DRIFTERS

A feature length documentary proposal

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Introduction

Taking place across multiple U.S. cities and multiple peoples' ways of life, *Drifters* is a feature length documentary that aims to delve into the emergence and development of NASA's Deep-Space Exploration Program (DSEP) during the early 2070s. The film will follow the stories of three separate entities to gain a full breadth of knowledge regarding the DSEP as well as better understand those involved with the program. *Drifters* will combine explanations from professionals as to the technical aspects regarding the state of the art machinery being developed by NASA with the real stories of the "Drifters" being selected to take part in the program and scientific knowledge surrounding the Earth's environmental downturn in the latter half of the 21st Century.

Concept

Overview

Genre	Interview-Driven Documentary
Audience	General Audiences
Distribution	To be released on select streaming services and aired in select theaters.
Setting	Ames Research Center, EPA Headquarters, NHEERL, New York City, Kennedy Space Center
Budget	To be determined

Purpose

On October 10th, 2068, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the United States made the terrifying declaration that by the year 3050 it was probable that the Earth would succumb to the years of environmental abuse and become completely uninhabitable for mankind. The state of the world's environment is well known to everyone now across the globe, yet in the 10 years following the announcement, it has been left up to speculation as to what measures have been taken to try and save not only our planet, but also ourselves. The aim of *Drifters* above all else is to inform

audiences across the world as to what exactly is being done by NASA and the United States government to try and keep the world's population from coming to an end.

Audience

Drifters is being considered a public service announcement of sorts, attempting to relay information about a worldwide crisis to as many people as possible; because, while many people are aware of the future problems the Earth faces, many are still generally uneducated regarding the UN's attempts at finding a solution. Therefore, while the film will be produced and recorded using English as the main language, the film will be transcripted, translated, and subtitled into Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, German, French, Italian, Polish, Korean, and other widely used languages. This is being done to broaden the influence this film can have by expanding the potential audience beyond English speaking countries. The film will be made available on selected streaming services, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu; and will also be set to air in theaters across the globe.

Production Team

Our team consists of rookie director Brandon Martinus, a recent graduate from the American Film Institute who, in his undergraduate work, has worked on numerous award winning short films tackling social issues primarily involving the environment and subsequent issues. With him, as an Assistant Director, is Martinus' professor and professional mentor at the AFI, Buddy Shimon. Before taking his skill to the classroom, Shimon was considered a visionary in the world of documentary filmmaking, directing nine of the most influential documentary films of all time.

Professional Team and Cast

Joining our team we have a set of three individuals who are going to be guiding our journey through the research that led to the discovery of the world's imminent demise, the thus far secretive world of the DSEP, and a personal look into the life of one of the individuals chosen to man a Deep-Space Craft. These individuals will be further described in the Synopsis section of this proposal. Our team will also be working in conjunction with Wes Charley, the current Administrator of NASA, in order to give our team legal access to the classified research and development centers NASA has dedicated to the DSEP and also to fact-check any information we're going to be relaying to our audience. Furthermore, we'll also be working in conjunction with Dr. Annabel Su, the current Administrator of the EPA who will grant our team access to some of the EPA's research centers where our selected scientific subject had conducted much of the research that led to her world changing discovery.

Synopsis

Drifters as a whole is broken up into three separate arcs that each focus on a different aspect of the development of the NASA's Deep-Space Exploration Program. The first arc, also the shortest, follows the story of Dr. Laura Gilliam, a Senior Environmental Data Analyst working for the EPA. Through her continued research into global warming, she discovered certifiable evidence that as of 2068, the Earth was past the point of no return; the ice caps had been melting at a steady, exponentially increasing rate for years and now, there was no hope in remedying the situation. With more research into the the speed of the ice caps' melting in correlation to the steady rise of the sea level, Dr. Gilliam was able to determine that approximately by the year 3050, the world will be completely uninhabitable due to the continents being flooded by the oceans.

The second arc of *Drifters*, also the longest, picks up following the announcement of the world's environmental crisis. This arc follows the story of Dr. Lloyd Thurston, the head aerospace engineer behind the development of the space crafts to be used by NASA in the DSEP. Following the announcement, the United Nations contracted thousands of the world's brightest scientists to come together to try and solve the oncoming environmental collapse. Unfortunately, even after two years of rigorous research, the UN's scientists could find no effective solution to overcome the years of global warming's damaging effects. Soon after, the UN relocated its sights on locating a new place for us to live. For this purpose, Dr. Thurston was asked by the UN to spearhead a R&D team that would focus their efforts on developing machines that could travel deep into space in order to locate a potential planet for the Earth to relocate to.

