

Gerald Forrest  
COMS 185 Project Proposal  
1/29/14

**TITLE:** Boswell & Figg

**THEME OR PREMISE:** The story details the socioeconomic effects of two talented African American drummers who struggle with music industry standards because they cannot read or write music.

**OBJECTIVES:** In highlighting the disparity between musicians with and without exposure to traditional training, this project seeks to raise the consciousness of the music community as it relates to the systematic roadblocks that talented urban musicians often encounter. Obstacles to higher education will be investigated, including interviews with university professors from music departments. Upon completion, this project will shorten the gap between urban music education and formal music education, and in doing so, provide a pathway to a mutually beneficial future for educators and urban youth.

**SYNOPSIS OR TREATMENT:** Hollywood's top-selling recording artists, from Beyonce to Lady Gaga, have increasingly sought out musicians from urban, nontraditional backgrounds to provide their platinum-selling sound. But behind all of the glitz and glamour lies musicians who, despite becoming amazing performers, can't read a single note. They are musically illiterate.

Boswell & Figg is a story of two such musicians, Fred Boswell Jr. and Tim "Figg" Newton, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and San Diego, California, respectively. Although reared in different cities, these two drummers share commonalities in their upbringing that have lead them to the same place: illiteracy.

The narrative explores the positive and negative aspects of their urban childhood that have both elevated their performance capabilities to exceptional levels and stifled their ability to transition into institutions of higher learning. Interviews with university staff will reveal the requirement of musical literacy for admission, while performances will contrast their exceptional skills that could out-perform most accepted students.

Sociological impacts will be measured by interviews with the parents of the drummers. These interviews will speak to their childhood social conditions and give insight to the parents' goals for each drummer.

**STYLE AND GENRE:** Boswell & Figg will be filmed in a documentary style to include interviews, musical performances, and nondiegetic narration. Multi-camera setups will be used for musical performances along with significant handheld tracking shots to give the viewer a sense of realism of the story.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** This project should appeal to musicians and music lovers of all types. Moreover, the sociological themes addressed in the project will be attractive to educators, religious leaders, and community activists.

**LENGTH OF VIDEO:** 10 minutes