAM 120 GB hard drive or larger (4GB preferred).
- External Hard Drive.
- DVD-RW SuperDrive.
- Firewire and USB ports.

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- Wireless Internet.
- Macintosh OS X.
- Microsoft Office 2004 for Macintosh.
- Quicktime Pro.
- External hard drive with Firewire connection. 7200 RPM USB hard drives are not adequate for video.
- I recommend the G Drive, it's a very compact, lightweight, 500GB. I used a 250GB unit in Afghanistan during my May-June 2008 trip. (See <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/428/index.html>) I was able to store about 20 hours of HD material on each of these hard drives during that trip. They only make the 500GB units now. The good thing about them is that they operate without external power source. They run from the computer power. Go to www.g-technology.com.

You must have an external hard drive, as this is where you will store the raw materials that you shoot for your workshop project. Video takes up an awful amount of space and you will not be able to fit this material into your laptop computer.

It is essential that you make sure that you can transfer video from your camera onto your computer and into Final Cut Pro – before you arrive here for the workshop. If you cannot, take your gear to your nearest Apple store and ask for assistance. I have the 7.0.3 version, which I believe is the most recent. It's best to get the most recent version, which ensures your project is compatible across different machines using the same version. Final Cut Express will work if you don't have the means for the full version.

Please keep in mind that these are suggested guidelines, or parameters. None of this is written on tablets of stone. What's important is that you learn from these tools and that they work, in conjunction with each other, for you.

Make sure you have the appropriate cables to facilitate this process. Make sure you have an external hard drive that is compatible with your computer.



Bill Gentile typically conducts the workshops in Washington DC, but also holds events in Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

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I.0 Appearance Release Form

Name of "Participant":

Telephone:

Address:

E-mail:

This release is made to allow _____ ("Production Company") to include Participant's appearance in programming produced by Production Company. Participant agrees to appear and participate in the production and taping of the program and to allow the taping and recording of Participant's likeness and voice, conversation and sound, including any performance of any musical composition and biographical information that Participant may provide (the "Appearance").

Production Company is granted all rights and permissions necessary to record, produce and distribute the programming containing the Appearance, and to otherwise license others to use any or all of the Appearance. Participant understands that Production Company, and any person or entity it may license the program to, shall have the right, but not the obligation, to telecast and/or otherwise exhibit the programming, or any advertising, promotion or publicity containing the Appearance in all media, now known or hereafter devised throughout the world in perpetuity. Production Company or its licensee may edit the programming, including Participant's Appearance.

Participant confirms that, to the best of his/her knowledge, any statements made by Participant during the taping and production of the programming will be true and will not violate any third party's rights.

Participant hereby acknowledges that he/she has no right to inspect or approve any or all of the Appearance or other materials produced in connection with this release.

Signature or Participant

Signature of Authorized
Agent of Production Company

Date

Date

Please feel free to photocopy this release for your own video shoot.

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2.0 Location Release Form

(Production Company) _____

Production Location: _____

Location Owner: _____

Date of Recording: _____

I agree that _____ ("Production Company") may use the above location for taping the program.

_____ ("Production Company") shall indemnify the undersigned against any property damage to the above location and against any personal injuries caused by Production Company.

I agree that the location may appear in the program and in other programs produced by the Production Company and in publicity about the program and such other programs and that the program and such other programs may be distributed in whole or in part in all electronic and print media now known or hereafter devised throughout the world in perpetuity.

Signature _____

Name (print) _____

Title _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Date _____

Please feel free to photocopy this release for your own video shoot.

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3.0 Parent or Guardian Release Form

Name of "Participant":

Telephone:

Address:

E-mail:

This release is made to allow _____ ("Production Company") to include Participant's appearance in programming produced by Production Company. Participant agrees to appear and participate in the production and taping of the program and to allow the taping and recording of Participant's likeness and voice, conversation and sound, including any performance of any musical composition and biographical information that Participant may provide (the "Appearance").

