

# Tessa Venell

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Date of Birth: 7 October 1984  
Citizenship: United States  
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## Education

B.S. International and Global Studies, Brandeis University, 2008

Concentration: The Global Environment

- Honors: Cum laude

## Academic Experience

*Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, USA*

- Layout and Design Assistant, The Louis Lunatic: Brandeis' Sports Magazine 2004-2005
- Assistant Copy Editor, The Justice 2004-2007
- Academic Tutor 2006

*School for International Training, Kunming, China*

- Independent Study Project: Drowning Shangri-la: Balancing Environmental Protection and Development in China

## Languages

- Conversational Chinese
- Native English

## Professional Experience

*Grant Writer, MAB Community Services, March 2011-Current*

- Manage grants calendar for development team
- Draft grant proposals
- Conduct outreach for program support

*Freelance Copy Editor, Harvard University, December 2011-Current*

- Reviewed, edited articles for Harvard University Marie Curie Fellow
- Proofread manuscripts for Ph.D-level academic articles

*Harvard University Ash Center, Kennedy School of Government, July 2011-December 2011*

- Faculty Assistant who supported faculty member with complex administrative duties related to their teaching and research
- Compiled jointly-listed course readings for Law School and Kennedy School
- Coordinated complex travel arrangements. Prepared itineraries and documents to facilitate faculty travel.
- Made room and catering arrangements as necessary
- Organized Harvard visits for international government members

*PBS International, Boston, September 2009-January 2011*

- Conducted research and compiled a database detailing the PBS International buyer market
- Developed a system to track royalties due for international contracts
- Managed the PBS International royalties tracking system
- Edited the PBS International film catalogue
- Performed administrative tasks as needed

*Harvard University, the China Energy and Environment Conference, December 2010-April 2011*

- Researched the field of professionals working in China's environmental field
- Contacted potential panelists for involvement at the Harvard Conference on April 9, 2011
- Worked with panelists and an academic moderator to formulate topics for panel discussion

*Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital, Braintree, MA September 2008-Spring 2009*

- Researched the 'greening' movement in Massachusetts hospitals and compiled it accessibly for hospital administration
- Pitched the development of an environmental sustainability program to hospital administration
- Facilitated meetings with Director of Business Development, Director of Facilities Management and Head of Nursing to discuss environmental sustainability at the hospital

*The Jane Goodall Institute, spring 2009*

- Organized the 2009 mini-grant recipients in order to write press releases and media advisories to newspapers local to the grant beneficiaries
- Contacted and communicated with those involved in grant projects in order to accurately reflect researched media briefings

*New Hampshire Lakes Association, Wakefield, NH Summers May 2002-August 2009*

- Responsible for checking all incoming boats for invasive weeds and for educating the boating public about the dangers of aquatic invasive species
- Summer 2006: Promoted to Lake Host Captain. Additional responsibilities include scheduling, training and synthesizing collected data to report to the State of New Hampshire Lakes Association

## **Works in Progress**

### Writer

- Working to develop a story about my recovery from a brain injury that I sustained in July 2006
- Working with an editor at HC Pro to interview my past medical staff at Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital, medical staff at Portsmouth Regional Hospital, and my family about their experiences during my brain injury recovery
- Published pieces:
  - *Forgotten, but hardly lost*, Brandeis Hoot, Chrissy Callahan, 19 September 2008
  - *A Small Miracle*, Brandeis Magazine, Evan Sweeney, spring 2011

### Producer

*The Green Reason: Beijing's Emerging Environmental Movement*

- Received grant funding to shoot a documentary in Beijing about the way that environmentalism is developing in China, examining the way that environmental education is stressed in Chinese schools and exploring the possibilities of the Chinese environmental movement
  - Regularly posted on and edited a project website to proactively manage shooting the film and to coordinate the production process
- Link to the Green Reason website: [www.thegreenreason.com](http://www.thegreenreason.com)

### Unpublished Papers

- *Environmentalism in China: Globalization and Emerging Chinese IENGOs* (2008)
- *Conservation Biology in the Hengduan Mountains Sub-Alpine Conifer Forests* (2006)
- *Drowning Shangrila: Balancing Environmental Protection with Development in China* (2005)

