

Navigating deepest, darkest Peru: A seven-week investigation

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Introduction

This investigation began when curiosity was piqued in early January, after reading a Guardian article¹ regarding the murder of an environmental defender of the Chaparri reserve.² The headline included a new term, “Land Trafficking”, and skimmed over issues that left me wanting to learn more: an irrigation project was mentioned; a reserve was under threat; and it stated that the murderers are known to the community. Although this tragic event had already happened, surely there would be more detail and context to the story.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/04/community-leader-jose-napoleon-tarrillo-astonitas-chaparri-tortured-killed-land-trafficking-peru>

² <https://www.peru.travel/en-us/what-to-do/Natural-Peru/protected-natural-areas/chaparri-private-conservation-area.aspx>

Thinking it possible to follow up on this article for the final project at MIJ, I contacted a few of the names mentioned in the Guardian piece - they replied quickly and furnished me with documents and unpublished details, the start of which was a research paper on “Land Trafficking”³ by the one of its authors, Noga Shanee (who would become my first contact in Peru), along with links to news, press releases and other useful contacts.

I kept contact with these sources over winter, and, recalling a tactic learned through previous projects, created a series of *Google alerts*⁴ to keep abreast of developments in news regarding the subject, region and murder investigation.

After learning that a fellow classmate had received a grant to help fund her final project abroad, I took the opportunity to apply for an MFS grant myself, receiving funding a few weeks later.

Rajmonda Rexhi and I had planned on teaming up for a project (still underway) involving an advanced level of Spanish - she is fluent in the language, and my competence level is low. In March, we decided to put our previous project on hold and, as the situation in Chaparri, we learned from sources, was increasing in intensity,⁵ we began to plan for the coming seven to eight weeks ahead.

Scope

The investigation would at first be two affected areas in northwest and northeastern Peru, Lambayeque, and Amazonas regions - different in terms of forest, ecology and climate - yet both experience the threat of land invasion.

We knew from the beginning that not only would we need the testimonies of people affected within these regions; NGOs based there, such as *Parkswatch*,⁶ *Frente de Defensa Salvemos Chaparri* (Save Chaparri Defense Front),⁷ *Neotropical Primate Conservation*⁸ and experts including biologists, ecologists, engineers; but also, to be objective, the officials in charge of institutions meant to serve and protect affected flora and fauna such as *SERFOR* (Forest and Wildlife Service),⁹ *MINAGRI* (Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation),¹⁰ *SERNAMP* (National

³ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1940082916682957>

⁴ <https://gijn.org/2016/07/27/the-10-most-used-tools-in-todays-newsrooms/>

⁵ <https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1173549-pnp-considera-a-chaparri-como-una-zona-en-peligro-latente-por-invasiones>

⁶ <http://parkswatch.org/news.php?l=eng&id=168>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/ChaparrienPeligro/>

⁸ <http://www.neoprimate.org/index.php/en/>

⁹ <https://www.serfor.gob.pe/>

¹⁰ <http://www.minagri.gob.pe/portal/>

Service of State Protected Areas),¹¹ ANA (the National Water Authority),¹² and local, regional, national police and prosecutors. We factored in that we would need to spend time between the north of the country and the capital of Lima.

Hours were spent travelling between these points, and the case of Chaparri became increasingly complex. It became apparent to us two weeks in that we would, for the purposes of giving the issues at hand a thorough examination, have to scuttle our investigation in the Amazonas region of San Martin and resume it at a later date.

This turned out to be necessary as we would have set ourselves up to fail. Chaparri is complex enough that it might take months or years to properly gauge and distill a coherent story. After conversations with experts working within conservation in Peru, we were forced to come to the conclusion also that those areas in the Amazonas region would be much more lawless, less strictly monitored and assessed, therefore making an investigative case much more difficult to prove.

