

**INTERVIEW WITH BES ARNAOUT '20, CREATOR OF "EN ROUTE",  
WINNER OF THE UCHV SHORT MOVIE PRIZE 2019**

**UCHV:** Where are you from, and what is your major?

**BA:** I come from Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am a track 2 Italian major, with French as my second language of study. My work in the department focuses on film theory and cultural studies, which, in combination with a certificate in Visual Arts: Film and Video, allows me to engage with the moving image both critically and creatively.

**UCHV:** When did you start making movies and how did you come to make "En Route"?

**BA:** I started making movies at Princeton. I took an introductory documentary filmmaking class my freshman spring, and I made "En Route" as the final project for that course - thanks to professor/experimental filmmaker Su Friedrich, who has been inimitably supportive and inspiring since the first day of that class more than two years ago.

**UCHV:** What was your budget?

**BA:** There was no budget; I borrowed a camera from the Visual Arts department, used some found footage, some of my sister's videos, and interviewed acquaintances - for free.

**UCHV:** Could you describe the process behind/difficulties you had in making "En Route"?

**BA:** I cannot recall any particular difficulties associated with the process of filming and editing - I had no filmmaking experience before this project and it helped me learn a lot on the technical side (and took quite a while). Since it is an experimental, I learned more than just the basics of editing; I had to think about the spectatorial experience, about the way emotions display in a film when it is unattached to a boilerplate narrative.

The key term I based my project on is "movement". The gap year I took after high-school was a difficult period of time, finally sealed off by illness and death of a close family member the summer before I moved to the US. Coming to Princeton, I was unable to shake off this feeling of severe sadness, which seemed to tarnish everything one would normally seek to experience in college. I was lucky to meet a remarkable group of people, outside of Princeton, who shared their own, genuine experiences with me, effectively a stranger. Their stories made me feel less alone, and in spite of the difference between the peculiarities of our situations, we all seemed to observe this pattern, the caustic cycle of hope and despair. I have been thinking a lot about motivations - what drives the human experience - and I believe that at its worst and most dangerous, the impetus is in fear and desperation, and ideally, it is genuine passion. But most of the time, the reality is in-between, "sometimes when I do, it's because it's just what I do". And when the world loses its color, an unmotivated, tiny step in the right direction, like getting yourself out of bed to brush your teeth, can be life-saving, just to keep going, to stay *en route*.

**UCHV:** Any final thoughts?

**BA:** I feel grateful and humbled by the decision of UCHV to award this prize to my project. Finally, sending a giant virtual hug to the greatest friend ever: "this life is just a probable one", but I am thankful for it, as you have been my top associate since day zero, reminding me of color even when the darkness appears abysmal.

