

# Introduction

# Senior Project Case Study

{A Review Of My Comm 465 Project And Contribution}

By: Robert Harris

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This case study will be an in-depth analysis of my team's COMM 465 Projects and my contributions to these projects. My main job throughout COMM 465 was the lead editor of the Fictional Film "Gamble." For the Factual Film, "Thin Blue Divide," I was assigned the role of sound recordist/editor. I chose these roles because I believed these to be my biggest strengths out of all the roles we had for the creation of our films. I was confident in my abilities to contribute effectively to our films. Before joining the communication program here at BYU-Idaho, I already had a deep love for video production, specifically the editing aspects of creating.

# Rationale and Process

## Why

We created *Gamble* and *Thin Blue Divide* because we wanted to shed light on the truth and create an exciting world filled with suspense and drama. *Gamble* was created to test our ability to build tension and have a story filled with high-stakes drama. *Thin Blue Divide*, on the other hand, was made to open a conversation. We wanted to give space to different perspectives on law enforcement and help people understand one another better through real community stories. Both films were driven by the idea of connection, either through emotion or through shared experience.

## What

Both films were short-form projects with a 6–8 minute runtime, but their purposes and audiences were completely different. *Gamble* is a fictional thriller targeted toward more mature viewers and follows a man who has to play a poker hand for his life. *Thin Blue Divide* is a documentary built around interviews and real experiences from people in Rexburg and local law enforcement, aimed at adults ages 25–54 who value honesty and different perspectives. Each brief laid out expectations for style, structure, tone, and technical direction, which helped guide the way we approached the storytelling.

## How

The creative process looked completely different on each project. For *Gamble*, we leaned into a slow, tense style with careful lighting and sound design instead of music, using silence and background ambience to build pressure. *Gamble* took inspiration from some scenes from *No Country for Old Men* and *Inglorious Bastards*. For *Thin Blue Divide*, we used documentary techniques like talking-head interviews, poetic B-roll, soft lighting, and a more inspirational tone to let the real stories of real people shine. We took a lot of inspiration from A&E's *Live PD* when it came to most of the B-roll.

Both creative briefs spelled out roles and responsibilities so each team member knew what they were accountable for and how to support the director's vision. That structure was essential to keeping the projects moving.

## When

Our created schedule was set up to give us as much time as we needed for post production. As much as we wanted to follow the schedule, things fell through, and we ended up going off schedule, which ended up making post-production a lot shorter than we had hoped.

- *Gamble* progressed from pre-production beginning April 25 to May 30, into filming from May 31 to June 13, and post-production from June 14 to July 19
- *Thin Blue Divide* followed a pre-production schedule beginning May 6, filming from May 27 to June 15, and final delivery by July 21

# Swot Analysis

# Swot Analysis

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	<p>“Gamble” - Fictional Film  <a href="#">Full Creative Brief</a></p>	<p>“Thin Blue Divide” - Factual Film  <a href="#">Full Creative Brief</a></p>
Strengths	<p>Collaborated closely with our director, Chance Herman, during post-production to coordinate editing tasks and ensure consistency across the project.</p> <p>Organized project files efficiently by maintaining structured Google Drives and personal hard drives for each production phase, ensuring quick access to footage and project materials. Managed media transfers by securely delivering all necessary footage — and additional material — to our sound editor, Nick, which streamlined his workflow.</p> <p>Took initiative during on-set downtime by capturing and managing behind-the-scenes footage for our social media page, helping promote the project and keep our audience engaged.</p>	<p>On A Thin Blue Divide, I had the opportunity to work with a well-prepared and passionate team. I want to acknowledge Producer Travis Roberts and Director Logan Cordray for their dedication to this project — their enthusiasm and organization helped the entire crew stay focused and motivated.</p> <p>Although my role on this film was smaller, I worked to the best of my abilities and approached my responsibilities in a timely and professional manner. I handled post-production audio editing for the project, adding sound effects and music to match the tone and emotion of the film. Even though I wasn’t part of the on-site recording team, I took pride in refining the soundscape to elevate the final product and support the director’s vision.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>One challenge I faced was working with our director, Chance Herman, who had a very specific vision for the film and paid close attention to small details. While it could be difficult to meet his exact expectations, I respected his role and adapted my work accordingly. I still made sure to share creative input when appropriate, even if it wasn’t always implemented.</p>	<p>One of the main challenges I faced on this project involved creative disagreements with Nick, our video editor. At times, he expressed that he could handle the audio editing himself, even though that was my assigned responsibility. This caused some tension and confusion about roles within the team. Although it was frustrating, I remained professional and focused on completing my work to the best of my</p>

