

PRODUCER BRIEF

591 Days Locked in paradise

LOGLINE

A man sent to a Jamaican behavior-modification program at thirteen reopens his childhood letters, setting his memories beside the outside record to ask what happened, what was understood and what remains unresolved.

SYNOPSIS

Steven Ortmann kept the papers. Now the physical archive becomes the starting point for a documentary about his time at Tranquility Bay and the life he has carried beyond it.

A hopeful letter, a report of progress and an article published under his name each hold a different version of the boy inside. Steven revisits those words in the present. Period reporting and other records enter the story when they change what we can understand about his experience.

The film follows an active inquiry: choosing a page, explaining a memory, seeking a record, and deciding what to share. It leaves room for disagreement and for the evidence to complicate the story Steven remembers.

STEVEN

Steven Ortmann is the documentary's central participant and the source of its personal archive. He attended Tranquility Bay in Jamaica as a teenager in 2002-03. Today he is developing a film around his account, the correspondence he retained and the questions those records raise.

PROPOSED FORMAT

Three episodes of approximately 45-55 minutes. A 90-110-minute feature can follow the same three movements, with the final form determined during development.

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THE SERIES

Three movements

01 / SENT AWAY

A child arrives in Jamaica and learns that getting home depends on progress through a program. Early family letters introduce the levels, expectations and adults interpreting his experience. Steven opens the binder in the present and reconstructs what he understood at thirteen.

Dramatic question: How does a child understand what it will take to get home?

Closing turn: An encouraging update reaches home. The audience has learned to ask what that update can show.

02 / THE WORDS THAT LEFT

The correspondence becomes more complicated. An August 2002 letter anticipates change. Family updates and advancement records give different views of progress. An April 2003 article appears under Steven's name. He considers how those words were written, received and remembered.

Dramatic question: What happens when the record of progress and the memory of survival sound different?

Closing turn: The frame widens from one child's papers to the routes through which information traveled.

03 / BEYOND THE GATES

Contemporaneous journalism and documented disputes become leads for Steven's inquiry today. He seeks underlying records and reflects on what leaving did and did not resolve. The present-day story returns to authorship: which pages to share and what he wants to understand now.

Dramatic question: What can the adult establish about what others knew?

Closing turn: Steven decides how to tell his story. The ending remains open to what development and reporting reveal.

These are proposed story movements. Interviews, additional access and new filming remain to be developed.

THE EXPERIENCE

The person holding the binder

A PRESENT-DAY STORY

The camera begins with Steven now. His choices give the film its movement: selecting a letter, reading it aloud, comparing a memory with a date, and deciding which question to pursue next. The archive opens scenes rather than functioning as a catalogue.

AN OPENING TO DEVELOP

Steven places a binder on a table and chooses a dated letter. His present-day voice meets the words he wrote as a child. A source is shown closely enough to understand its context, with private details handled during clearance. An outside report then opens the next question.

The opening is a proposed filming approach. The existing concept teaser uses supplied images and narration to communicate tone.

IMAGE AND SOUND

Use Steven's real correspondence and the supplied photographs as the visual foundation. Film his present-day encounter with those materials. Restrained sound and careful pacing allow the words and pauses to carry emotion. Any reconstruction would be developed and identified openly; concept imagery does not establish historical events.

THE PROJECT'S DISTINCTION

Tranquility Bay and the wider troubled-teen industry have been covered before. The proposed focus here is specific: Steven's 2002-03 Jamaica experience, the changing meaning of his correspondence, and the inquiry he can pursue now. The Program is a relevant comparison, not a claim of endorsement or involvement.

THE AUDIENCE

Viewers drawn to personal documentaries, family communication and institutional accountability. Development should test whether a feature or series gives this particular story its strongest form.

THE DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION

What we can build together

AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

One-page overview; 16-slide visual deck; this producer brief; 46-second concept teaser. Steven's fuller treatment and selected source records can support a more detailed development discussion.

THE ARCHIVE

Eight original scanned PDFs contain 322 pages, including reverses and continuations. The material includes correspondence, reflections, advancement records and seminar work. The project also holds supplied photographs. Selected originals have received close review; authentication and permissions remain ongoing work.

THE NEXT STEP

A short conversation with an experienced nonfiction producer or director to assess editorial fit. An initial development scope could identify the strongest scenes, plan an interview or filmed test with Steven, prioritize archive review, and establish a realistic access, budget and production plan.

WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The working chronology is January 7, 2002-August 20, 2003: 591 days inclusive. An alternative departure account requires reconciliation with records. Personal recollection, period correspondence, journalism and official findings retain their distinct source status.

No producer, director, buyer or counsel is represented as attached. Additional participants, third-party rights and financing remain to be secured. Sharing this brief does not grant exclusivity or project rights.

SELECTED SOURCE BASIS

Personal archive: eight original PDFs and page register. August 4, 2002 letter: TB-B07-P083. April 2003 publication: The Source Online, printed page 19, article attributed to Steven Ortmann. These references guide further review; the full private research register is available by arrangement.

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