## **Invited Talks**

### Conference Presentations

- Jane Goodall Institution: Roots & Shoots Program
- New England Regional Annual Summit: China's Environmental Movement Panel
- MAB Community Service Annual Gala

### Education

- Harvard University: The Green Reason Production Notes
- Brandeis University: The Green Reason Production Notes

- Emerson College: Cognitive Communication Disorders
- Boston University School of Medicine
- Boston University College of Health and Rehabilitation Science

#### Conferences and Workshops Attended

*National Climate Change Solutions Day, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA*

- Ridgewood Building Tour
- Shapiro Science Building Tour

*Greenbuild Boston, 2008*

*Greening Healthcare Conference, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston*

#### References

Anthony Saich, *Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation*

Director

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Professor of Public Policy

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Manager, Business Development

Phone: 978-646-02421

Email: acampana@copyright.com

Dan Perlman, PhD, *Brandeis University*

Professor of Biology, Environmental Studies Program Chair

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John de Cuevas, *The Baker Foundation*

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[www.tessavenell.com](http://www.tessavenell.com)

## Writing Sample #1

Tessa Venell

22 March 2010

Ivy School Gala to honor Dr. Katz

In July of 2006, I was injured in a car accident near my parent's house in Maine. I was home before my senior year at Brandeis University. I had spent part of the previous year in Kunming, China studying water policy and the potential environmental effects of a dam that the Chinese government was planning for the Yangtze River. I planned to travel back to China for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing after my graduation from Brandeis.

Instead of moving into a new dorm room that Fall, I was moved to the Intensive Care Unit at Maine Medical Center, and I was hospitalized there for five weeks. I had broken five bones and sustained a severe diffuse axonal head injury. In September of 2006, I started treatment at Braintree. My mom tells me about how happy and excited she was when the head nurse at Maine Med suggested that it was time to start thinking about rehabilitation facilities for me, because I was ready for that next step.

Rehab facilities in Maine that handle cases such as mine were limited, so the nurse suggested taking me out-of-state for this next step. For the five weeks that I was at Maine Med, my parents were at the hospital every day: they were both able to stay very close and watch every step of my recovery when I was hospitalized in Maine.

Mom tells me that before she even met Dr. Katz, she was impressed by the professionalism at Braintree Rehab. The Director of Patient Care Services called my parents after their visit to reach out and answer any questions they had, and I think they appreciated this kind of support during this difficult move. Braintree is so far away from Maine to move your brain injured child!

After meeting Dr. Katz, my parents felt more secure in their decision to hospitalize me at Braintree for 100 days of rehabilitation therapy. Mom says that she remembers meeting Dr. Katz and that it "gave her energy", because although he never gave a prognosis, Dr. Katz shared with her enough of the medical background to make her feel more secure in her confidence in my recovery. Of course parents want to believe that their children will get better, but Dr. Katz made my parents feel more confident in this belief.

I think that parents in this situation have two different kinds of reasons for believing that their child will make it through the traumatic event: There are real reasons and there are good reasons. The real reasons are memories of the drive to the hospital on the morning I was born and memories about the excitement that I felt on my first day of school. Dropping me off at college for the first time. Mom told me about one specific late Summer afternoon memory that she has of my brother and me leaving together for an 8 mile run. These memories were my mom's real reasons for knowing that I would recover.

The same day after that Summer run with my brother, early the next morning, I would get taken by helicopter to Maine Medical Center with five broken bones and a diffuse axonal head injury.

What Dr. Katz gives patients' families is the energy to BELIEVE in the validity of their real reasons. By explaining to my parents the medical factors that I had working in my favor, Dr. Katz gave them confidence to believe **in their real reasons for knowing** that I would recover. Dr. Katz helps his patients' families understand the GOOD reasons for believing their REAL reasons.

Writing Sample #2

## *The Green Reason* [2009]

Funded in part by The Baker Foundation

28 August 2009

*producer* Tessa Venell

*director* Jeff Arak

*editor* Ben Fundis

*research director* Tessa Venell

*composer* Daniel Duffy

*web design* Andy Venell

*illustrations* Matt Witham

*photography* Jeremy Sisselman

*composer* Dan Harris

*photography* Jennifer Craig

### **Production facts**

*Title* The Green Reason (working title)

*Length* 52 minutes

*Format* DV-CAM

*Development* Oct. 2005-July 2008

*Production* Aug. 2008

*Post production* Oct. 2008-August 2009

*First broadcast* 2010

This movie has dialogue in English.

