

10:17am

By: Myles Hoenes

Unregistered HyperCam 2



10:17am began as a video project for me to express the isolation and loneliness I felt during quarantine. The project was full of long wide shots of scenic Ann Arbor contrasting the dense claustrophobic isolation I felt in my box of a room.

It was never meant to be though.

At 10:17am everything changed and over the last 4 months the project has become something completely different. It has become a way for me to express my grief, my frustration, my pain, and my sadness. To document, on video, what I saw and what I felt.

What we went through is not an isolated incident. There are millions of families like mine and every day thousands more.

-Myles Michael "Mike" Hoenes

Myles Hoenes is a graphic design senior at the STAMPS School of art and design from Battle Creek Michigan. While Myles's main medium is digital graphics, theater has always been close to his heart. This is his first attempt at a short film project and he hopes you enjoy it as much as he hated making it.



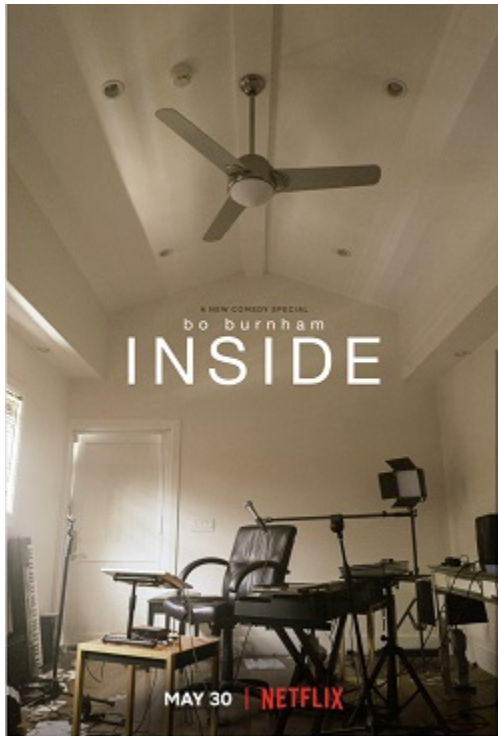
My final work for my IP project is a 20 minute short film focused on COVID and vaccinations. The piece was made as a response to my father's diagnoses with, and subsequent death from, COVID at the hands of his anti-vax coworkers. The piece directly confronts anti-vaxxers and my own grief. Everything is left on the table for people to understand just what it means to treat COVID like any other disease.



The final exhibition is a recreation of my film set in my apartment. Pictures of my father throughout his life are pinned to the wall like the memorial boards my family had made for his funeral. The pictures sit on top of scans of the visitor cards from the duration of his hospital stay. Symbolizing my memories of him trying to outshine the last 8 days I had with him. At the center is the poster for my film and a QR link to the video online. Giving viewers the opportunity to not only watch the video but share it and spread my family's story.



Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/dK9-vOHUeCg>



Netflix. (2021). *Inside. Bo Burnham: Inside.*

The piece is an hour and a half long mini series on Netflix filmed and produced completely by Bo Burnham out of a single small room that the audience assume, and could possibly be true, that he hasn't left for the majority of quarantine and isolation. The piece takes the audience through Burnham's slow decline during quarantine as well as through his reflections on the types of things witnessed and discussed during quarantine. There is a big emphasis on the effects of so many more people living digital lives and heavy critiques on the types of actions conducted by governments and their citizens at large with heavy comedic undertones.

This piece was my initial inspiration for my project and gives me a rough idea of how a successful use of video techniques and thematic writing can produce an entertaining, thought provoking, and cathartic performance. The way Burnham tells his story is what specifically has inspired me. Balancing telling one's personal story but in a way that connects with the world at large and the struggles of others in order to create a thought out experience. Not to mention balancing talking about serious topics dealing with grief and adding in an air of light hearted humor. Brunham's piece is helping me understand, within my own context, how to juggle all these aspects in a way that is authentic to me and my family.