The third and final arc of *Drifters* will take place in the present day, following the story of Kip Haywood, the first registered "Drifter" in the DSEP. While there are many trained astronauts working for NASA, each and every one unanimously decided that they were not willing to take part in the DSEP as a "Drifter" because the job essentially entailed drifting across space examining planets for the rest of their lives. This subsequently meant abandoning their families and loved ones, never to see them again. Even given the dire situation the Earth was in, it was something they weren't willing to give up. NASA then had to redirect their recruitment efforts towards finding individuals that had significantly less ties to their lives on Earth. They searched primarily for individuals who were unemployed, unmarried, and without any living relatives. Kip Haywood filled each of those requirements perfectly and was the first to accept the offer of joining the DSEP.

Production Schedule

Pre-Production

March 2078 - April 2078

- Meet with legal contacts, draft contracts for access to restricted areas
- Finalize production crew, hire any extra/necessary crew members
- Schedule interviews and reserve locations for shooting
- Reserve equipment for shooting and production
- Finalize shooting schedule
- Allocate funds for travel expenses and schedule flight times
- Finalize schedule, keeping in mind travel times
- Finalize budget and procure funding from sponsors and supporters
- Complete background research and finalize tentative script

Production

May 2078 - July 2078

- May: Arc 1
    - 1st-7th: Shoot at National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, North Carolina
        - Footage of Dr. Gilliam working on research
        - Interviews with Dr. Gilliam regarding her research
        - B-Roll of headquarters, research documents, nearby lake/woods
    - 8th-15th: Shoot at EPA Headquarters, Washington D.C.
        - Footage of Dr. Gilliam and Dr. Su working
        - Interviews with Dr. Gilliam, Dr. Su, EPA employees, regarding Dr. Gilliam’s findings
        - B-Roll of city, headquarters
- May/June: Arc 2
    - May 15th-31st: Shoot at UN Headquarters, New York City
        - Footage of UN in session
        - Interviews with various UN members regarding Dr. Gilliam’s findings
        - B-Roll of UN building
    - June 1st-5th: Shoot at NASA Headquarters, Washington D.C.
        - Footage of Dr. Thurston

        - Interviews with Dr. Thurston regarding the UN's proposal
        - B-Roll of headquarters
    - June 6th-31st: Shoot at Ames Research Center, California
        - Footage of Dr. Thurston and his team
        - Interviews with Dr. Thurston and his team regarding the project
        - B-Roll of the research center
- July: Arc 3
    - 1st-5th: Shoot in New York City
        - Footage of Kip at home
        - Interviews with Kip regarding his recruitment as a Drifter
        - B-Roll of city
    - 5th-25th: Shoot at Kennedy Space Center, Florida
        - Footage of Kip training
        - Interviews of Kip, trainers, regarding Kip's training
        - B-Roll of facility
    - 25th-31st: Shoot at Ames Research Center, California
        - Footage of Kip working with equipment
        - Interviews of Kip, Dr. Thurston, regarding the end of the project

Post Production

August 2078 - October 2078

- Compile all shot footage, make final changes to script
- Record any necessary voice over
- Work on necessary motion graphics
- Splice together used scenes and edit with audio
- Schedule re-shooting times (if necessary)
- Finalize soundtrack and legal issues
- Contact Netflix, Amazon, Hulu to discuss streaming
- Send finalized film for transcription, translation, and subtitling

Tentative Budget

Description	Estimated Cost
Project Development *Research Staff, Materials, and Production*	**$48,357.00**
Producing Staff *Directors, Producers, and Writers*	**$105,000.00**
Right, Music, & Talent *Story Rights, Archival Imagery and Footage, Musicians, and Composers*	**$31,350.00**
Crew & Personnel *Camera Operators, Assistants, Makeup, Financial Workers, and Editors*	**$210,923.00**
Production Expenses *Camera, Sound, Lighting, Wardrobe, and Film Equipment and Facilities*	**$30,586.00**
Travel *Airfare, Hotel, Transportation, Incidentals, and Baggage*	**$25,600.00**
Post-Production *Editorial Staff, Equipment, and Facilities*	**$74,445.00**
Insurance *Liability, Equipment, and Worker's Compensation*	**$15,300.00**
Office & Administration *Supplies, Postage, Meals, Legal Services, Accounting, Bookkeeping, and Copyright*	**$28,495.00**
Publicity, Promotion, Website *Photography, Design, Press Kits, Publicist, Website Design, Coding, and Hosting*	**$18,735.00**
Total	**$588,791.00**

Costs referenced from:

Bahar, Robert. "Don't Fudge on Your Budget: Toeing the Line Items." International Documentary Association, International Documentary Association, 22 Oct. 2008, www.documentary.org/magazine/dont-fudge-your-budget-toeing-line-items.

