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## "Might for Right" A Christian Soldier Karae SE Film

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**“Might for Right”**  
**a Christian Soldier Karate SE film**

by

**Valaine Shelby Pfister**

An Honors Capstone

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Honors Diploma

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4-24-17

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This Capstone is dedicated to Cathy Ferry, who was the example that taught me to use my own Might for Right.

## Abstract

Valaine Shelby Pfister, a student of UAH and of Christian Soldiers Karate SE, used her training to create a short film as a promotion, featuring the karate school she is a part of. The completed project, a short film titled "Might for Right," was then delivered to the karate school for their use in promotion and teaching. This paper serves as an examination of her process and of the finished film.

Firstly, this paper will examine what Christian Soldiers Karate SE is and why they needed this film. Then the paper will examine each major stage of the movie making process before presenting the film itself. These stages include writing, production, editing, and collaborating. Pictures throughout will supplement the text, featuring images both from production, the school, and frames from the completed film.

# What is Christian Soldiers Karate SE?



Christian Soldier Karate South East (CSK SE) is a non-profit martial arts school located in Huntsville, Alabama. They operate under the certification of the World Martial Arts Ranking Association as a school of the J. Pat Burleson martial arts academy system. While there are hundreds of J. Pat Burleson schools, there are only seven non-profit CSK schools. Of those seven, five are located in Texas and one in Russia.

CSK SE is the only non-profit martial arts school in the southeastern United States that teaches a Tae-kwon-do based form of martial arts.



They teach American Karate, the form of its founder J. Pat Burleson (tenth degree black belt). Their stated purpose is to give students of all ages (4 years+) the opportunity to acquire spiritual, mental, and physical discipline through martial arts training without socio-economic factors as a limitation. To accomplish this, they charge only \$15 a month to cover the cost of equipment maintenance, with no additional fees for belt testings or in-school tournaments. There is even a fund where more financially capable students donate money to cover the cost of personal equipment (sparring, gear bag, uniforms) for those students who have financial need. All of this helps facilitate their goal of making martial arts training available to all who desire it.



# Summary of Need

As a non-profit, CSK SE depends heavily on other non-profit support systems for its needs.

They are located inside of Whitesburg Baptist Church (WBC) so that they do not have a rent bill. All instructors volunteer their time to the program and receive no financial compensation for teaching time or for their extra training.

Equipment is bought and maintained with their minimal tuition fees, and the student body takes extremely good care of the equipment because of this personal ownership.



All advertisement for the school takes place through the church that hosts them, as well as the social media of the students. The school exists as one of many programs hosted by the church, and thus space for information about the school is very limited.

Frequently, instructors hear questions about what the school is and what it does.

# Connection to the Project



Valaine Shelby Pfister has been a student in the school for nearly six years. She has completed the colored belt program, and continues in the school as a lead instructor and black belt student.

Her rank is second degree black belt, placing her as third lead instructor and frequently responsible for classes when Heath Ferry (fourth degree black belt, Lead Instructor) and Daniel Philips (second degree black belt, second lead instructor) are out of town. As a member of the program, Valaine has long perceived a need for a comprehensive way to showcase the school to those who are interested. Since she is pursuing a career in filmography, she chose this form to help develop the aforementioned showcase.





# The Project

## "Might for Right"

Valaine entered into this project to help fulfil the requirements of both her Communication Arts Capstone and her Honors Capstone. In Communication Arts, she chose the Small Group Service Project option alongside her friend and fellow film student Harrison Stone to co-Direct the resulting film. For the Honors requirement, Valaine took the lead on the project, fulfilling the roles of Writer and Producer in addition to co-direction.

