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LRSC Coast Creative Project

For the creative project I chose to design the layout for a fictitious magazine called “Fifty Six.” The idea behind this project was to lend the platform of a newsmagazine, a medium that is exclusively available in countries with the technological and economic means to publish them, to the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. I attempt to reverse power dynamics three-fold, first by lending the platform to a people who do not use it because they primarily do not have the option to use it. Secondly, I use the focus of the magazine to overturn the tourist gaze. The magazine is set up to be written as if the community is writing for its own audience, scrutinizing the tourists that come into Pearl Lagoon. Lastly, the media in Nicaragua is very much state-controlled, so I wanted this fictitious magazine to also be free from that censorship.

I named the magazine “Fifty Six,” because one statistic that stood out to me during our entire time on the coast is that the amount of land that is the Caribbean Coast constitutes about 56 percent of the land of Nicaragua. For that reason, the title alludes to the magazine’s content that is by the people on the Coast, for the people on the coast. I came up with the headlines and the decks myself, and I made the authors of the articles to be the folks we had charlas with, as if they had the opportunity to write the article before or after our charlas on the same topics that they talked to us about.

The first piece called “Separation of Home and School” is a play on the phrase “Separation of Church and State,” alluding to a conflict of interest. When Carmen spoke to our group in Pearl Lagoon about education, I asked many questions about how involved parents are in the education of their children. She answered a bit about how they come to meetings and prepare lunches, but when it came to how much they influenced curriculum, she seemed to hold back a bit on her answer, so I would be curious to see what she would write about in an article.

The next piece called “Plateful of History” would be by Warner Cayasso. He was newly elected as territory president while we were visiting Pearl Lagoon, but never missed a meal with us, making sure it was perfectly to our taste after her had cooked it himself. He mentioned to us briefly about his philosophy that he does things out of love rather than the need for money, including running his restaurant and participating in politics, so I would want to know how his story weaves together those seemingly different aspects of his life.

The piece titled “The Key to Managing the Keys” was inspired when I heard that Warren was going to clean up the Keys, including the one we visited, the following week. I would like to know what that means, how the system was set up to decide who does that, since the land belongs to the community now. The specific impact of tourists is a segue into the last piece. Before then, however, I stick in an advertisement for tourism on the Corn Islands. I do this because I know there are times when finances and journalistic integrity are at odds in the process of producing a

newsmagazine. A certain irony is produced, which would be interesting to investigate, when there is an advertisement for tourism immediately before the article about the impact of tourism for the coast.

That piece is called "In-Depth: The Tourists Are Coming, The Tourists Are Coming." The biggest question that I had as I was in Pearl Lagoon, and that I still have even after the in-depth, was and is about our impact as tourists on the community. The photos that are used are from Azani's and my walk with Anthony during the day with our families. From that experience, it seemed like Anthony was very excited to have us there, but he was the only person that we really heard from. I would want to know of other community members had thoughts about the phenomenon of ecotourism coming now to the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua.