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## Creating My Own Lens

It's 3:15 a.m., and my face glows with the bright blue light of my MacBook. My AirPods are on, my phone is on Do Not Disturb, and the only sound in the room is the click of my spacebar as I replay the same ten second clip over and over again. I'm reediting a short documentary film I finished a while back, trying to get one cut to land perfectly on the beat of the music. No one else might notice it but I will, I'll know it's there. For me, filmmaking is about perfecting the little details that make something not only feel alive but become alive.

My love for media started in middle school, when my friends and I made funny skits on our phones but never posted them online. Back then, I didn't care about lighting or angles I just wanted to do something I had fun with and make my friends laugh. But by the end of freshman year, everything changed. I had just finished my first year out of a four year STEAM program focused in digital arts. That year was graphic design and I studied Photoshop. I was so inspired to try out new things, I wanted to know more and explore multimedia. I started to obsessively watch and break down movies and videos frame by frame, studying why some felt alive while others didn't. My curiosity grew into a routine. Now I'm filming, editing, and experimenting almost every week.

By the end of sophomore year I had learned how to make commercials, PSA's, feature stories, and how to be a reporter. That year I had TV Production, I became fascinated with all the possibilities, I loved what I was doing and could see myself doing it for a living. When I am filming, editing, directing, or acting I feel a mix of expression and meditation, the rest of the

world goes away and I am there. Me and my vision come to life. The hardest part about filmmaking is making your work stand out and feel like yours. Anyone can learn the technical skills, but selling a story that only you could tell is different. It forces me to experiment constantly and try new things. I always push past my comfort zone because you never know what could happen. I've learned to be proud of what I've made. That's when the best work happens.

The summer before junior year, I interned with professional educator, writer, and photographer Neil de la Flor. For six weeks, I worked alongside high school students from different backgrounds, skill levels, and creative styles: sports highlight editors, short film directors, music video artist and more. We learned from each other's mistakes, collaborated on projects, and built great friendships through the process. That experience taught me that filmmaking isn't just about cameras or software, it's about connection, communication, and the stories that bring people together.

Film and broadcasting has reshaped who I am. I used to be loud, unfocused, and convinced I knew everything. Now I've learned patience, listen more than I talk, and work without expecting instant results. In the future, I want media to remain at the center of my life, whether that means studying multimedia production in college, starting my own studio, or building an independent career. I'm also drawn to business and marketing, knowing how important it is to brand and share stories effectively. But no matter what direction I take, I know I'll keep creating. Because at 3:15 am when the last shot lines up perfectly, nothing else matters.