### **Log Line**

The rapid growth of the Chinese economy in the beginning of the century caused a popular disregard of the environment among Chinese people, but the concept of environmental sustainability has entered the Chinese mindset with the government-initiated “green” theme at the Olympics, which focused on increased harmony between human beings and nature. The ability of the introduction of this “green” concept to lead to environmental sustainability in China is contingent on the ability of these individual actors to share information.

### **Synopsis**

The Green Reason: Beijing’s Emerging Environmental Movement explores the positive steps China is taking environmentally and how the 2008 Olympics has spurred the exchange and dissemination of information regarding the global impact of local actions within a society long regarded as suffering from a lack of information and from heavy government control and censorship. We show that environmentalism in China relies largely on environmental education, and this pattern of environmentalism does not effect change in the short term. The Green Reason shows the hopefulness inherent in this pattern of environmentalism. The Green Reason explores the positive steps China is taking environmentally and how the 2008 Olympics has spurred the exchange and dissemination of information regarding the global impact of local actions within a society long regarded as suffering from a lack of information and heavy government control and

ensorship. The Green Reason was shot in August 2008 during the Summer Olympics; the Olympics are an established framework for positive interactions between China and the rest of the world. But would this sudden interest in a more environmentally sustainable China live on after the Games? Would the Games spur the Chinese people--as well as the government--to realize the importance of being aware and more active in creating a sustainable environmental and economic future? We set out to shoot a short film about this "greening" effort. During this first trip, we showed the way environmentalism was highlighted during the 2008 Summer Olympics. Real environmental progress in China must rely largely on the introduction of thinking about environmental progress into the culture, but this is a pattern of environmentalism does not affect change in the short term. The Green Reason shows the hopefulness inherent in this pattern of environmentalism and how this new pattern, which emerged from the spirit of the Olympic Games, sets the stage for great environmental progress in China.

As we go forward, we want to show China is using this same emergent pattern in preparation for the World Expo in 2010 in Shanghai. We propose to use a more granular approach, but show the way environmentalism is being introduced through China's hosting of these international events and introduction onto the world stage. The same environmental strategies from Beijing are being employed by the government to affect operators, participants and visitors to Shanghai for the World Expo. The correlate between these two events is the emphasis that the Chinese government has put on environmental education in preparation for the events.

### **Producer's Notes**

I went to Kunming, China in 2005 and decided that I was going to come back to China for the Olympics in 2008. I did not know how I would get back, but I saw a story developing there deserving of Western attention, and I was confident that I could pitch the story in such a way to attract a funder--the project is driven by an idea that a saw developing in China. I was always bothered by the discrepancy between China—as the Western media presented it—and the place I saw and heard about when I talked to Chinese people. I felt the disconnection and I wondered in what it was based, and what I could do to tell a story about China that is not shrouded by human rights abuses and a history of governmental negligence. Regardless of the governing system, there are people living in China and they are the ones being effected most immediately by the environment, and, increasingly, impacting the environment in a positive way. A people are not their government, and a government is not always what it looks like from a representative vantage point on the other side of the world. The Chinese government made the first liberalizing move by opening the door to make it possible for the people of China to have a positive impact on their environment. The Chinese government mandated environmental education: education in schools and capacity-building in Chinese companies. When the Chinese citizenry is more educated about their environment, demand for environmental regulations will increase organically.

In The Green Reason I am not trying to convince viewers to feel the way that I do about China—impossible without Magnum Bars and drinking ginger tea in the Fall in Tiger Leaping Gorge. I am presenting a story alternate to both of the stories that we have hear from the Western media about China and the green-washed news that comes from China about the environmental movement. We had a source in China tell us that the truth is somewhere in-between these two stories. I hope that our film will start to tell that in-between story.

## **Pre-Production**

In 2005 in Yunnan, China, I was enjoying a cup of ginger tea at Sean's Guest house, overlooking the water of the Yangtze River where it rushes through the rocks at Tiger Leaping Gorge, when I named something that I hadn't yet completely realized. I was leaving China next week, and it felt as if I were turning my back on something important. Even in 2005, it was clear to me that something is happening in China; my work researching the environmental and societal effects of the dam plans for this gorge hinted that in China there is a movement starting to emerge.