Treatment

Arc 1 - The Founder: The Story of Laura Gilliam

Following a time card mentioning that the sequence takes place in November 2068, a news report can be heard over panning shots of a lush forested area with the the video from the news clip coming into view after a brief period. The news clip will be from a reputable national news network discussing the announcement of Dr. Laura Gilliam's research findings. Once the news clip comes to an end, the screen fades to black and the title is displayed, followed by the arc title finally there is a time card informing the audience that the events take place three months prior. The scene cuts to a compilation of panning aerial shots of the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory in North Carolina. Following that, we see footage of a woman making her way from her vehicle in the parking lot to the entrance of the NHEERL building. Over this, we hear audio of an interview with Dr. Gilliam who introduces herself and describes her position in the Environmental Protection Agency. Move to B-Roll of the interior of the building, focusing on various people working throughout, laced throughout will be footage from the face-to-face interview with Dr. Gilliam. During this scene she is explaining a bit more of her and NHEERL's background. From here, we'll move into using footage of Dr. Gilliam working in various parts of the building, looking at documents, using her computer, etc. Here the audio will be her discussing the research that she had been partaking in over the past year. Once she starts getting into the more scientific and/or technical aspects of her research, animated infographics will be utilized to make the information being relayed easier to understand for the general audience; laced in once again will be footage from the face-to-face interview. After discussing her research, she'll begin to move into her what some of her early findings were. Using infographics once again, she'll explain to the audience what global warming is, and the current state of the environment given the effects of years of letting global warming go unchecked and how it has been exponentially increasing for years. Moving back to footage of Dr. Gilliam working, she transitions to discussing how she began looking for various correlations amongst the data, which is when she discovered the terrifying truth of what was to come.

The second sequence of this arc begins with another time card explaining that this sequence occurred in October 2068, succeeding this is footage following Dr. Gilliam as she boards a plane to make her way back to the EPA headquarters in Washington D.C. Over this, we'll have audio of Dr. Gilliam discussing how distressed she is about her research findings and how important it is that she meets with Dr. Annabel Su, the Administrator of the EPA, as soon as possible. Following this, there is some B-Roll of

the exterior of the building preceding footage of Dr. Gilliam entering the building, walking up to the information desk, and asking for Dr. Su. After this, B-Roll of Dr. Su working in her office will show as her introduction is played. As more B-Roll of Dr. Su and the EPA headquarters is shown, Dr. Su will discuss her opinions regarding the current state of the environment in regards to global warming. Finally, a reenactment will occur of Gr. Gilliam entering Dr. Su's office and mentioning that she has very important information to tell her; without relaying the information yet, the scene will cut to black.

Arc 2 - The Builder: The Story of Lloyd Thurston

Following the black screen, B-Roll of the exterior or the UN building with people moving in and around it will fade into view. Following the B-Roll, we'll move inside the UN building where there is session about to get begin to set the scene. After this, we'll show archival footage of the UN emergency session that was held in 2068 to announce Dr. Gilliam's findings to the rest of the UN. The footage features Dr. Gilliam's speech to the UN and the debate amongst the UN members as to who was the cause of this problem. These arguments eventually cease as the President of the United States takes the stand and quiets everyone down and proposes that a discussion should be held to figure out potential solutions to the problem they were just informed of; the scene fades to black here.

Section two of this arc starts with another timecard showing that this sequence takes place starting in December 2068 then fades in with a news clip from a reputable news source where the news anchor is explaining the development of a scientific team tasked with researching potential solutions to the environmental crisis; each team member is listed and their credentials mentioned. The clip includes video of a press conference with the POTUS expressing his optimism regarding this team, which then fades to black to be replaced by a timecard that informs the audience of a jump to June 2070. Still on a black screen, a news anchor from the same reputable source announces that there is a breaking news report on the progress being made by the research team and sends us off to a press conference being held by the leader of the research team, Dr. Usmaan Stephenson. He explains that over the course of the past year and a half, the team has made essentially no progress on developing a solution that will have any sort of effect. The scene then cuts to more archival footage of the UN session held following the team's announcement, where the members are frantically contemplating what to do about the problem. Dr. Gilliam takes the stand again and reiterates that she doesn't believe there is any chance to reverse the effects of global warming anymore and that they're going to have to think more outside the box if they want to solve this. With that, the screen fades to black, and moments later Dr. Lloyd Thurston can be heard giving his introduction. Partway through the introduction, the video will cut to footage