Hypotheses

Our hypothesis was at first a case of “so what?”, in the words of our Senior Lecturer, David Crouch, who would hammer this means of testing ideas fit for time and effort, from the first week of lectures. It began with an unfocused following paragraph:

The state of protected areas in Peru is in danger due to invaders and land-grabbers. The Peruvian government is doing little in order to defend land and propertyrights, deforestation and degradation of biodiversity.

In that we aimed to report that Peru’s government lacks proper oversight and means to protect sensitive areas was redundant. The country is rife with corruption¹³ - the President was recently forced to resign for receiving advisory fees from the Brazilian company *Odebrecht*.¹⁴

Once in Peru, our original hypothesis would shift drastically, becoming:

¹¹ <http://www.sernanp.gob.pe/>

¹² <http://www.ana.gob.pe/>

¹³ <https://www.transparency.org/country/PER>

¹⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fworld%2fthe_americas%2fperuvian-president-kuczynski-resigns-amid-corruption-scandal%2f2018%2f03%2f21%2f07d37a2e-2d38-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_story.html%3f&utm_term=.e0c935704fec

The first private protected area in Peru – the Ecological Reserve of Chaparri - is in danger due to land-grabbers destabilizing the community; through speculation of land- prices by a planned reservoir project.

As the “initial stage of the plan is never set in stone; it needs to have sufficient flexibility to cope with new information and new directions that [an] investigation may uncover”¹⁵ this second, more focused angle arose upon learning about the *Olmos-Tinajones Reservoir Project*¹⁶ due to support from the regional government of Lambayeque - specifically the Ministry of Agriculture, who plans to provide 80% financing (the other 20% from pro-financed private initiatives)¹⁷ - investment of one specific dam, La Monteria,¹⁸ is going forward. This construction, we learned, will encroach upon Chaparri.¹⁹

Furthermore, while visiting the area in and surrounding the reserve of Chaparri, and nearby towns, we would repeatedly hear the name *Olivio Huancaruna Perales* from most every source we talked to and during testimony gathering. Huancaruna is a high-level agro-exporter and director of the Lambayeque Chamber of Commerce.²⁰ The accusations leveled at him - from community and reserve founders - all the way up to the Chief Prosecutor of Organized Crime, Juan Carrasco Millones,²¹ and Congresswoman and head of the environmental commission, Maria Elena Ferronda²² - pointed to Huancaruna being behind the destabilization of the reserve and a few similar cases before it.

All of these only exist as accusations and speculation however. There are handfuls of previous news reports regarding such cases - yet, all of it, as is common in Peru, seem to have been archived or dissolved.^{23 24} In light of this new information we created a further hypothesis to explore:

The destabilization of Chaparri is connected to a large agricultural export business - Agrícola San Juan,²⁵ who's Director, Huancaruna, has in the past forcefully, illegally taken over land in neighboring communities, resulting in displacement of people and damage to sensitive

¹⁵ <http://www.investigative-manual.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Investigative-Journalism-Manual.pdf> Ed. Nazaket, Sayed

¹⁶ <https://www.regionlambayeque.gob.pe/web/tema/detalle/12546?pass=MTA1Nw==>

¹⁷ <https://elcomercio.pe/peru/lambayeque/lambayeque-construiran-2-presas-almacenamiento-nino-269826>

¹⁸ https://www.proyectosapp.pe/RepositorioAPS/1/2/JER/PROY_IP_COFINANCIADAS_EVALUACION/IPC/IPC%20LAMBAYEQUE%20REGION%20COMPREHENSIVE%20WATER%20SYSTEM.pdf

¹⁹ <https://larepublica.pe/politica/1176971-consejo-regional-se-pronuncia-por-proyecto-la-monteria-en-chaparri>

²⁰ <https://cclam.org.pe/nosotros/consejo-directivo/>

²¹ <https://larepublica.pe/politica/1158759-denuncia-contra-fiscales-son-manotazos-de-ahogado>

²² <http://www.congreso.gob.pe/congresistas2016/MariaForonda/>

²³ <https://diariocorreo.pe/ciudad/chongoyapanos-piden-a-empresario-huancaruna-81432/>

²⁴ <https://bloquepopular-peru.blogspot.se/2009/11/respeto-las-propiedades-en-tabacal.html>

²⁵ <http://www.agricolasanjuan.com.pe/>

environmental areas. The development of a new irrigation project benefits such enterprises in that they wish to expand their agricultural frontiers into the protected area of Chaparri – adding to their own growth and claiming land that experts speculate will increase in value.