	<p>I also experienced difficulties managing the lighting for the project. As the assigned gaffer, I sometimes struggled to interpret exactly what the director and cinematographer envisioned. This led to some inconsistencies between shots. Although I wasn't always included in lighting decisions, I take responsibility for communicating more clearly and seeking clarification earlier in the process.</p> <p>Communication during filming days was another area for improvement. Our shoots often ran late due to the director's perfectionism and extended takes, which affected morale and efficiency. Looking back, I could have contributed more by helping to mediate communication and suggesting better planning to keep production on schedule.</p>	<p>ability. The experience taught me the importance of clarifying responsibilities early on and maintaining open, respectful communication during post-production.</p> <p>Another difficulty was communication during the filming process. I wasn't informed about the shoot schedule, which meant I couldn't be present to record audio on set. Because of that, I had to rely on others to capture clean sound and deliver it for me to edit later. This situation helped me recognize how vital it is to stay in the communication loop throughout all stages of production.</p> <p>Lastly, the project timeline created additional challenges. I didn't receive materials to work on until about a week before the deadline due to delays in editing and coordination. When the post-production process fell behind, the director ultimately took over editing to finish the film. While it worked out in the end, this experience reinforced the need for consistent scheduling, accountability, and early collaboration to keep future projects on track.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Working with a director who was highly detail-oriented and committed to his vision gave me valuable experience adapting to creative direction. In the film industry, editors often need to balance their own ideas with a director's specific expectations, and this project helped me develop the communication and flexibility to do that effectively. Learning to navigate differing opinions while maintaining professionalism has strengthened my ability to work in collaborative, high-stakes environments — an essential skill for future production roles.</p>	<p>This project gave me valuable experience working under a tight deadline. Because of communication issues and production delays, I had significantly less time to complete my sound editing than expected. While it was stressful, it allowed me to experience the kind of pressure common in the film and media industry. Learning to stay calm, prioritize tasks, and deliver quality work despite time constraints helped me build stronger time management and problem-solving skills. These experiences will prepare me to handle similar high-pressure situations in future professional environments.</p>

<p>Threats</p>	<p>Scheduling was one of the biggest challenges our team faced — and it’s something that will always be difficult when working with student actors and crew members. Everyone had their own responsibilities and couldn’t always prioritize the project. We tried to meet at least once a week, but these meetings often took place after class, and some team members had to leave early for devotional, which meant we rarely had the full crew present for important discussions.</p> <p>Location was a major challenge for our team and ultimately forced us to rely on a backup plan — filming at one of our team member’s apartments. While it wasn’t ideal, it worked for what was needed at the time. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to secure a location until very late in the process, which cut into our filming schedule and preparation time. The apartment itself also posed difficulties, as it had no air conditioning. With the entire crew and cast working in a confined space, the temperature often became uncomfortably high, raising concerns about dehydration and overall health. Despite these obstacles, we adapted and managed to complete our scenes effectively.</p> <p>We also dealt with sickness during production. One crew member, who was also the homeowner where we filmed, became ill midway through filming. This created a health concern for the cast and crew, but we carefully managed the situation to stay on schedule. These experiences taught me the importance of flexibility, communication, and proactive planning — skills that will be crucial in future professional projects.</p>	<p>Scheduling was once again one of our biggest challenges, especially since this project required coordinating with law enforcement professionals. Working with people who have demanding and unpredictable schedules meant we had to plan far in advance and remain flexible when unexpected conflicts arose.</p> <p>Collaborating with the police also introduced additional logistical threats. A sudden change in their availability or departmental priorities could have disrupted filming entirely. These factors reminded me of the importance of proactive communication, detailed scheduling, and building strong professional relationships to minimize risks during production.</p>
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# Takeaways



# My 8 Takeaways For New Filmmakers

By: Robert Harris

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## Communication Is Everything

Strong communication prevents confusion, delays, and conflict. Whether you're the editor, gaffer, or sound designer, staying in the loop ensures smoother collaboration and fewer last-minute surprises.