When I came back to Brandeis University in January 2006, I focused my training in a clear direction; I had found something to love in the broad liberal arts curriculum. I took a conservation biology class during that semester and my professor, Dan Perlman, became a mentor to guide my work getting to learn about know the importance of the biodiversity in Tiger Leaping Gorge. This biodiversity would be flooded when the Chinese government dammed Tiger Leaping Gorge.

Moving forward at Brandeis, my training had a focus, and during my last semester at Brandeis I took another class about international environmental policy. This class gave me the opportunity to focus on the more-macro aspects of the environmental movement in China and think about its global implications. The Olympics were also approaching, and I thought about the Games as an established framework for positive interactions between the host country and the rest of the world. China's hosting of the 2008 Olympics was referred to as "China's coming out party".

I applied for the Katheryn Wasserman Davis Project for Peace grant to make a movie with my friend Jeff Arak--of *On This Earth Productions*--acting as cameraman. In 2006, Jeff won the Davis grant to set up a media lab in an indigenous community in Mexico. The project we proposed to Davis in 2008 was about the "greening" movement in China and its connection to the Olympics. Jeff and I did not receive the Davis grant.

At this point I told my mentor that we didn't get the Davis grant, but this project still needs to be done, and I am still excited to be the one to do it. I remember Dan told me to send an email to his friend at The Baker Foundation, put "Dan's student" in the subject line of the email, and explain the project.

## **On Location: Beijing August 2008**

Jeff and I left from Boston to film in Beijing on the 5 of August, 2008. We flew from Boston to Chicago to Beijing. On 13 August 2008 in Beijing, I wrote in a journal that, "Things continue to get better, and the story we're telling is getting more specific and broadening as well." The story continued to evolve as we met more people and learned more about what is happening in China, and I think this is one of the best things about this project. The evolving nature of the project is evident in the following posts from Beijing on the project's website.

## **Meetings Meetings | August 10th, 2008**

This is getting exciting again! We have been very busy. We got into the city on the 5th. I accidentally scheduled a meeting with Doug Whitehead at the Global Environment Institute before we had gotten into Beijing. The time zones mixed me up. So, we arrived in the morning

and had a meeting on the day after, and so had a day to acclimate. I'm pleased with how quickly I was happy in China again. Today we had ginger tea and it was just like it always was. fabulous.

We rescheduled the meeting with Doug Whitehead to yesterday, and it went really well. I think because Doug and I had exchanged so many emails—he's a good emailer too—leading up to the interview, we both felt very comfortable. And we got great lighting for the interview, so it looks really nice. We watched some of it today, but I'm looking forward to continuing to check it out. Doug touched on some things that I had been preaching about since earlier this spring [2008], and imparting to Jeff more recently, about the pattern that environmentalism is developing in China, and so I'm happy to have had my idea validated.

We spent Thursday the 31 meeting with the Roots & Shoots program at the Jane Goodall Institute. This program kind of encapsulates the way that I see Chinese environmentalism developing—in an emergent pattern. By educating Chinese kids, change is affected from the bottom-up, and this pattern depends upon time to see any changes realized. I feel like I've told this story fifty times. We had dinner tonight with our friend Tony—someone who has contacts who are middle and high school teachers—so we're looking forward to connecting with teachers about the implementation of the government-mandated environmental education regulations in schools. Tony also has connections in factories that were moved outside of the city for the Olympics, and we're going to try to set up some factory tours—this is GREAT visual evidence, I'm learning all about it.

Coming up this week we have a meeting scheduled tomorrow with the World Wildlife Foundation, Steve Blake at the Nature Conservancy, and possibly a meeting with Greenpeace on Tuesday.

Our homestay is on the outskirts of the city, so we have to take a bus or taxi to the train and take the subway into Beijing everyday, which is kind of a hassle. But, Jeff and I agree that there is a lot that is positive about this homestay. We have lots of space, and feel very comfortable here.