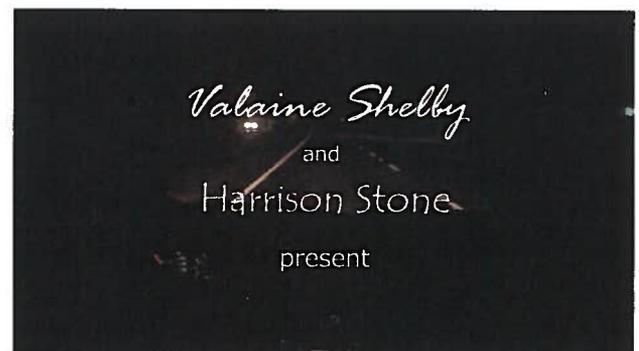


The first task of the project was to figure out the narrow purpose of the final product, which would then guide all work done. After much deliberation and consulting with members of the school, the purpose statement was settled as such:

To feature the learning available at the Christian Soldiers Karate SE school, including the discipline of mind, spirit, and body that is emphasized in their program.

This purpose would be achieved by the production of a short form (10-20 minute) narrative film that portrayed the growth a typical black-belt candidate experiences in the program. The contents of the fictional story would be very closely based off the individual experiences of actual students, including nearly exact recounting of school incidents. Narrative events would be grounded in the reality of the school by filming on location at the school and using actual class-time footage for the film. Additionally, any belt testings, technique, or other school-related features in the film would be derived solely from what could be learned and experienced within the curriculum of Christian Soldiers Karate SE.

## The Purpose

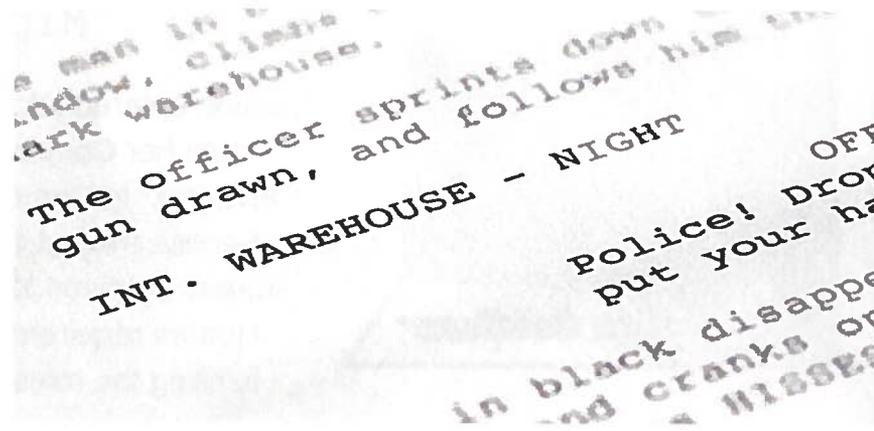


Special focus would be given to featuring the main discipline of the school, a character trait known as meekness. Meekness is defined in the context of the school and film as "power under control." This trait would serve as the primary thematic element of the film.

# The Process: Writing



The purpose and set of rules guided the rest of the film's development. Starting in November of 2016, Valaine started writing the script. It took several tries before she finally got a concept going that she could develop, but within two weeks she and Harrison had a working first draft to build on. Valaine wrote each draft, then had both Harrison and their project director Mr. Goodman review it and comment. Then she would write another draft. There were twelve drafts of the script before January began.



In congruence with the purpose and rules, Valaine derived the themes of the narrative from her own experience in the school. While dramatized onto fictional characters, the journey of the main character was designed as a representation of what she and her fellow black belts could testify to experiencing. Additionally, several stories about humorous events in the school are recounted by characters in the film (with names changed for the privacy of the students involved).

The script features three primary characters: Zach, the black belt candidate whose journey the film follows; Lizzie, his twin sister who took the journey ahead of him and guides him through it; and Brett, their best friend and fellow student. These characters were written to be portrayed in turn by Harrison, Valaine, and Ben Tapp, another student at the school and friend of Valaine. Each character had a distinct purpose. Zach is the example of the journey potential students can expect. Viewers can see what they will gain in discipline and training through his character. Lizzie serves multiple purposes. Firstly, she is the teacher and guide to display that no student goes through this journey alone. Secondly, she is the example of the teacher's journey, an aspect for the school that many students expressed curiosity about. What comes after black-belt is attained? Lizzie is the answer to that question. Finally, her portrayal by Valaine allows her character to perform the physical techniques taught in the school. A fight scene was written into the film, which Lizzie wins, to show how the martial arts training is practical to any potential student. The character of Brett also serves this function by demonstrating complex technique in the course of the film. Furthermore, he serves as the more light-hearted friend to the solemn main characters. The natural humor of the performer Ben allowed the fun of the school to be featured in the midst of a more thoughtful story.