## Respect But Trust Yourself

Balancing creative ideas with a director's detailed vision is part of the job. Learn when to compromise and when to offer your perspective. This builds trust and improves teamwork on any production.



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## Stay Organized from Day One

Efficient file management—like keeping structured Google Drives and backups—saves enormous time during post-production. Good organization isn't glamorous, but it's the backbone of a professional workflow.

## Deadlines Teach Discipline

Working under pressure can be stressful, but it builds your ability to prioritize and deliver quality results on time. The film industry thrives on deadlines, so treat every crunch period as training for the real world.



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## Clarity of Roles

Misunderstandings about responsibilities can create tension on set or in post. Make sure everyone's duties are clearly defined early on to maintain a respectful and productive team environment.

## Flexibility

Schedules will change. Locations will fall through. People will get sick. Adaptability and a calm attitude are what separate dependable filmmakers from the rest.



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## Collaborate Across Disciplines

Film is a team sport. Understanding how your work (lighting, editing, sound, etc.) fits into the bigger picture helps you communicate effectively and make the entire project stronger.

## Every Challenge Builds Experience

Each obstacle, whether it's creative disagreements, technical setbacks, or scheduling chaos, teaches resilience and problem-solving. These lessons prepare you for the realities of professional filmmaking.



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# Reflection

Looking back on both projects, a lot of my biggest learning moments came from the challenges I wrote about in the SWOT analysis. Working with Chance on *Gamble* taught me how important it is to communicate clearly and consistently, especially when a director has a very specific vision. There were times when we struggled to get on the same page because expectations weren't always communicated up front, and that made editing more difficult than it needed to be. I learned that waiting for direction instead of asking questions early on can slow everything down. If I could redo that part of the process, I would schedule regular check-ins so we stayed aligned instead of trying to interpret details after major edits were already finished.

The confusion around roles was another major takeaway for me. When Nick mentioned that he could handle the audio editing himself, even though that was my responsibility, it created tension and hostility about whose job was whose. I stayed professional and finished the work, but it taught me how important it is to clarify responsibilities at the beginning of a project instead of assuming everyone is on the same page. It's a lot easier to solve those issues early than in the middle of post-production when time is limited.

Timing and scheduling were also big challenges. For both films, we fell behind and ended up squeezing most of post-production into a much shorter period than planned. I didn't receive materials to work on until about a week before our deadline. In terms of *Thin Blue Divide*, which I wasn't the editor for, the director eventually took over editing to finish the film. That was frustrating, but it showed me how crucial accountability and communication are in group projects. Good planning only matters if everyone sticks to it.

One of the hardest parts about filming *Gamble* was getting used to Chance's style of directing. He insisted on filming everything in Chronological order, not by shot type or location. Because of that, our shooting days were far less productive and took much longer than we had planned. I wish us as a team had voiced out concerns earlier in the filming process to avoid the problem, Instead we all quietly kept going along with it which caused a lot of silent frustration.

Working on *Thin Blue Divide* reinforced those lessons. Because I wasn't included in the shooting schedule communication, I wasn't able to be on set for audio recording, which meant I had to work with audio captured by others. I can't blame that on my team because a lot of the film was closely monitored by the police; we had to adapt to their schedule, which meant not everyone was allowed to go. That forced me to problem-solve and adapt quickly in post, but it also helped me understand the importance of staying actively involved throughout every phase of production instead of waiting to be told what to do. Staying in the loop isn't just helpful, it's essential.