Production Company is granted all rights and permissions necessary to record, produce and distribute the programming containing the Appearance, and to otherwise license others to use any or all of the Appearance. Participant understands that Production Company, and any person or entity it may license the program to, shall have the right, but not the obligation, to telecast and/or otherwise exhibit the programming, or any advertising, promotion or publicity containing the Appearance in all media, now known or hereafter devised throughout the world in perpetuity. Production Company or its licensee may edit the programming, including Participant's Appearance.

Participant confirms that, to the best of his/her knowledge, any statements made by Participant during the taping and production of the programming will be true and will not violate any third party's rights.

Participant hereby acknowledges that he/she has no right to inspect or approve any or all of the Appearance or other materials produced in connection with this release.

I hereby warrant that I am the parent or guardian of _____ and I have full authority to authorize the above Release which I have read and approved. I hereby release and indemnify _____ ("Production Company"), its underwriters and licensees from and against any and all liability arising out of the exercise of the rights granted by the above.

Signature or Participant

Signature of Authorized
Agent of Production Company

Date

Date

Please feel free to photocopy this release for your own video shoot.

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4.0 Materials Release Form

(Production Company) _____

Description of Materials: _____

Owner of Materials: _____

I agree to release the above described materials to _____ (“Production Company”) and I hereby irrevocably grant to _____ (Production Company) and its licensees, permission to use such materials, in whole or in part, in any production and that the production, the footage containing the above described materials and any portions of the production or such footage may be distributed in all broadcast and non-broadcast media including, but not limited to television, radio, cable, audio and video, web sites and other interactive media worldwide in perpetuity. I also consent to the use of the above-described materials in publicity and advertising concerning the production and other programs containing the above described materials appearance and in publications related to the production and such other productions.

I expressly release _____ (Production Company), its underwriters and licensees, from any claims I may have arising out of the broadcast, exhibition, publication, promotion, and other uses of this production and the footage containing the above-described materials.

My signature indicates that I have the right to enter into this agreement and to grant the rights as stated above.

Signature _____

Name (print) _____

Title _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Date _____

Please feel free to photocopy this release for your own video shoot.

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Formulario De Autorizacion Del Participante

Nombre "Participante":

Teléfono:

Dirección :

correo electrónico:

Este documento autoriza a _____ ("La Compañía Productora") a incluir al participante en la programación realizada por la compañía de producción. El Participante se compromete a comparecer y participar en la producción y grabación del programa y permitir la grabación de su imagen y su voz, la conversación y el sonido, incluyendo cualquier actuación, composición musical e información biográfica que el participante quiera proporcionar (la "apariciencia").

"La Compañía Productora" conserva todos los derechos y permisos necesarios para grabar, producir y distribuir la programación que contiene "la apariciencia", y la licencia del uso por otros de "la apariciencia". El Participante entiende que la empresa de producción, y cualquier persona o entidad a la que esta podrá dar licencia del programa, tendrá el derecho, pero no la obligación, de transmisión y / o no presentación de la programación, o cualquier publicidad, promoción que incluya "la apariciencia" en todos los medios de comunicación, ahora conocidos o creados en el futuro en todo el mundo. "La Compañía Productora" o sus licenciatarios podrán modificar la programación, incluyendo la apariciencia del Participante.

El Participante confirma que, que es de su conocimiento, que cualquier declaración hecha por los participantes durante la grabación y la producción de la programación será verdad y que no se violan los derechos de cualquier tercero.

El Participante acepta y reconoce que él / ella no tiene derecho a inspeccionar o aprobar lo que sea de la apariciencia o de otros materiales producidos en relación con esta autorización.

Firma del participante

Firma del agente autorizado por la
Compañía Productora.