# The Process: Scheduling

Before production even began, Valaine enlisted the help of UAH Videography Intern Leslie Crafton to serve as the film's Cinematographer. She recognized that they would not be able to act and operate the camera at the same time, and found someone who would be able to work on the project consistently over the course of the semester. She also contacted Marylynn Coffey, Kenny Paone, and Robert Butler as potential help in lighting and sound for the upcoming shoots.

Beginning in January, Valaine started producing the film. The first task was to cast the remaining four characters by finding actors willing to volunteer their time to the project. Valaine knew three actors who she was able to cast fairly quickly—John Coleman as Ash, Sampley Barinaga as Matt, and Ragan Holland as the clerk. Harrison also helped find Reggie Darby to play the part of Judson. These actors were cast both for their ability in the part and also for their availability for shooting dates.

Shooting dates were set around the schedules of Harrison, Valaine, Leslie Crafton and Ben Tapp. They identified a half dozen days in March and April on which they would be able to shoot. Valaine secured a reservation for the school's classroom at the church, and contacted a gas station and a convenience store as potential locations for the remaining scenes. Each location agreed and was secured, including follow-up requests to ensure keeping the production day available. The CSK classroom was also secured for repeated rehearsal and development meetings in order to properly choreograph fight and training scenes, and work out characters and production obstacles before shooting dates arrived.

Date	Item	Location
January 5	Script read-through	CSK SE classroom
January 9	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
January 13	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
January 16	Scene 2 choreograph	CSK SE classroom
January 20	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
January 23	Scene 2 rehearsal	CSK SE classroom
January 30	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
February 3	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
February 6	Scene 2 rehearsal, Scene 1 choreograph	CSK SE classroom
February 13	Scene 2 rehearsal	CSK SE classroom
February 17	Scene 2 rehearsal	CSK SE classroom
February 20	Scene 1 and 2 rehearsal	CSK SE classroom
February 24	Scene 1 previsualization	WBC parking lot
February 25	Film scene 3	Waters General Merchandise
March 2	Film scene 4	CSK SE classroom
March 3	Film scene 2	CSK SE classroom
March 6	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
March 20	Film scene 4 (additional)	CSK SE classroom
March 23-24 (overnight)	Film scene 1	Raceway on Bob Wade
March 28	Film scene 1 and scene 3 (additional)	Raceway on Bob Wade and Waters General Merchandise
March 31	Production Meeting with Harrison	CSK SE classroom
April 1	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 3	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 7	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 10	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 14	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 17	Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab
April 18	Final Edit with Harrison	UAH Animation Lab

Valaine coordinated for multiple crew for each shooting day to cover the tasks of sound recording, lighting, and marking each take.

Scene 1 also required a make-up artist and further support to make sure the cast and crew were safe a fed for the overnight shoot.

The following credits summarize the duties of all individuals involved:

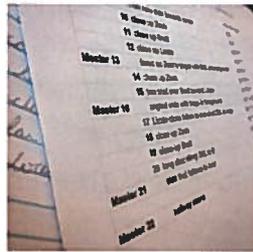
Leslie Crafton	Director of Photography
Marilynn Coffey	Sound Recordist Scenes 3,4
Robert Butler	Sound Recordist Scenes 1,2
Benjamin Tapp	Fight Choreography
Kenny Paone	Lighting
Designer	
Lori Sanders	Fight Makeup
Valarae Pfister	craft services
Moriah Pfister	production assistant
Michael Pfister	set security

# The Process: Pre-Visualization and Rehearsal

In preparation for each shoot day, Valaine and Harrison held multiple rehearsals with Ben and the rest of the cast. These rehearsals were designed to lock down the blocking and choreography ahead of time, so that filming hours could be focused on getting good performances.