Overall, these projects pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me grow in areas I didn't expect. I walked away with stronger skills in communication, flexibility, time management, and teamwork. I also learned that building a healthy workflow between editor and director is really the heart of a successful film. When that relationship works well, creativity feels exciting. When it doesn't, everything becomes harder. These lessons will absolutely shape the way I approach future productions, and I'm grateful I learned them now rather than later in a professional environment.

# Insights To Share

Throughout this project, I learned that filmmaking is less about having perfect equipment or perfect plans and more about communication, collaboration, and adaptability. One of the biggest insights I gained was how essential clear communication is. When everyone understands expectations and stays in the loop, the process becomes smoother and more enjoyable. When communication breaks down, even small problems grow into major delays.

I also learned the value of trusting myself creatively while still respecting the director's vision. Finding the balance between offering ideas and knowing when to step back is something I'm still improving, but this project taught me that honest discussion builds stronger teamwork than staying silent and hoping things work out.

Another key insight was how much organization matters. Having well-structured storage, consistent file labeling, and backups may not feel "creative," but it's the foundation that holds everything else together. The time spent organizing on day one saves hours of stress later.

Deadlines were another major teacher for me. Working under pressure forced me to problem-solve faster and stay focused. Even though the tight turnaround was frustrating at times, I can already see how those experiences will help me in real professional environments.

I also saw firsthand how important clarity of roles is. Confusion about responsibility can lead to tension and missed opportunities, and the best way to avoid that is by defining duties early. When everyone knows what they're accountable for, the crew functions better and respect grows naturally.

Above all, I learned that flexibility isn't optional in filmmaking; it's essential. Schedules changed, plans fell through, and things went wrong, but learning to stay calm and adapt made all the difference. Every challenge, whether technical or personal, became a lesson in resilience and patience.

The biggest insight I'm taking away is that film is a team sport. Understanding how different departments rely on each other helped me appreciate the workflow beyond my own role. When editors, directors, gaffers, designers, and audio engineers work together instead of separately, the final product becomes something stronger than any individual could create alone. Every moment of stress ultimately helped me grow and was incredibly rewarding.

# Schedule Breakdown

# Schedule Breakdown

Advanced Moving Image 2: Project Planning Sheet - Semester: Spring 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Turn in Project Planning Sheet	7 Creative Briefs	8 Visual Design Packages	9	10 Script Final Draft
11	12 Start Auditions	13 Meet with Talent	14	15	16	17 Shotlist and Storyboard
18	19 Table Read	20 Interview Tech Rehearsal	21	22 Permissions/ Project Security Plan	23 Shotlist and Story Board	24 Tech Rehearsal, Props/Costume
25	26 Start Filming	27 Start Filming	28	29	30	31
MAY						

Key:

Factual	
Fictional	
Both	

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Wrap Filming
15 Wrap Filming	16	17	18	19	20	21 Hard Wrap on Filming
22	23 Assembly Cut	24	25	26 Meet with Brother Mawlam	27	28
29	30 Rough Cut 1					
JUNE						

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Meet with Brother Mawlam	4	5
6	7 Rough Cut 2	8 Finish Social Media Packages	9 Picture Lock	10 Meet with Brother Mawlam	11	12
13	14 Finish Final Cuts	15 Social Media/ Documentation Deadline	16	17 Meet with Brother Mawlam	18	19
20	21 Final Cut Deadline	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
JULY						

