



How a UCSC film student helped Michael Moore make film history

EVERY WEEKDAY MORNING during the winter of 2004, Dan Hancox took the subway from an apartment in Brooklyn, past the Statue of Liberty, to a small office in the heart of Manhattan. A 21-year-old film student at UC Santa Cruz, Hancox was commuting to his temporary job as an intern for Michael Moore's latest film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

One of only five interns in Moore's New York production office, Hancox spent his time conducting research for the film, an unprecedented documentary of post-9/11 America and the Bush administration that broke box office records when it opened nationwide in June. The film had previously

won the top honor at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival for Moore, who received the 2002 Academy Award for best documentary with *Bowling for Columbine*.

Housed in close quarters with the film's editors, Hancox had a front-row seat to the making of the first blockbuster election-year documentary in the 90-year history of the American feature film. Surrounded by storyboards of the entire film, he verified background information, assisted editors with various technical projects, was privy to stunning, previously unseen footage from Afghanistan and Iraq, and generally soaked up the mechanics

of putting the film together.

One of Hancox's responsibilities was to screen tapes of Fox, CNN, and other major TV networks, searching for news footage that Moore could use in the film.

"I looked at quite a bit of tape," Hancox recalls. "They would have different assignments for me each day. One morning they would say: 'we're



Fahrenheit 9/11 intern Dan Hancox

looking for clips about U.S. troops in Iraq not getting enough funds to supply everyone with Kevlar flak jackets.' The next morning they would ask me to look for a specific story about a government warning to watch out for model airplanes because they could be used in terrorist attacks."

Hancox was pleased to see that some of the clips he had personally tracked down were woven into Moore's final footage. He also had the opportunity to meet and talk with the director himself during his first week on the job. "I had this image of Michael Moore before I got there—that he would be super-slick and running more of a Hollywood-type production. But instead, I found him to be very nice, relaxed, and down-to-earth."

Hancox's internship was arranged by community studies professor Paul Ortiz, who

had recently met one of the producers of Moore's *Bowling for Columbine*. Ortiz advises Hancox in the Page and Eloise Smith Scholastic Society, a campus organization created to provide financial and mentoring support for UCSC students who are orphans, foster youths, or wards of the court. Hancox was born in Korea and adopted by a family in

Michigan, before moving to Santa Cruz to attend UCSC.

An aspiring filmmaker now in his senior year at UCSC, Hancox says that the internship has opened his eyes to the documentary art form—a facet of filmmaking that he had received little exposure to in the past.

"The main reason I took this internship was that I had no work experience with documentary or independent films," says Hancox. "I was under the impression that those types of films were from a different world—that they were less interesting and rarely watched. But I think Michael Moore has done a remarkable job of bringing the political independent film into the mainstream. He's demonstrated that you can make a very entertaining movie that still makes you think about important political issues."

Hancox added that working on Moore's film has also inspired him to reconsider the content of his own films. "The internship has motivated me to become a more responsible filmmaker—not just someone who makes films only for their entertainment value. It was an extraordinary experience."

—SCOTT RAPPAPORT