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## For The Record: Bill Schurk

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## **For the Record: Bill Schurk Documentary Proposal**

### **Logline**

A half hour documentary feature about Bill Schurk and his contributions to Bowling Green State University's Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives. The collector's dream becomes a reality in building the country's largest assortment of music and the advancement of popular culture in an academic library.

### **Background/Story Summary**

William Schurk, who is most commonly known as Bill, is a pop culture enthusiast and music man who created the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives (MLBSSA) at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Bill is an upbeat and quirky man with enough knowledge about popular culture to fill an entire library with. Bill Schurk started as the sound archivist on July 3, 1967 on the third floor of the Jerome library (William T. Jerome). When he started there on that exciting day he did not expect this place would be where he would be spending the next 50 years of his career, collecting about a million recordings ranging from polka music all the way to grunge and all the other kinds of genres in between. From a young age, Bill was interested in collecting things, whether it be fanzines, newspapers, records, bottle caps, or any other objects that might be symbolic of that time of his life. Bill's real passion would be collecting recordings, which would lead to his passion for helping to set up the sound archives at BGSU. Currently, BGSU has the largest collection of popular music recordings in an academic library in North America (Music Library).

Through his time as an archivist Bill did have some set backs with administrators at the university thinking he was buying too much and would outgrow the third floor of the library. Some of his favorite artists featured within this collection are Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Fats

Domino, Gene Vincent, and Carl Perkins (Moody, 2011). Also in an interview with Laura L. Moody, Bill expresses how retirement is inevitable and points out that “times have changed in the audio world, and I’d like to see a layer of passage from generation to generation” (258). Through the years, colleagues of Bill’s have thoroughly enjoyed his company and the way he runs the library and have profusely expressed how they are going to miss having him around all the time and the quirkiness he brings to the job. Now that Bill is retired he still does come into the sound archives most week days to continue to help archive all the extra materials.

The story will begin at his childhood, describing his family life and what sparked him to become a collector and ultimately what lead him to his career of being a librarian. Showing his past will better set up and explain who he is today and how he has been able to create the library. The majority of the documentary will be about his work at BGSU and his influence on the campus and pop culture community as a whole.

Making a documentary about someone’s life when they are still living can be very difficult. In an article by Liz Giuffre, she explains how a documentary should not just focus on the subject, but try to include the surrounding situations that helped to shape who the subject was and how they became who they are (Giuffre, 2014). The film will be shot as a first-person narrative, because Bill is very open about talking about his work. I would like to be the one to tell his story and have additional interviews with family, friends, and colleagues to help supplement what he says. I will be working in collaboration with BGSU, specifically with Jerome Library and MLBSSA, in order to obtain the archival footage and to be able interview colleagues of Bill. All of the interviews will be held within MLBSSA in order to keep the setting consistent and to help set the aesthetic of how important this floor of the library is to Bill.

## **Topic Summary**

A documentary about Bill Schurk would bring a new appreciation to librarians and how one man's dedication to his passion lead him to never having to work a day in his life. It is the best time to make this documentary about him, because he currently retired from the library so he would have more time to be able to help us and with the changing over of personnel in the library it gives administrators the opportunity to show skeptics of change that Bill's legacy will be carried on. Bill was one of the main people to bring popular culture to BGSU and his dedication to it needs to be celebrated. Music documentaries have been on the rise over the past ten years so making a documentary about a person who has devoted his life to collecting and educating people on music should be honored. Students in the university and at universities across the country need to be informed about Bill's dedication and how his contributions affect their education. Universities from all over the country contact Bowling Green to obtain items from their sound archives and music library, which, without the work of Bill this would never have happened. Popular culture is a topic that is only just starting to get explored, and BGSU has given students the opportunity be fully emerged into it. The topics that will be talked about within this documentary are what inspired Bill to want to get into collecting, how Bill obtained the job he ended up having for 50 years, the creation and advancement of popular culture studies, and the legacy Bill is leaving to the BGSU community.

The overlying theme that will be intertwined throughout this documentary will be the changing of popular culture and how it affected Bill. Also the music that attracted Bill to collecting will be highlighted through the documentary within the background of his interviews and within the soundtrack for the documentary. Some of the questions I will be answering throughout this documentary are: 1) What influenced Bill Schurk to want to be a librarian, specifically a sound archivist? 2) How has Bill influenced the popular culture library and the

sound archives? 3) What kind of legacy does Bill want to leave behind for future generations? and 4) What steps are the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives workers taking in order to honor Bill's legacy and to continue to expand the collection? Having all of these questions answered are essential in telling the story of Bill and helps to show why he was such an important figure in BGSU's history.

I am the best person to make a documentary about this, because I have a passion for music and I have grown up in a library. Since I was young I have been visiting libraries and when I started attending Bowling Green State University, I immediately fell in love with Jerome library and all the features it offered students. Walking through the sound archives was mind blowing to me and made me want to just stroll around the aisles for hours. Meeting someone as outgoing as Bill made me really want to make this documentary about him because he is living his dream. I feel like I can relate to Bill in his upbeat and quirkiness personality and that would make for a fun and upbeat documentary that would draw people into wanting to watch it.