# Factual Creative Brief

## COMM465 Factual Narrative Film - Creative Brief

COMMISSIONER	Christian Mawlam
TITLE (working)	Thin Blue Divide
DURATION	The documentary will be 6 to 8 minutes long.
AUDIENCE	<p>The primary audience for this film is males, aged 25 to 54 who live in suburban and rural areas of the United States, particularly in the Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana region. They value perspectives that humanize law enforcement and have a pro-police leaning. They are doubtful and dismissive of anti-police views, but are open enough to hear convincing counterarguments.</p> <p>The secondary audience for this film are males and females, aged 25 to 54, who live in suburban and rural areas of the United States. They have more neutral/negative views of law enforcement but are also open to hearing new perspectives. They value honesty and transparency.</p>
OBJECTIVES	After watching this film, the audience will have received a new perspective and understanding regarding the dynamic between the community and the police. Those that lean to one side will be able to empathize with the other. The audience will have a better informed and more level-headed opinion about the topic and will be more open to hearing other perspectives in the future. The divide between police and the public will shrink among those who watch the film, and the audience will be more willing to have open discussions regardless of what side they're on.
SYNOPSIS	National public support for law enforcement has hovered around 50% since 2020. In Rexburg, that number is likely higher, however, there are still voices that have had negative experiences with law enforcement. This film explores both sides of the divide between the community and law enforcement, presenting first hand experiences that have shaped interviewees opinions, and what they believe needs to happen in the future for the divide to heal.
STYLE	<p>This film will be shot in an observational and participatory documentary style, consisting of talking head interviews intercut with B-roll and moments of actuality.</p> <p>The tone will lean towards the dramatically inspirational, which will be reflected in the lighting, lensing, and color grading as well as the editing and music. The images will be soft, achieved through the use of mist filters. The lighting ratio will sit around 4:1.</p> <p>The talking head interviews in particular will be shot with emphasis on seeing the subject immersed in their environment (<a href="#">example</a>), meaning their</p>

	<p>environment will not just act as the backdrop for the interview but as an important narrative component.</p> <p>Most of the B-roll will be captured in an actuality, “fly on the wall” style, with the camera observing the deputies in their workspaces (<a href="#">example</a>). B-roll elements of the title sequence will be captured in a poetic style to create an engaging and visually interesting intro (example).</p>
STRUCTURE & TIMINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0:00-0:30 - Poetic title/credit sequences with law enforcement and community iconography</li> <li>- 0:30-2:00 - Short on the street interviews to introduce topic, introduce interviewees and their backgrounds</li> <li>- 2:00-5:00 - Introduce conflict: individual stories exploring the dynamic of policing in a small community, positive and negative experiences</li> <li>- 5:00-6:00 - Find common ground and explain how the conflict is overcome, how they look towards the future</li> </ul>
CONTRIBUTORS & ELEMENTS	<p>Crew:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Producer: Travis Roberts</li> <li>- Director: Logan Cordray</li> <li>- Cinematographer: Regan Dabell</li> <li>- Editor: Nick Anderson</li> <li>- Sound Recordist/ Designer: Robert Harris</li> <li>- Assistant Director: Ethan Julander</li> <li>- Assistant Editor: Chance Herman</li> <li>- Colorist: Kasey Price</li> </ul> <p>Talent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 retired law enforcement officer</li> <li>- 1 active law enforcement officer</li> <li>- 1 member of the community who has had negative experiences</li> <li>- 5-10 members of the community for short, 30 second interviews</li> </ul> <p>Equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sony FX9</li> <li>- Sony FX6</li> <li>- Sony FX3</li> <li>- Sony G-Master Prime Lens Kit</li> <li>- Mist Filters</li> <li>- Shotgun Boom Mic Kit</li> <li>- Wireless Audio Kit</li> <li>- Lighting Kits</li> </ul>
TIMESCALE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-Production (Planning, Organising &amp; Logistics): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Planning Sheet: May 6</li> <li>- Creative Brief/ Visual Design Package: May 7</li> <li>- Meeting w/ Contributors: May 13</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shot list/ Storyboard: May 17</li> <li>- Permissions/ Project Security Plan: May 22</li> <li>- Production (Shooting &amp; Recording Video &amp; Audio Elements): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tech Rehearsal: May 20</li> <li>- Shooting: May 27 - June 15</li> <li>- Shooting Hard Wrap: June 21</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Post Production (Editing, Titling/Graphics &amp; Final Output): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assembly Cut: June 23</li> <li>- Rough Cut 1: June 30</li> <li>- Rough Cut 2: July 7</li> <li>- Picture Lock: July 9</li> <li>- Final Cut Completed: July 14</li> <li>- Final Cut Deadline: July 21</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Delivery and Distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Media Package Completed: July 8</li> <li>- Social Media Package/ Documentation Deadline: July 15</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
NOTES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Certain information and faces we record may need to be censored</li> </ul>