As Emanuel Sidea mentioned during his MIJ guest lecture - a common mistake journalists make, is clinging to a hypothesis for too long. It is important to be flexible when circumstances and evidence dictate.

Target audience/outlets

The first outlet considered for publication was *The Guardian*, as it was my following of their *Defenders*²⁶ series, in collaboration with *Global Witness*,²⁷ which led me to reading about Chaparri. I thought we would be able to offer a follow-up to their original story.

Other outlets include those interested in international environmental news, South America, and Peru in particular, such as *The New York Times*,²⁸ *Buzzfeed*²⁹ and Canada's *Globe and Mail*³⁰ - the last outlet I was adamant in reaching out to after a murder occurred between a Canadian national and a medicine woman in the Peruvian Amazon during our investigation.³¹ My reasoning being that while anything Peru-related was in the headlines, editors and readers would be interested in other stories set there.

We also believe that *Vice* (which keeps up frequent coverage of Peru)³² and its audience would be an ideal outlet for our story. *Vice* is branching out and teaming up with *National Geographic* on a Latin American series.³³ They also format their news in both print and video (which we have chosen to attempt), and they seem to commonly publish stories where journalists experience an event in the “gonzo” style, or at least a situation where those reporting the story are, or have been inserted into, often extreme situations. We ended up living through such a scenario when we accompanied the Ronderos on their first nightly patrol following the death of their lieutenant, “Napo”.³⁴

²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/series/the-defenders>

²⁷ <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/perus-deadly-environment/>

²⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/topic/destination/peru>

²⁹ https://www.buzzfeed.com/davidmack/peru-greenpeace-nazcar-lines?utm_term=.as065vqmv#.yw1OWkG0k

³⁰ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-trudeau-to-attend-two-summits-on-10-day-trip-to-peru-paris-and-london/>

³¹ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-peru-authorities-say-canadian-man-bought-gun-that-matches-weapon-used/>

³² https://www.vice.com/en_us/topic/peru

³³ <https://deadline.com/2018/01/vice-national-geographic-latin-america-series-1202245394/>

³⁴ <http://elperuano.pe/noticia-policia-trabajara-cerca-ronderos-chaparri-64864.aspx>

Emails were sent to the aforementioned outlet's editors, and others, including *The Independent*, and *Al Jazeera*. As of yet, we have not received interest, but for a connection to a *Guardian* editor, by David Crouch. We are currently in a dialogue with said editor, and aiming to publish.

Background/research

On Chaparri, nothing has, to date been published in international news media besides the *Guardian* article. We had to familiarize ourselves with local and national Peruvian paper's online coverage of events at Chaparri, such as *LaRepública*,³⁵ *RPP*,³⁶ *El Comercio*,³⁷ *Peru21*,³⁸ *El Peruano*,³⁹ *Agencia Andina*⁴⁰ and *Diario Correo*.⁴¹ Advanced *Google Alerts* and searches were invaluable at this time. Following advice from Lecturer, Sandra Foresti, I made sure to filter searches within *Google*, setting it to Spanish language terms and Peruvian pages to ensure all bases were covered.

A cluster of events began cropping up in February and March - there were reports of man-made fires⁴² in the reserve area, and death threats to the Head of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Republic of Peru, Duberlí Rodríguez,⁴³ for his denunciation of land-grabbing in the area and the grim, connected events.