Some of these rehearsals were attended by the Cinematographer, Leslie Crafton. She took pictures and collaborated with Valaine and Harrison in a process known as Pre-Visualization.

This process allows exact framing and design to be planned in advance of filming, adding to the efficient use of time on set with the entire cast and crew.





# The Process: Editing

As principle photography was coming to a close, Valaine and Harrison began editing the film. This took many hours of tedious work like syncing video and sound files, sorting footage, and compiling effects for each scene. Valaine possessed the technical computer skills to conduct this editing, so she and Harrison spent their meeting times on creative choices.

Several challenges arose while editing. The most notable issue was the discovery that all of the audio recorded on the overnight shoot of scene one was unusable from wind pollution. This resulted in the need to have Additive Dialogue Recording sessions with each actor to re-record their lines. Additionally, they had to record foley effects for every sound in the scene, including pavement scuffling, fight sounds, car doors, car alarms, shop doors, and background noise. They had to rebuild the entire soundscape for scene one from scratch, which took over two dozen hours of recording and editing alone.

Editing took three weeks to complete. In the process of editing, certain shots had to be redone and changed to make the film work in the final stages. Additionally, Valaine and Harrison graded the color of the footage, balanced audio, selected performances, and added music and titles to the film. Finally, the fifth version of a final cut was selected as the complete movie, and the film is ready for use by the karate school!

# The Process: Communication

The greatest challenge of the project was the collaboration of Valaine and Harrison as directors. While Valaine wrote and produced the film, they directed it equally, and sometimes the vision each of them had contradicted. One notable moment of this was on set trying to shoot the end of a scene. Valaine had a very clear vision of a side shot and fast cutting for the scene, while Harrison had a very clear vision of a wide shot. As they attempted to decide what to shoot, they were trying to explain these contradictory ideas to each other. They ended up shooting both, and eventually using a combination of both ideas in the final film. What seemed like a contradiction turned into a complementary collaboration, and it only worked because they persisted in communication until each understood what the other was envisioning.



# The Product

The plot of the story follows the main character Zach, as he learns to control his own power through martial arts discipline. This gain of self-discipline is demonstrated by comparing his control of temper before training and after training. The film contains an inciting incident where Zach is faced with a catalyst of anger which he succumbs to. He starts a fight which Lizzie then has to get him out of. Her physical skills as a martial artist are featured, but the thematic focus remains on the loss of control that began the crisis. Zach then pursues the suggested course of gaining self-discipline: studying martial arts in the CKS SE school. We see his journey culminated in a second confrontation with the catalyst of anger, which he does not succumb to on this second encounter. This contrast from first scene to last scene is emphasized by Heath Ferry's presence in the film, asking Zach the question he asks of every black belt candidate "Why do you deserve this belt?" This climaxes the featured theme of developing Meekness, or power under control, by showing Zach as more powerful than he was, but also under the self-discipline afforded by his training in the CKS SE school.

## Might for Right



**Christian Soldiers™**

# In Summary

The process of creating this film was lengthy and time consuming, but also extremely rewarding.

Valaine was able to put her training in communication into practice with her passion in writing and producing film. Working with Harrison as a co-director was the greatest challenge of the project, but also the most effective choice for the project. Their individual vision and training competed and collaborated to make a better film than either could have made alone.



The film produced is solid short film. It has a complete story that is understandable and appealed to the audiences that viewed it so far. It achieved the original goal of featuring all three aspect of training in the school: mental, physical, and spiritual.

One comment about possible improvements would be to develop the antagonist more, in order for him to be a hefty threat for Zach to respond to.

Additionally, Harrison and Valaine wish they could have spent more time developing the score of the film to better serve the story. However, they are very proud of being able to accomplish this complete and quality film.

Directed  
by  
*Valaine Shelby*  
and  
Harrison Stone

Might for Right