# Fictional Creative Brief

## “Gamble”/”The Hand of a Lifetime”

COMMISSIONER	Brother Christian Mawlam
TITLE	Gamble/The Hand of a Lifetime
DURATION	6-8 minutes
AUDIENCE	This is a very tense short film, so we are looking for ages 18-30. It is intended more for most likely a male audience, but should be made to be enjoyed by a female audience as well.
OBJECTIVES	We hope that our target audience will think about the themes of luck, chance, gambling, and risk. We also hope that the audience will be entertained, on the edge of seat, and/or feeling uneasy throughout the whole film’s runtime at least.
SYNOPSIS	A man gambles for his life against a man sent to kill him in a hand of poker.
STYLE	<p>There is an intense and sickening tone to everything. It is very slow in order to immerse the audience in the tense and nerve-racking nature of the story. But there’s still humor, albeit some sick humor, from Jameson as he plays with basically his prey or target.</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-iQldPiH64">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-iQldPiH64</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPoCFAP6RuM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPoCFAP6RuM</a></p>
STRUCTURE & TIMINGS	<p><b>Beginning</b> - The two characters get introduced and the poker game begins (2 minutes)</p> <p><b>Middle</b> - Discussion over their actions and consequences happens while the cards are being dealt out (3 minutes)</p> <p><b>End</b> - The final hands are revealed and Jameson leaves (2 minutes)</p>
CONTRIBUTORS & ELEMENTS	<u>CREW</u>

	<p> <u>Producer (project manager) Kasey</u>  <u>Director Chance</u>  <u>Cinematographer /DIT Ethan</u>  <u>Editor Robert</u>  Sound Recordist Nick  Production Designer Logan  Sound Designer Nick  Camera Assistant Regan  Colorist Ethan    Gaffer Robert    <u>ACTORS</u>    Jimmy - male, in his 20s (pudgy, shorter, glasses)    Jameson if male, Jamie if female - male or female, in his late 20s, early 30s (Slim, hard eyes) </p>
TIMESCALE	<p> Pre-Production (Planning, Organising &amp; Logistics):    April 25th - May 30th    Production (Shooting &amp; Recording Video &amp; Audio Elements):    May 31st-June 13th    Post Production (Editing, Titling/Graphics &amp; Final Output):    June 14th - July 19th </p>
EQUIPMENT	<p> Sony FX9    New Pavo Anamorphics    Rhino Slider    600D   300X   Godox Light Wands   C-Stands   Bounce Cards   Flags    Shotgun boom mics Kit    Stinger Bag   Grip Bag    DaVinci Resolve </p>

LOCATION	We need a house that we can clutter up. The main character Jimmy has not cleaned up his house as he has other things to worry about.
NOTES:	2.39:1 aspect ratio 2K 24 FPS Deliverable.  Props - money bag/duffel bag  No music whatsoever (crickets and a clock will be background audio to add to the tone)

# Social Media Breakdown



**8takeslater** ...

8takesLater

6 posts 20 followers 41 following

Studen Film Team At BYU-Idaho

2 Upcoming Projects



Followed by leassykrout7, maddiejones23 + 4 more

Following ▾

Message



Adam Whittaker

Joe Raymond

G  
A  
M  
B  
L  
E

A

A CHANCE HERMAN film  
ADAM WHITTAKER - JOE RAYMONT  
Produced by KASEY PRICE  
Edited by ROBERT HARRIS  
Production Design by REGAN DABELL  
Director of Photography by ETHAN JULANDER  
Sound by NICK ANDERSON  
Written and Directed by CHANCE HERMAN

JULY 17th

Created by: Chance



Created By: Robert Harris

A short teaser video of the two main characters in "Gamble." I chose to create this because I was learning that editing technique in class and decided I could make something fun using it.