Besides scouring Peruvian news outlets, we chose to follow William C. Gaines' "strategies for using the internet during investigations",⁴⁴ and accessed online databases, such as *ResearchGate* and *Sage Journals*; official Peruvian government sites; web pages and documents from Non-Profit Organizations such as *Mongabay*,⁴⁵ *Amnesty International*⁴⁶ and various Facebook group pages dedicated to protecting Chaparri.^{47 48 49}

³⁵ <https://larepublica.pe/domingo/1170733-chaparrimuerte-de-un-defensor-del-bosquechaparri-muerte-de-un-defensor-del-bosque>

³⁶ <http://rpp.pe/peru/lambayeque/chaparri-y-la-situacion-que-agudiza-el-conflicto-en-sus-tierras-noticia-1107309>

³⁷ <https://elcomercio.pe/peru/lambayeque/solicitan-8-anos-prision-presunto-causante-atentado-bosque-chaparri-noticia-511590>

³⁸ <https://peru21.pe/peru/presidente-judicial-denuncia-amenazado-muerte-397187>

³⁹ <http://elperuano.pe/noticia-investigacion-a-trafficantes-tierras-seguira-chaparri-64283.aspx>

⁴⁰ <http://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-minam-garantiza-trabajo-articulado-protoger-recursos-chaparri-703619.aspx>

⁴¹ <https://diariocorreo.pe/edicion/lambayeque/buscan-desarticular-red-criminal-en-chaparri-808897/>

⁴² <http://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-incendios-forestales-amenazan-biodiversidad-zona-chaparri-702077.aspx>

⁴³ <https://larepublica.pe/politica/1202504-lambayeque-duberli-rodriguez-recibe-amenazas-tras-intervencion-en-conflicto-de-chaparri>

⁴⁴ Gaines, William C. (2007), *Investigative journalism: Proven Strategies for Reporting the Story*, Indiana University, CQ press. Chapter 4.pgs 77-100.

⁴⁵ <https://es.mongabay.com/2017/12/peru-incendio-arrasa-500-hectareas-del-area-conservacion-privada-chaparri/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR4679982018ENGLISH.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Salvemoschaparri>

⁴⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/AlertaOSO/>

⁴⁹ https://www.facebook.com/Chaparri-Ecolodge-1313311915420988/?ref=br_rs

Research papers, such as Noga Shanee's⁵⁰ not only helped to educate us on the background of land grabbing in Peru, but often led to contact with experts cited within them. While such research did not always focus on Chaparri, we were able to cross-check with experts on issues similar to those affecting the reserve, receiving documents we might not otherwise have found online ourselves. A steady stream of contacts also grew out of this, including ecologist and director of *CIMA*⁵¹ (Center of Conservation, Investigation and Management of Natural Areas), Dr. Lily Rodriguez - who would set us up to talk with a handful of experts in the fields of hydro-engineering, ecology and conservation.

It is impossible to know for sure that we have not missed any details in previously published reports and papers. Peru is bureaucratically Kafkaesque in many ways. Certain institutions that are meant to work together such as SERFOR and SERNAMP, for example, never seem to be on the same page; often working independently from one another, leading to counter-productivity.

We often found vastly different variations in numbers quoted or cited in various documents - for instance, the number of hectares burned, or fires started; or estimates on land prices before and/or after irrigation, no matter if the source be "official" or anecdotal.

One major, but unfortunately, anonymous and unmentionable source in our investigation, the Organized Crime Prosecutor, Milliones, even warned us on the exasperation of trying to make sense of Peruvian institutions and retrieve reliable statistics. We are still trying to pin down exact figures.