from the face-to-face interview with Dr. Thurston. Following the end of his introduction, we'll cut to B-Roll of NASA's headquarters in Washington D.C. and briefly overlay audio from the archival footage of the team working under Dr. Thurston meeting for the first time. The footage from the meeting shows Dr. Thurston and his team receiving their task from the UN for the first time from the POTUS himself. The remainder of the footage shows the team discussing what direction they want to go in for developing a solution. Eventually the audio from the meeting will fade out and an interview with Dr. Thurston will begin instead and soon the video will cut to the interview itself. In this interview, he explained how confused and nervous the team members were at this point in the project, but nonetheless they had a plan. As he explains the plans the team had made, he'll begin to discuss some of the initial prototypes the team had drafted for the project and the video will be replaced with animated prototypes to better illustrate what Dr. Thurston is explaining. Transitioning back to the face-to-face interview, he describes some of the roadblocks the team will inevitably face over the course of this project, but also their plan to carry on and persevere no matter what. Finally, we cut to archival footage of the press conference Dr. Thurston held once their solution had been formulated. In the footage we see him explain the goals and objectives of the project, and also express his excitement to be building such a life changing spacecraft. The scene fades to black.

A timecard fades in explaining that the story is progressing three years into the future. The timecard cuts into aerial B-Roll of the Ames Research Center in California, capturing the building and its surrounding area. This will then cut into a compilation of shots capturing various engineers working about the factory floor of Ames welding, working with equipment, viewing blueprints, amongst other things. Following the compilation, we'll see some brief B-Roll of Dr. Thurston on the factory floor overseeing the workers and the progress they're making. Over this scene will be audio from the interview with Dr. Thurston where he's discussing some of the intricacies in the design as well as discussing the current progress that has been made on the project. Immediately following this will audio from the interview of Thurston describing the big ticket problems the team had yet to solve in the current design of the craft; he'll also give a brief explanation as to the current state of space travel in 2073, and where they needed it to be for the project to be a success. The big ticket items he'll discuss are issues with propulsion and fuel usage, long-range connectivity and data transmission, food and water systems, and the ability for the craft to land and take-off multiple times. Each of these points made will be aided by an animated infographic. Following this, archival footage of the initial tour of the craft's initial model will be shown. In the tour, Dr. Thurston moves throughout the rough interior of the craft and discusses how the current focus of the team is to make sure the craft is livable and sustainable for years to come. He also goes into to detail regarding the different aspects currently developed

within the craft's design; specifically, the living quarters, communications area, food storage and production area, water storage tanks, and exercise areas within the interior. At the end of the tour a beaming Dr. Thurston expresses his pride in the team's progress and optimism for the future. This will then fade to black, where after a moment we'll hear the beginning of archival footage for an update meeting for the research team where multiple team members are explaining the areas that the team cannot seem to make any progress on, namely the issues of propulsion and fuel usage and long distance communications. It is explained that to get the propulsion to a level that need it to, it burns far too much fuel in the process, which will leave the craft stranded out in the depths of space with ne energy. In regards to the issue of communications, the team is merely struggling to expand the reach of the communications system beyond what it already is. These two points will be explained in more detail with the help of an interview from Dr. Thurston and animated infographics. Laced throughout the infographics will be archival footage of various tests that Dr. Thurston and his team performed to test possible solutions to these two issues to further illustrate the points. An face-to-face interview with Dr. Thurston is used at to end this sequence where he mentions for the first time his possible doubts in the success of the project. The screen fades to black.

A timecard informs the audience that yet another year to May 2074. The timecard fades into archival footage of Dr. Thurston holding another update meeting to discuss the news that a solution to the communications problem had been found, to which the team celebrated heavily. The audio fades out and transitions into an interview with Dr. Thurston who explains the found solution to the problem in more detail with the aid of animated infographics. The team found success in deploying a string of satellites that essentially formed a breadcrumb trail from the craft back to Earth that would begin being deployed starting from that year. After the previous scene fades, more archival footage is shown of a second tour of the craft. For this tour, Dr. Thurston focused more on the additions that have been made to the exterior of the craft. He goes into detail regarding the quality of the materials being used and how that is affecting the ability for the craft to withstand the harsh conditions of space including cold and potential damage from space debris and meteor showers. He then moves in to describe the equipment added to assist in landing on found planets and inevitably relaunching. They consist of large, retractable legs fitted with shock absorbers for landing and wheels for travel on planets' surfaces. From here he shows off the low-weight, reusable thrusters the team developed to allow the craft to deploy multiple times. Finally, he describes the equipment added to test the planet's surface to determine whether or not it's fit for human life; this includes probes and pincers meant to soil quality and composition and also test air quality and water content. The scene fades to black.