### **Artistic Approach**

The approach I would like to take with this project is one that is dominated by music. I want it to be dominated by music, because of how important music is to Bill. This will be especially important in the beginning when he is talking about his childhood. For example, he likes to tell a story about how his dad had bought a 45 of Frank Sinatra singing "My Blue Heaven" so during that scene I would play the melody underneath him telling the story (Moody 253). By having Bill tell his own story, viewers will get a first-person experience into his world, and having supplemental interviews will only help put into perspective how others viewed him. Also I will feature a tour that will be broken up all throughout the documentary to put Bill in his natural setting and to give viewers some insight into some items offered in the library and how some

items hold a special meaning to Bill. All of the interviews will be held within the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives, because that is where Bill's career took off and because it is named after him. By holding all the interviews within the library it makes it relatable to current students because they may watch it and it bring up their own memories about Bill, or if someone has never visited MLBSSA it might spark their interest by seeing all the different items that are featured within it. Along with that I will be doing up-tempo editing and have a very upbeat sound bed, because I want to give this documentary the feel as though they are inside Bill's head. Bill has been described as quirky and upbeat so I really want his personality to be shown through the editing and production choices made to bring this documentary together.

### **Project Stage**

Currently this project is in the preproduction stages with having only conducted some pre-interviews and having created a teaser trailer. The aim is to create this documentary by the end of next year. All of the interviews still need to be set up and specific questions need to be written for each interviewee in order to create a storyline from each interview.

### **Distribution**

The intended distribution of this documentary would be to WBGU and other student award film festivals. It will also be shown within the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives on their television screens and be made accessible to people via a YouTube link on the MLBSSA website.

### **Intended Audience**

My anticipated audience for this documentary are music and pop culture enthusiasts, especially ones who have graduated from Bowling Green State University. A documentary like this will also be reliable relevant to people who are interested in libraries and the uniqueness of

certain libraries. I plan on heavily marketing this documentary to popular culture and music students, because Bill has done so much for those programs and will be able to most relate to this documentary. I will be playing many of different genres of music and will be highlighting some big pop culture moments in the journey through Bill's life. As a community, Bowling Green is very supportive of the arts and by highlighting a person who has done so much in the community there will be many viewers wanting to tune in to learn more about Bill and his story.

### **Visual Sample**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upRxAEMwkc&index=9&list=UU8dWkP5iutKYGW1TjJuSXQ>

### **Current Sample**

This current teaser is a very general look into the different aspects of the library with Bill explaining how he wants his legacy to be that he contributed to the world of information. I will be featuring various pictures from the past and they will be used in a similar way as they are shown in the teaser, because I want them to be visually appealing and have the viewer want to read the titles of the articles or look at his pictures. What is missing from this is Bill actually narrating and a professionally shot interview set. I would also like to add parts of the supplemental interviews to show that people other than Bill will be a part of this documentary. The teaser will also evolve to be more specific once we start to roll on the official interviews because an overarching storyline will begin to be portrayed.

### **Crew**

All crew members on this project will be current BGSU students with emphasis in media production or film. This is to give students the opportunity to advance their skills and to help build their resume.

**Budget**

The budget is based off of renting equipment for one week of filming with crew working eight hour days and three days of post production for a half-hour long documentary.

**Camera:**

Canon Rebel T6i.....	\$49.00
Canon Rebel T6.....	\$42.00
Canon Prime 6-Lens Cine Bundle.....	\$488.00
MeFOTO GlobeTrotter Carbon Fiber Travel Tripod Kit (2) .....	\$91.00
DJI Ronin-M 3-Axis Handheld Gimbal Stabilizer.....	\$175.00

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Subtotal: \$845.00

**Audio Equipment:**

Sennheiser G3 Wireless Mic Kit –Freq A.....	\$52.50
Rode NTG-2 Shotgun.....	\$35.00

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Subtotal: \$87.50

**Lighting Equipment:**

Manfrotto CROMA2 Bi-Color On-Camera LED.....	\$42.00
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Subtotal: \$42.00

**Production Crew:**

Producer/Camera.....	\$1400.00
Camera/Lighting.....	\$1400.00
Assistant Camera/Audio.....	\$1400.00
Production Assistant.....	\$840.00

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Subtotal: \$5,040.00

**Per Diem:**

Meals and Incidental Expenses.....	\$400.00
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Subtotal: \$400.00

**Post Production:**

Adobe Premiere Pro with Dell Precision 3620.....	\$600.00
Editor.....	\$1200.00
Assistant Editor / Graphics .....	\$600.00

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Subtotal: \$2,400.00

Subtotal:	\$8814.50
+ 15% Overhead	\$1322.18

**Total Estimated Budget** **\$10,136.68**

Terms: 10% required before principle photography begins with balance due upon delivery.

### **Fundraising Strategy**

The fund raising strategy for this project will be funded through donations from a bake sale and fund raising websites such as a GoFundMe. Along with that we will be looking into grants that would be applicable to this project in order to cut down on the cost of all the production needs. How we will publicize that we are raising money is through a social media campaign that will include our mission statement with a teaser trailer to show people what our project is about and hope to spark some interest in it in order to raise money. Currently, we have not set out to raise money and are in just the beginning stages of looking into possible grants.

### **Media Audit**

In the 1990s, PBS did a special on Bill Schurk which had a similar premise to the documentary as this one. Along with that there has been many on camera interviews given by Bill to describe his life and his contributions to Bowling Green. There has yet to be many documentaries made about music scholars or pop culture scholars which will make this documentary unique.

### **Contact Information**

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