Investigation Process

We compiled a list of people and organizations to contact and created a shared checklist document, dividing the workload - crossing off completed contacts, adding accompanying notes, depending on the responses we received or not. We mapped out and kept tabs on key players and sources in the investigation, as Mark Hunter advises in chapter 3 of his *Story-Based Inquiry*.⁵²

We created a clean, organized set of specific folders in a shared *Google Drive*, containing color-coded sections designated to institutions, NGOs, sources etc., and we adhered to this from day one. This source mapping helped us to identify key players and documents relating to their actions. We would add job titles, email addresses, phone numbers, or Skype contacts and by

⁵⁰ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1940082916682957>

⁵¹ <http://www.cima.org.pe/en>

⁵² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193078e.pdf> Hunter, Mark, Lee. Chapter 3, pg. 35

which method we were in contact, as well as log the dates and times of all correspondence. Here we also placed interviews, audio, email, or otherwise under whichever contact sub-folder they belonged.

Before leaving Sweden, JMG prefect Ulla Sättereie gave us a safety briefing, and a safety memo, security-course and checklist prepared for journalists in foreign countries and dangerous situations by Fredrik Laurin. It contained valuable tips and information. Most procedures for extreme scenarios, we didn't have to employ, but it was reassuring to have the information in our heads for what we thought might be the inevitable - kidnapping, assault and bribery.

Following the advice of Lecturer Birgitte Alfter, who praised the virtues of networking with journalists in other countries - we contacted journalists at *La Verdad*⁵³ and *La Republica*,⁵⁴ who offered advice and source contacts. We also spoke to a Peruvian member of *Reporters Without Borders*⁵⁵, who warned us of the danger and viciousness we were getting into.

In Lima we met with Dr. Rodriguez, who we believed at that time was one of our 'ins' to the Amazonas part of the land grabbing investigation. We were able to pull hints regarding who we might contact along the way. We found that the world of Peruvian ecologists is a small one - and a network of experts and scientists emerged. Many would be helpful, as Hunter advises: "seek someone involved in the sector you are investigating, and who will find the story worthy of interest, but who has no conflict of interest in the case at hand".⁵⁶

Names already published in related news articles and specified Facebook searches, as, Sidea told us, became a valuable method of finding/verifying sources. A handful of times, who certain people actually represent, and what their interests might be came into question. More than once it became apparent that a source was promoting their own business interests, and we had to politely decline, for instance, being offered meals or lodgings, so as not to fall into bias.

Rajmonda and I discussed the danger, journalistically, of straying to one side of the story - and as soon as we were in country, we started organizing meetings with agencies and officials accused of being on 'the other side' of the struggle. We thought best to wait with this until we could gauge the situation and threats to our safety - not wanting to tip off certain authorities - specific police departments, for instance, accused/suspected of corruption.

It was extremely difficult dealing with those accused of malfeasance. Getting any answers, or even arranging interviews on the phone, or by email in Peru was mostly impossible. We learned

⁵³ <https://diariolaverdad.pe/tag/chiclayo/>

⁵⁴ <https://larepublica.pe/>

⁵⁵ <https://rsf.org/en/peru>

⁵⁶ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193078e.pdf> Hunter, Mark, lee, Chapter 3, pg.31

to go directly to offices and businesses and catch those required face-to-face. Without doing this, we never would have gotten our interview with Huancaruna. It should be noted that with him also, we had to omit why exactly why we wanted to interview him and smudged the truth - saying that we were there to report on his business success. This “white-lies” tactic was discussed in class during lectures by both Nils Hanson and Fredrik Laurin. We used our discretion in this case.

If we did manage to set-up a Skype or phone conversation, it would invariably never happen on the day scheduled. Perhaps part cultural trait, and maybe to do with a chain of one person tipping off another after our digging was alerted to; but, as is a Latin-American stereotype, minutes and hours on the clock would often make little difference in regard to meeting sources and arranging interviews - leading to much wasted time.