### **Caveats | August 15th, 2008**

As I'm waiting to get the Internet reconnected in our homestay—it's a thunder and lightning storm, so the Internet disconnected itself—I am wondering what I can do without the Internet. My computer tells me I have access to an excellent connection, but in China, there are always caveats to excellent connections.

Jeff and I are continuing to plow ahead with IENGO meetings, because this is where my contacts are. Although I've made connections with the people who organized the green buildings for the Olympics, and we're in the process of setting up a meeting with people who are concerned with carbon trading and with environmental law. Also the person who runs our "homestay" is planning to develop his facilities, and he has talked about the government subsidies that are available to development if the development is "green". Including this in the film may be too anecdotal though.

Also we are starting to look to post-production, and—if this Internet ever gets straightened out—I am finally having a chance to check out some video editors who were recommended to me when I was working in Boston.

I had two hours of work to do on the computer scheduled today, and I'm going to get about 20 minutes worth of work done and 80 minutes of frustration due to this thunder storm. If I didn't have a huge project to get done, I would enjoy being affected by the weather in this way.

Jeff just predicted that the last week of this trip might be full of all the things we've pushed off until this point and meeting with the people who we have not connected with yet. He said that the next week will get busier. Jeff is taking a break this morning and going to buy cheap Chinese clothes with our cook—who we've become great friends with—and I'm having dinner with my second grade teacher (!) and her daughter tonight. We need to take breaths like this I guess.

### **Notes about the Storm | August 15th, 2008**

The thunder and lightning storm a couple of days ago for sure cleared the sky and we've had a couple of BEAUTIFUL blue sky days in the meantime. Yesterday we had a meeting with Ellen Carberry—a venture partner at HAO capital—about the Clean Tech in China Report that she helped to work on and Clean Development Mechanisms. Ellen has since given us information about the development of Clean Power in China. At The Climate Group, Steve Howard and Changhua Wu say, “In the move to a low carbon economy, we believe that China will no longer be a developing country following where others have led, but a pioneer leading the way.”

Jeff and I just spoke about whether or not we think the Olympics has served as a catalyst and an impetus to a movement that was already beginning in China. I think the movement was starting in 2005 when I was in Kunming. I therefore fell in love with the hopefulness that I saw here, and continue to see. It is the next place where things are happening. This dynamic we can maybe show by pairing it with China's sweeping of medals in the Olympics. We are talking to someone tomorrow about the history of metals won compared to home court advantage in the past Olympics too, to put China's sweeping into perspective.

### **Meetings at BeiDa | August 19th, 2008**

Yesterday Jeff and I had some meetings at Peking University that really wrapped together a lot of what we had been talking about. Jeff needed someone to tell us on camera a lot of the things I had been telling him anecdotally, and the professors at the University yesterday really spelled out some important points for us. It was very encouraging.

Today we meet with more students and also with my first conservation hero. I'm very excited about this meeting, because I have not seen Libo since I worked with him in Kunming, China, in 2005. We also are meeting with students who were involved in EE programs at their school. The way that environmentalism is developing in China is so exciting to me. The government of China has mandated creativity in schools, and by highlighting creativity for students, environmentalism is beginning to develop. It's similar to the Roots & Shoots ideology: give people the necessary tools and prompt them to identify problems that they then solve themselves with the tools provided. This is the foundation for all of my hopefulness about China, and the meeting yesterday reinforced this hopefulness to me.

### **Timelapse | August 22nd, 2008**

Yesterday we had no meetings, so we went into the city to get a good time lapse shot. This is when Jeff sets up the camera and records for one hour, then we watch it very fast to indicate busyness. Beijing is a good place to take shots like this. We had taken one in the subway during rush hour as well. There are so many people here.

When we were taking this shot, I went to go find a cheap shirt, because I spilled chocolate icecream on my shirt, and we were meeting Tony and his friend for dinner after we got the time lapse shot. Shopping for a shirt took me a long time, but I found a good one I think. It is a good amount of ridiculous.