Munck, N., & Munck, E. (n.d.). *Sadworld.* YouTube. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/c/sadworldonline>.

Sadworld is the brainchild of Noah and Ethan Munck, a Youtube based video project that uses intense editing to create a series of videos that are unsettling, dramatic, disgusting, yet on point with the current generation. Videos topics range from the implications of "...a technology infused flesh mound" (From the Video: fantasies) or a mass murder as in the video *dreams*. Each video makes you feel like you're watching someone having a midlife crisis. Many videos are over edited leaving the visuals broken and

bitcrushed with vibrant colors and video tearing present in even the most mundane scenes. As I go forward with the process of making this video project, I'm finding it harder and harder to express what it's like to experience this kind of grief and to have this kind of crisis in the modern world. These videos inspired me to move towards a shorter skit like structure for the talk show section of 10:17am with fast paced and broken editing. It helped show me that maybe the way to show my own grief/anger was not to create something that could be easily followed, but instead something that was broken and moving in many directions at one time. Indirectly showing the audience how I felt.

Cacioppo, John T ; Hawkley, Louise C ; Norman, Greg J ; Berntson, Gary G. (n.d.). Social isolation. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing Inc. https://search.lib.umich.edu/articles/record/cdi_pubmedcentral_primary_oai_pubmedcentral_nih_gov_3166409

This paper takes a focus on the ways loneliness can affect a person's overall health. This specifically makes the argument that it isn't just actual loneliness that is detrimental to a person's health but that "perceived loneliness" is just as detrimental in the long run. Using the example of early humans and the evolutionary advantage of sticking together in groups as a reason why being just perceived as separated from the group can add significant stress and real danger to an individual. Noting that it's possible that the development of this feeling of perceived loneliness could be a sort of warning sign letting early humans know when their connections with others are weakening and motivate them to repair them. With the neurological phenomenon of "social pain" actually causing the activation of the area of the brain responsible for processing physical pain.

The main takeaway, for me, with this source is the fact that it's not just physical loneliness that can lead to negative health effects, it's the psychological concept of loneliness. When I was at my lowest during quarantine I had people around me and I had friends and family back home in my home town that were always there for me. The question then is why did I feel so alone? This paper provides a clear and scientific answer to that question and gives me the confidence to build off this concept. It was unfortunate that I ended up not being able to use the meat of this paper to its fullest in *10:17am*, but it has left its effect. Loneliness is a main theme for many Gen Z such as myself so I can see myself revisiting this idea of physical vs perceived loneliness in some project in the future.

Arrigo, B. A., & Bullock, J. L. (2008). The Psychological Effects of Solitary Confinement on Prisoners in Supermax Units: Reviewing What We Know and Recommending What Should Change. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 52(6), 622–640. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X07309720>

This study looked at the short term and long term effects caused by placing inmates into solitary confinement. Comparing the findings of several studies, the paper proposes the idea that solitary confinement can greatly affect a prisoner's mental health leading to more harm than good. The paper brings up that humans are naturally social animals and, "...rely on social contact with others to test and validate their perceptions of the environment." Without this validation, inmates would consistently develop symptoms of clinical depression and long-term impulse control disorder. It was even found that this lack of social interaction made inmates go from craving social interaction to actively fearing it. Behavior would become more irrational and abrasive as the inmates would either try to test the boundaries of their isolation or retreat into some sort of fantasy usually leading to violent outbursts that, instead of warranting more solitary confinement, would be a result of the confinement in the first place.

There was a point that my isolation during quarantine began to take on the qualities of solitary confinement and at the time I found this article I thought I might be able to connect the two. If I had made this solitary confinement connection then that would have helped explain the reason I had so much trouble moving past that point in my life, especially with the fact that inmates began to fear interaction with others. This would have done two main things for my project before it changed after my father's death: it would have validated what I was feeling and it gave me a new connection to make. I made a prison for myself in that room and now there is a scientific basis to that connection.