Within days of arrival in Lima, we headed 16 hours north to base ourselves in Chiclayo for as long as we felt necessary to record and gather evidence and testimonies from Chaparri. It wasn't long before we met a key contact from NGO *Salvemos Chaparri*, Javier Gutierrez. He was referenced in most news articles and were able to run a background check on him by reading through them all and verify his person and motives with other contacts.

Javier proved instrumental in helping us get our hands on valuable documentation - including court records, proposed reservoir plans, and evidence of “false comuneros” (community board members). We had to cross-check this with relevant experts and similar papers from the institutions they were issued by. For this, and at all times, we did our best to stick to the “two-source rule”⁵⁷ for confirmation.

Through him, and another contact made before leaving Sweden, Heinz Plenge (founder of Chaparri), we had access to key members of the community, who would add to our testimony/interview collection as well as the reserve itself. We felt it was important to get a sense of the area and fulfill what we aimed to be “shoe-leather reporting” and as Hunter refers to “harvesting documents in the field, where the most pertinent to a given activity is nearly always found”.⁵⁸

Had we not chosen to immerse ourselves in the area of interest, we would not have joined the *Ronderos*' night patrol. At one point, leaving the reserve, we even filmed one of “Napo's” suspected murderers, Jorge-Carranza,⁵⁹ in front of his own home across from the murder site.

⁵⁷ http://www.investigative-journalism-africa.info/?page_id=8 Investigative Journalism Manual, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Chapter 4

⁵⁸ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193078e.pdf> Hunter, chapter 3.4

⁵⁹ <http://www.recompensas.pe/profugo/jorge-cruzado-carranza>

There was discussion regarding approaching him for an interview, but we decided against it for our safety.

After recording as much as we could in Chaparri, we went about contacting relevant authorities such as regional and local police, and those in charge of the hydraulic project. Here also, replies were scarce, and we spent many hours - on phones, writing emails, scouring *LinkedIn* profiles, idling in office waiting-rooms, only to be given a redundant web-page address scribbled by a frustrated secretary.

When contact was made we chose to, where possible, use encrypted forms of communication, such as *Signal*, or *WhatsApp* as was suggested by Anders Thoresson in our Online Security lecture. This enabled us dialogue with the Prosecutor, who began to show trust in us after we suggested this option - he had been ‘burned’ before with email leaks. It is a shame this source had to remain anonymous as he would deliver a lot of “first hand, insider knowledge... confirmation” and “leads to additional evidence”.⁶⁰

Intensive networking paid off, and we eventually managed to secure interviews with prominent figures such as the Head of the Supreme Court of Peru, Rodriguez, and Congresswoman and commissioner for the environment, Foronda. It took us near to the end of our investigation to land these two interviews and they became the crux of our story - they both implicated Huancaruna and discussed the organized criminal and land grabbing ties to Chaparri. By this point, we chose to say we were freelance-journalists, doing a “follow-up” to a Guardian piece. Technically true, sounding worthier of a high-profile official's time than ‘students’.

Choice of investigation methods

Though there was much background research for our investigation, we chose an immersive approach and, wherever possible, we documented as much as we could, recording video and audio interviews, along with handwritten and typed notes.

Rajmonda and I would prepare the interview questions, but she had a lot of work cut out for her in that most were in Spanish (her 4th language), while I filmed or recorded dialogue. I could follow along to a point, but often she would break to fill me in, in case I had further questions to add. Adding to her work, Rajmonda had to transcribe all interviews in Spanish, and then we would find their best translations starting with Google Translate and then amend it ourselves to make the best possible sense.

⁶⁰ <http://www.investigative-manual.org/en/chapters/psst-insight-knowledge/2-protecting-sources/> Konrad et al, Chapter 6.

Hypothesis evaluation

At this time, in that there are only accusations and speculation against Huancaruna - there was insufficient hard evidence to point the finger at him. We do know that he is under investigation, but we cannot use our anonymous police source. However, we have Congresswoman Feronda adamant, on-record, denouncing him for the destabilization of Chaparri. There are ongoing discussions with our Lecturer, David Crouch, about how to proceed with this line.