Fecha

Fecha

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Forma De Autorizacion De Materiales

_____ (Compañía Productora)

Descripción de Materiales:

Dueño del material:

Estoy de acuerdo en liberar el material arriba descrito a _____ (“La Compañía Productora”) y por la presente irrevocablemente conceder a _____ (La Compañía Productora) y sus licenciatarios, el permiso para utilizar dicho material, en todo o en parte, para las producciones y que la producción y las imágenes que contienen los materiales descritos anteriormente y cualquier parte de la producción o tomas, puede ser distribuido en todos los medios de difusión y radiodifusión, incluyendo pero no limitado a televisión, radio, cable, audio y video, sitios web y otros medios interactivos en todo el mundo a perpetuidad. También doy mi consentimiento para el uso de los materiales descritos en la publicidad y la publicidad relativa a la producción y otros programas que contiene el anterior aspecto se describe en materiales y publicaciones relacionadas con la producción y como otras producciones.

Yo expresamente libero a _____ (La Compañía Productora), sus suscriptores y licenciatarios, de cualquier reclamo que puedan tener derivados de la difusión, exhibición, publicación, promoción, y otros usos de esta producción y las imágenes que contienen los materiales descritos.

Mi firma indica que tengo el derecho a entrar en este acuerdo y para conceder los derechos como se ha dicho.

Firma: _____

Nombre (letra de imprenta): _____

Dirección: _____

Teléfono: _____

E-mail: _____

Fecha: _____

Please feel free to photocopy this release for your own video shoot.

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Tutorials • Resources

Final Cut Pro

<http://library.creativecow.net/tutorials/applefinalcutpro>

http://files.lynda.com/files/finalcutstudio/index.html?utm_source=apple_fcs&utm_medium=partner&utm_content=apple_fcs&utm_campaign=apple_fcs#fcp7

<http://www.macprovideo.com/tutorial/finalcut7101>

<http://www.rippletraining.com/provideoapps.html>

<http://lafcpug.org/tutorials.html>

Final Cut Express

<http://www.izzyvideo.com/learn-final-cut-express-pt1/>

<http://www.apple.com/finalcutexpress/resources/>

<http://www.gotmyidea.com/cat/final-cut-video-tutorials>

<http://www.lynda.com/home/DisplayCourse.aspx?lpk2=647>

Adobe Premiere

http://www.tutorialhero.com/view-588-adobe_premiere_tutorials.php

<http://www.lynda.com/home/DisplayCourse.aspx?lpk2=59974>

<http://www.tutorialized.com/tutorials/Premiere/Basics/>

<http://www.vtc.com/products/Adobe-Premiere-Pro-CS5-Tutorials.htm>

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Come Join Our Video Journalism Workshops

The Video Journalism Workshops With Bill Gentile are intensive, four-day immersions in the craft of “backpack video journalism” defined as character-driven television/web productions with hand-held digital cameras by a single practitioner. The workshops cover the gamut of this storytelling craft from the genesis and shaping of story ideas, to shooting powerful images that drive the story, to the capture and use of sound, to script writing, narration, and editing with Macintosh computers and Final Cut Pro. These workshops are appropriate for beginners with some experience as well as existing practitioners who desire to sharpen their skills or acquire new ones. We welcome photojournalists, print and video journalists, aspiring documentarians, filmmakers and independent storytellers.

Below is the Video Journalism Workshop schedule that I typically conduct several times a year in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit the links below:

<http://www.videojournalismworkshops.com> • <http://www.billgentile.com>

Day 1:

- Introductions and objectives.
- Definitions.
- 10 AM brief Skype introduction with Internet marketer Bruce Jones.
- View teaching/training video.
- Clips to Sequence to Scene to Story – the final objective.
- Basic elements of a new language: XCU to XWA.
- The Six-Shot System: Demonstration.
- Composition: The deliberate arrangement of elements in your images.
- The Rule of Thirds and Multiple Planes.
- Gentile's Shooting Rules.
- Introduction to Final Cut Pro and how it relates to the new language.
- First shoot: Characters and The Sequence. Casting a wide net. Noon-ish – 5 PM.
- Download, sub-clip, label material.
- Review footage.
- Proposals, Titles and The Controlling Idea.
- View “Echoes of War” and two models of “character-driven” documentaries.