### **Meeting with Ma Jun | August 24th, 2008**

Yesterday we got to meet Ma Jun—he has been called China’s Rachel Carson. Time magazine named him one of the world’s 100-most influential people in 2006. I read Ma Jun’s book—China’s Water Crisis—when I was doing research in Kunming in 2005, and, for me, this helped to start my interest in China’s environment. Ma now is the director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs in Beijing. We called Ma Jun after getting his cell phone number from Lingu—who was introduced to me by Libo, my Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge contact from Kunming—on a Saturday night around 8:00 and met him the next morning at 9am. quick! This is reflective of the speed at which development is happening China. A Chinese friend said that I had been raising the eggs for years (I’ve been doing research about China’s environmental policy for years.), and now I get to meet the hen. Ma Jun talked about awareness building in China and how participation is key to developing some kind of environmental consciousness here. Ma said that, since he’s started doing work here, he’s noticed government policy change to emphasize environmental education. This reinforced what we’ve learned through talking to IENGOs in China.

### **Omissions | August 25th, 2008**

The post that I wrote yesterday was about the story that we won’t tell with our film. It seems like this is unavoidable in story-telling; no matter what story we tell, there will be many that don’t get told. And this story just got broader but also more specific each time we had an interview in China, in a way similar to the meetings I conducted in Boston prior to our departure. I was looking through my project-notebook and finding loose ends and getting kind of frustrated by the size of this subject (and feeling like I have a life’s worth of further work to do here), and so we started to talk about what we won’t be able to say.

On our bus ride into the city, we go through some towns that are just beginning to develop. These people haven’t been touched by the Olympics and development the way that others in Beijing have. We are telling the story of the people who have been affected by the Olympics, but this is not all of the people in China. We need to be explicit about our intention to tell the story of only a certain portion. It’s difficult to weigh this against a fair and balanced framework. I guess truthfulness is more important than fairness and balance, and it’s possible to be truthful and not be balanced.

### **Production: Fall 2008-Spring 2009**

After Jeff and I connected with a video editor, I started to work in Boston with Ben Fundis of Border Stories. Ben and I filmed an interview with Hongyan Oliver, an environmental economist at Harvard, and with Greg Ingram at The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, to fill in holes in our story that we noticed while we were reviewing our footage.

For distribution, I have been talking with quite a few groups about possible screenings. Everyone to whom I suggest screening *The Green Reason* expresses interest in hearing more about this project, because it is very timely.

I asked a friend from college to make the score for the film for me. Daniel Duffy also made the music for Jeff's previous work in Mexico, and he does a fabulous job. My favorite thing about working with Daniel is that he is very open to hearing suggestions about the direction of the product, because he clearly enjoys the process of making music. Also, I just got an email from a contact at Roots & Shoots in Beijing that the E.U.-China Biodiversity Programme (ECBP) and the IUCN in China are teaming-up to host a biodiversity film week in Beijing, which I'm pretty excited about possibly being involved in. We've also started to talk about distributing through the Roots & Shoots program at the Jane Goodall Institute, because people in this program are both featured in the movie as well as really personifying the Chinese environmental movement.

### **About the Producer**

Tessa Venell was born in Acton, Maine and went to school at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, where she got an undergraduate degree in International Studies with a Global Environment concentration. She spent three months doing an independent research project in Kunming, China in 2005; her work is titled "Saving Shangrila: Balancing Environmental Protection with Economic Growth in China," and is about the environmental and societal effects of a dam project that the Chinese government was planning for the Jisha Upper Yangtze River in the Hutiaoxia Tiger Leaping Gorge area.

Tessa extrapolated from this dam project proposal to discuss China's broader environmental policies. After finishing at Brandeis in July 2008, Tessa was awarded a grant from the Baker Foundation to go to Beijing to make a film about the emerging environmental movement in China. Jeff Arak [of *On This Earth Productions* <http://jeffarak.com/>] shot the footage in Beijing, and Tessa is working with Ben Fundis [of *Border Stories* <http://www.borderstories.org/>] to edit and produce the footage. Tessa comes into this project with training in story-telling, and since 2005 her work at Brandeis was focused on China's environment. Film is the media though which Tessa chose to tell this story; *The Green Reason* is Tessa's first film project.

### **Partial Literature Review**

"Green Power Takes Root in the Chinese Desert", Keith Bradsher, *New York Times*, 2 July 2009

"Can I Clean Your Clock?", Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, 4 July 2009

Green Guideline for Expo 2010 Shanghai China, *International Exhibitions Bureau*, 6 May 2009

### **Contact Information**

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