Through the testimonies and physical evidence we have amassed, we believe we can show the ways in which, and how, Chaparri is under threat, and point to the looming irrigation project which coincides with all the disturbances taking place there. We have chosen to present the facts as they are, and tell a “where they now, and what are is on the horizon” story.

Feature/Report

We committed our report to a feature-style, using a drop-intro into a night on patrol with the Ronderos as a means to bring readers into the story. We have interspersed testimonies from community members along with the facts and figures we can confirm (fire damage, illegal land tenure, reservoir project) so as to provide solid information and keep a human-element thread. Powerful quotes from Rodriguez and Feronda were used to introduce Huancaruna - we felt we had to include him, in that otherwise we couldn't avoid hearing his name from most testimonies - but we were forced to omit quotes such as Feronda saying that he “has hired assassins before” due not being unable to pin this down to a specific incident with sufficient backing evidence.

The accompanying videos provide an introduction to and facts about the reserve which we thought might otherwise break up the flow of the article, as well as clips from our night patrol with the Ronderos.

The most powerful interview, with the widow, we chose to place at the end of the article, to leave the reader with a sense of desperation and loss that the community is facing. We felt it to be poignant endnote. Alternately, this leads the Ronderos video, which immediately places the viewer in the severity of the situation.

We wanted to attempt both written and video forms for our final project, but are not entirely happy with the videos, as our editing skills are insufficient. There are also unfixable audio issues with a few interviews due to wind - though we did our best, using Lavalier Microphones. Regardless, we have hours of raw material to provide a potential editor if they wish.

We believe that the photographs we have chosen (from many hundreds we took) represent our story, clearly showing human emotion, evidence of damage to the land, and of course - a spectacled bear to attract readers. We had to “kill a few of our babies” so as not to overrun the piece with photos.

Investigation Results

We had to omit all information used from our anonymous police source – great for background information, and confirmation, though unpublishable in this case, dangerous to the source, and also an easy way to land ourselves in legal trouble as no charges have yet stuck to Huancaruna. We maintain contact with the officer, however, and are kept updated on developments. He seems to be learning to trust us as time goes on.

As stated, we have had to be careful with Feronda’s quotes, as they could not be sufficiently backed up with facts, and we are not in the business of rumors. There has been a parade of interviews with shady characters over the seven weeks, a lot of which, after verifying and background-checking, we realized could not be trusted. These interviews were immediately stored in a “contaminated” folder.

The facts, stories and quotes we do have – involving the irrigation project driving up land prices, the Ronderos night patrol, and Feronda’s damning remarks regarding Huancaruna, are exclusive to our investigation, and have managed to drum up interest from *The Guardian*. We are currently in talks to go about publishing a newsy-feature about the state of the community at present.

Reflections on the investigation with regard to course literature

Hunter’s *Story Based Inquiry* contained the most applicable and useful information and we referred to it often during our investigation – especially useful are the sections on organization, sources and interview tactics. The *MOJO handbook*⁶¹ was helpful with its technical tips on interview video and sound recording and editing. Anna McKanes’ *Basic News Writing*⁶² proved to be useful, helping to trim excess information, detail and phrasing during the time of writing our article.

⁶¹ Burum, Ivo, Quinn Stephen, Focal Press, London, 2016

⁶² McKane, Anna, Basic News Writing, Sage publications, London, 2006.

Besides this, first-hand accounts of triumphs and pitfalls, during course lectures were helping in setting us up to be realistic during our investigations. I particularly recall David's lecture on the *Financial Times*' Kerin Hope taking on Greek oligarchs and the legal issues she had with verification of allegations – something applicable to our case. I also found Frederik Laurin's lectures to be inspiring, yet realistic. I hope that every student next year is handed his Security Checklist – it's daunting, but it might save a life or limb.

Full and detailed list of all sources

Literature

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