Bill Gentile makes every effort to accompany students for personal instruction in the field.

Day 2:

- Present Title and Controlling Idea.
- Opening scene. Closing scene.

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- Production Schedule.
- Dramatic Arc.
- View video as example of multiple dramatic arcs.
- "Participatory Observation:" Engage your subjects.
- Formal and Informal interviews.
- Gentile's Interview Rules.
- Second shoot: Noon-ish – 5 PM.
- Review footage.
- More Final Cut Pro.
- Logs, Scripts and Treatments.
- Sound: The Heartbeat of Documentary.

Day 3:

- More Titles and Controlling Ideas.
- Marketing Your Work: 10 AM Skype conference with Bruce Jones.
- View video and discuss characters that embody editorial points.
- Third shoot: Only if necessary.
- Editing and "the creative treatment of reality:"
- View videos as editing models.
- Aesthetics vs. mechanics.
- The script: Writing to pictures.
- Narration, the third dimension of "three-dimensional chess."

Day 4:

- View video as model for narration and storytelling.
- Your conversation with the audience.
- More editing with Final Cut Pro.
- Workshop evaluations.
- View final products.
- Uploading your work to the Internet.



Each workshop features pre-production, production and post-production experience.

Where are the workshops held?

Workshops are generally held in Washington DC, but others are currently being scheduled for other cities in the United States and in Latin America

How much does it cost?

The four-day workshop, which runs from about 9 am to 9 pm each day, costs \$1,495.00 per participant.

What should participants bring?

Participants are required to bring their own digital camera, laptop computer with video editing program and external hard drive. We suggest cameras with two channels for sound, plus manual capability to allow practitioners to control aperture, shutter speed and focus. We also suggest Mac computers and Final Cut Pro.

For More Information Click Here

www.VideoJournalismWorkshops.com or call 202-492-6405.

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What Others Are Saying, Student Testimonials

"Bill,

I used the skills I learned in January's workshop to get a video published with Global Post after traveling to Brazil. Still have a long way to go, but it's a start. Here's a link in case you want to post it on your blog so people can see how quickly they can put your workshop to use.

Thanks, man!"

– Peter Holley, July 2012

"Bill,

I cannot express enough how much I enjoyed the class, and the experience. It was an extraordinary amount of stress, but I believe that is by design—to test students' flexibility and resolve. Aside from the amazing technical and creative support and the wonderful blend of fellow students, I have to say I think an essential piece of the magic is you and Esther opening your home to the workshop. I won't recount everything I learned, but will say that your instruction will inform everything I do moving forward—both at my current job and in my fledgeling efforts to branch out. Thank you for that!"

– Jim Eppard, March 2012



"Hi, Bill,

I returned to Boston filled with ideas and drive after your remarkable workshop! I've got a lot to learn (you're so right about this being a new language) - particularly since I've been so steeped in the print world - but you're a gifted teacher, shooter, and writer...I enjoyed meeting everyone in the class, was inspired by their energy, and hope to keep up with them, too. Bon voyage!"

– Ellen Clegg, August 2011

Students rave about their newly-acquired ability to practice the craft.

"Bill,

I've spent the morning raving about the workshop with colleagues, and I'll certainly make sure to incorporate what I learned into whatever I'm involved in moving forward...You've put together an amazing workshop and I hope many others get to experience what I did over the past four days."

– Brendan Rohr, World Wildlife Fund

"Hi Bill,

This workshop was really great. I can't thank you enough — your work with me and with Sam has really helped my family communicate our vision for the Sgt. Sullivan Center in a coherent and moving way. You are an inspiring speaker about the backpack journalism methodology, as well. Your workshop opened up my sense of the incredible possibilities that this method of inquiry and communication has to have world-changing impact."

– Dan Sullivan, August 2011

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White Balance

(Use this space to set the White Balance function of your camera.)



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by Backpack Journalist Bill Gentile

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www.VideoJournalismWorkshops.com