Early versions of the piece were very structured. Even after my father's passing, I had a clear script I wanted to follow with a specific scene order. I figured that the most efficient way to produce a video that authentically portrayed my feelings of isolation, and then later on the grief of losing my father, was to write something structured and controlled enough to show that. I felt that if I let myself "do whatever felt right" the piece would quickly go off the rails and would lose focus, even though that method was what ended up saving the project.

My early research focused a lot on how loneliness can affect people. One of the most important articles to my project, at that time, was *Social isolation. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. It gave me a solid understanding for this feeling of being around people, like I was in my apartment at the time, but not feeling connected. Still feeling isolated and alone.

This would influence the majority of that project, specifically in Act 1 where I would be outside at different locations on campus. I would place myself in high traffic areas with students separating me and the camera as they walked past me, usually not paying me any mind. The idea was to make me seem like nothing amongst the hustle and bustle of the "highly accredited" University of Michigan. Here I was part of something amazing, yet separated on a very human level.



Even after my father's passing, when my project was beginning to change into what would eventually become *10:17am* I very much had a plan for what I wanted. Some of the first takes of what would eventually become the talk show segment of *10:17am* began as a very structured scripted skit. Very similar to some of my early plans during the fall semester.



(A take from this very early scripted version of *10:17am*)

The issue though was that this didn't feel authentic. Everything I wrote felt like a filter that was holding back my true feelings. I feel I needed to begin improving. Improving is something that I have experience with, and was used by both my film references (Sadworld and Bo Burnham), but would extend the time it took to make this film by an unknown factor. I didn't know when or how long it would take to finally film that one thing that would be perfect for the video.

But it was the only way for me to feel like myself, and so I started filming. With the very intense feelings surrounding the project, this would have been only 2 months after my father's death, I found it hard to work on it. I would often have to spend days if not weeks away from it but always thinking about it. Every time I filmed, I tried to approach it with the built up emotions that had stirred since the last filming. This, in short, worked and left me with a sizable amount of footage and ironically, a plan.



(one of the first improved takes)

I proved to myself that I could trust my gut to let out what I needed to. This was how I approached the rest of the project. I let my feelings dictate what I needed to add and when, something that was very foreign to me but an honest relief. This would lead to the addition of the intro scene with me holding my dad's ashes in our back yard. A way to hint at what's to come while keeping the focus on my family.



It also led to the addition to the scene of me sitting on the ground and just talking with the camera. A way for me to level with the audience and give them a look behind the veil after seeing this character of myself and this view of my family at our most vulnerable in the hospital. It felt right to explain to people how I felt at my darkest. It felt like a necessity for people to understand the impact.



I continued to work on the video until I felt it had everything. I tried not to care if it flowed a certain way or if it had a central connecting theme between each scene, besides my own grief. I just let myself run and take it where it needed to end up. That's how *10:17am* became *10:17am*. It was just a matter of me letting it grow with me as I processed my own grief. I ended the entire short film with a shot of my family from before COVID. I think I did this because, not only did I



want to contrast the scene of us in the hospital, but try to leave people with the same image I have of my dad. This funny guy that lived his life the best he could and tried to give the best to me.

(the last shot of the film)

I think one of my friends said it best after he had seen the video, "This is something you do now and then revisit in like 5 years." This was a big change in my life and right now, only 4 months after his death, I am nowhere done processing every bit of that experience. I'm going to keep all the extra footage I took, I've been transferring every family video I can, and I've been digitizing every family photo. I want to do another project like this in the future after I have given myself time to heal.

I learned a lot from this project. I learned that life can be a bitch and the world keeps turning even when your own stops, but I learned that I can keep going and I can trust myself to take the steps I need. I can trust myself, trust my gut, to say what I need to say and show what I need to show. To make something I'm proud of and that I think he would be proud of too.