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Publishing My Life

When I think of Narrative, I think of my favorite source of entertainment media composed of actors, sets, soundtracks, and emotional story to tie it all together. Films formulize in my head when I look for peak storytelling, and as a kid half the fun of watching movies was relating to the characters; believing that one day that could be you. As I age, I hold onto that child-like spirit because what I do and how I do it is symbolized through the mantra: “I want to feel like a movie character”. I am a character with my own narrative, it is the narrative of my life and I tell it through the lens of social media.

Social media has the double edge ability that allows you to express how you see yourself but also have the world look upon you. For some, this melts into insecurity, personified through the worry you have over what others think of you and how they perceive you. I believe this is a justified fear to have about social media. When you express yourself, you leave yourself in a vulnerable position to be judged. But for me, social media isn't used to garner the attention of the public. Rather I use social media as a tool to visualize myself as the person that I want to be. It is a moment of empowerment as it helps me bring to life the image that I have of myself, one that is hard to see at first glance because we are all more than just the cover of our book. When I post, I make sure to put effort into the realization of me; it demands work and precision to have the vision executed correctly. I use social media through the software application known as “Instagram” to achieve my expression.

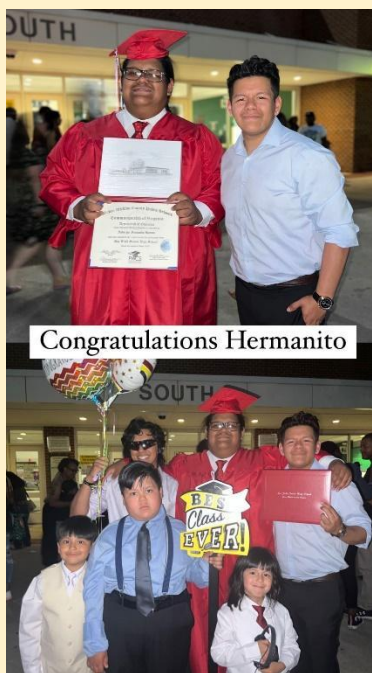
Instagram serves as my literacy tool for the narrative of my life. Through the camera feature on my phone, I can put my creativity to work with photography and filming. In this

aspect I feel akin to a director, trying different shots, angles, distance, and position to make my publication more enticing. Additionally, I like to be in the frame, so I have moments where I prop my phone up on miscellaneous objects just to get the shot. In this aspect, I feel myself living out my dreams of being on a big screen even if it is the small screen. The toolkit that Instagram provides like text, music, filters, gifs all serve as additives that bring the visual expression together.

Through Instagram, I can create two categories of ‘post’, feed post and story post which are perceived by the public. A feed post stays attached to your account, there is a sense of permanence attached as it is consistently visible to anyone, accessible at any point of the day on any day of any month. Therefore, my approach to feed’s post is to publish important moments that I want to stick with me. Sometimes, I use these moments as opportunities to write heartfelt messages to the world. I have a ‘*temporal*’ (seasonal) sentiment to these post, posting only when the emotional occasion calls for it; quarterly at a time which I feel adds an extra weight to the post.

The second category of post and the one I will display in this project are ‘Story Posts’. Story Post’s hold an instantaneous feeling to them as they only have a 24-hour life span. These are short moments that lack a permanence sentiment but still hold heavy emotional value. Some examples of story posts are birthday’s celebrations of friends and family, crazy spur of the moment adventures, quick moments of confidence to show off my proud appearance, and more. A common trend on my story post are the shoutouts for events happening on campus, posted by sharing the flyer, taking a picture/video at the event, and tagging the organization that held it. I value the ability to share and inform my fellow students about the incredible experiences happening nearby, it is an unexpected benefit of Instagram.

Story Post Collection: Familia



Showcasing the heartwarming moments with my Familia aid me in communicating my emotions to them. For all my life, I have felt an awkward relationship with showing warmth and affection. I understand the words and expressions of love, but I struggle to feel the weight of them. It is like throwing paint on a white canvas, and the colors just fail to stick. I always reciprocate with the same energy, but because I can't feel any of it, it internally feels shallow and forced and my biggest worry has been that it feels fake externally as well. But when I dedicate time and energy to create a story post, add a message that comes from within, I personify the emotions that I fail to express. It is a real expression for how I feel, and in the moments of publishing, I finally feel the weight of love.

Story Post Collection: Activism



My experience with activism and advocacy has the distinct characteristic of being singular. It isn't a job, a monthly exercise, or a year long commitment; it isn't a constant stable portion of my life, no matter how much I wish it was. Maybe one day I will be able to be a permanent public servant for the people. Nonetheless the singularity of it tells me that these expeditions demanded initiative on my part. An explosion of energy transformed from a genuine want to help the community. I am proud to use my voice to fight for the right cause, to use my privilege to advocate for those that can't, and to show that it is possible to get involved. It takes work to do the right thing, you must go out of your way. I am glad to say that I look forward to continuing taking the initiative and finding the time to highlight the good fight.

Story Post Collection: Community



It was on Virginia Tech's campus that I learned how to be a leader for my community. I never pictured myself being president of an organization, let alone for a community I have held dear to my heart. It is because of the Latinx community that I felt like I had the 'college experience', one that many Latinx students feel that they don't have. A community filled with inclusivity, understanding, laughter, and familial interactions; they are the reason I wanted to step up. I wanted to serve because I wanted to help the people I love. These experiences of leadership and camaraderie shaped me into who I am today. It instilled me with the power to believe in myself and to reach for the stars. With their friendship, I learned that anything is possible.

These three categories, while separate are all intertwined. Family, Activism, and Community culminate into one thing. That thing is my life, I love my life because of the people around me. It is a gift to share that with the world, and to preserve it for moments of reflection. They remind me that I have lived a good life, and I am thankful to have social media be my

literacy tool to create the narrative of Christian Ramos. I still have a lot left to go, so feel free to join the journey: IG Handle - @571.Christian