A timecard informs the audience that two more years have gone by and it is now 2076. A news clip from the same source is shown where the news anchor is relaying

information from the research team that there is seemingly no end in sight for the project, though no specifics are given. This fades into a face-to-face interview with Dr. Thurston who explains how downhearted the team was becoming around that point in time due to the lack of results they were getting from any of their testing. He questions whether or not it will be possible to do this, or if this entire project was an enormous waste of time. The scene fades to black.

A timecard informs the audience that another year has passed, it is now September 2077. The timecard cuts away and transitions into archival footage of a press conference being held on the steps of the NASA headquarters, Dr. Thurston takes the podium and announces that the propulsion problems have finally been solved. He explains that after another year of development, the team was finally able to build a new propulsion system that consumed far less fuel than any other system built before it. He then moves into the topic of replenishing fuel. Dr. Thurston excitedly describes the new system built that able to convert excess radiation from space into energy that can be used to power the craft and it's propulsion systems, as well as the state-of-the art back up generators set to power the craft for 6 months on limited power in the case of a fuel shortage. Following his speech, the crowd cheers and the scene fades to black.

A timecard informs the audience that 5 more months have passed, it is now March 2078. A final brief news clip from the same source is shown that features NASA's announcement that they are looking for individuals to take part in what they are referring to as the *Deep-Space Exploration Program*. The scene fades to black.

Arc 3 - The Drifter: The Story of Kip Haywood

The final arc opens with a compilation of B-Roll of different bustling sections of New York City. This soon transitions to B-Roll of inside and outside Kip Haywood's apartment complex, and later to B-Roll of Haywood himself. Once the B-Roll hits Haywood himself, audio of his personal introduction will begin to play. As he continues to discuss his background, the video will alternate back and forth between shots from the face-to-face interview with Haywood and more B-Roll of him going about his day. In his background he'll be sure to hit on his lack of employment, the loss of his parents, and his current situation living simply off of the inheritance his parents left him after their passing. Once his background is complete, the video will transition into being just shots from the face-to-face interview with Haywood where he'll give some exposition into his receiving of the recruitment letter from NASA and his confusion as to why. The scene fades to black for a period, before opening up on a face-to-face interview with Dr. Su who'll explain how none of the astronauts employed by NASA at the time were willing to go through with the project due to having to leave their families. She'll then transition into discussing how NASA had to switch to attempting to recruit those simply interested in space travel, but still no one seemed willing to leave. Finally, they switched their

efforts once more into recruiting those with little to no ties to their Earthly lives, which is why Kip Haywood was recruited and the first to respond with any interest. The video transitions once again to a face-to-face with Haywood who is questioned about his general reactions to his recruitment and his reasoning as to why he accepted. The scene fades to black.

When the scene fades back in, we're following Haywood silently as he's making his way to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Laced in will be B-Roll of the space center and the surrounding area. Following this is footage of Haywood finally arriving at the space center and being warmly welcomed by Dr. Su and her associates. We then follow him into one of the conference rooms where he's given a detailed synopsis of the training regiment he'll be going through while staying at the space center by Dr. Su and other veteran astronauts. Following the run down we're given an in-depth look into each of the different areas of Haywood's training. For each a brief montage will play as the description is given by Dr. Su. Some of the areas in which Haywood will be training is Zero-Gravity environments, Buoyancy, maneuvering in a space suit, and craft maintenance both in and out of buoyant situations. After the montages are complete, another face-to-face will be shown with Haywood where he'll be asked to describe the difficulty of the training, and question why, given the difficulty, he persisted and made it through. The scene fades to black.

For the final section, we begin seeing Haywood making his way, by plane, to California. While B-Roll of his travels are shown, audio from an interview with him is played where he discusses his combination of being nervous and excited at the same time. Following this, a brief section of B-Roll is shown once again of the Ames Research Center. Immediately following this is footage of Haywood and Dr. Su making their way from a taxi to the entrance of the research center where Haywood is once again warmly greeted by Dr. Thurston and Wes Charley, the Administrator of the the EPA, who both express their gratitude to him for taking part in this extremely important project. Soft inspirational music begins to play as footage of Haywood interacting with the equipment and the craft for the first time is played. The music dims so we can hear a final interview with Dr. Thurston who states that Haywood is truly a hero. The film ends with a shot of Haywood smiling brightly as he interacts with the spacecraft followed by an ending slide thanking Haywood and any future Drifters for their service to mankind, and a mention of the date and time that Haywood's craft was finally planned to launch in mid 2079. For a final time, the film fades to black.