"*Tangled up in The Lilly Ross*":

How Senior, Lilly Ross, created an award winning film and a brand built to last.

Written by Aleesa Booker

"I wanted to figure it out as I went. I remember putting in my journal, we're going to submit it to film festivals, even if we hate it," Lilly Ross States.

This determined-driven mindset would secure Ross a major win at the 2026 Oxford Film Festival, where her documentary *"Tangled up In the South"* earned the HOKA Award, marking a turning point in her career as a filmmaker.

"Winning the award was really special because it validated all of the work that I did," Ross said. "It wasn't like I was waiting for someone to say, you did good, but the fact that somebody did say, you did good…I was like, wow, like maybe I really am doing something."

Lilly Ross is a senior integrated marketing communication major with a minor in business at the University of Mississippi. During her time at the school Ross has used many of her resources to create a brand for herself and is now branching out to using her lens to its full extent.

Ross' film explores the cultural and historical importance of Bob Dylan's influence in the American South rooted in a pivotal moment in Mississippian history. The project was inspired by a classroom encounter that would ultimately shape her work.

"Dr. R.J. Morgan came to my Talbert Fellows class and he was explaining that he's doing a book project on Bob Dylan and a specific rally that happened in 1963 in Greenwood, Mississippi," Ross said.

The rally was held on July 6th and was a part of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) efforts to register African Americans to vote. Bob Dylan performed *"Only a Pawn In Their Game"* which he wrote to commemorate the recent death of civil rights activist Medger Evers.

"I approached him and said, 'Have you thought about the visual aspect?' And he was like, 'Take my class.' I took his Bob Dylan in the South class, and I knew that I wanted to make a documentary," Ross said.

Professor at the school of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi R.J. Morgan explains how he saw Lilly's dedication grow from an idea into an award winning documentary.

“She came up with the idea very fast and I said yes absolutely so we made the film her final project. When guest speakers would come she would set up private interviews with them. The whole documentary was her vision.”

“Lilly came to me and struggled a little with the B-roll. I gave her advice about getting visuals from the Square and End of All Music, but overall she managed the project from start to finish,” Morgan said.

Amongst seeing her dedication to the project, Morgan saw Ross’s actions as an example of what the school is aiming to showcase.

“This is the goal of any class we teach in the school of Journalism and New Media,” he said. “We're helping students become professional storytellers. We want all the students that come through our school to be just like Lilly.”

“Tangled up In the South” establishes Ross as an upcoming filmmaker. But her ambitions to create visual content go beyond the documentary lens.

“I run a videography forward marketing agency called Parthenon Pro,” Ross said. “It started off as a video production, then I expanded to photography and eventually brand management.”

Parthenon Pro was started by Ross her senior year of high school.

“People started reaching out to me,” Ross states. “Knowing what I do with video and photos. I started off doing medium-sized events.”

On campus Ross has shot for fraternities including Phi Delta Theta and Delta Kappa Epsilon. Outside of campus she has worked with groups including Victory event group and Wratchet Entertainment Group.

Jack Kirkland, a Freshman interning under Ross explains how these connections help Ross.

“One of the things that is admirable is the kind of connections that she's created,” Kirkland emphasizes. “I mean. She mentions all these people and it's like how do you keep track of all this? How do you find these people to connect with? I think it's so cool that she has this brand built up. She's a source for people, like, wanting content for their brand.”

Kirkland recalls his discoveries of Ross by chance. This *chance* would lead him to a creative outlet with an embedded structure.

“I remember seeing an ad on Instagram, looking for interns. I had nothing better to be doing. I love photography. I was like, ‘might as well sign up for it,’” Kirkland said.

“We’ll go and she tells you the objective of what we're doing. It's very simple for us, which is great. She lays out what she has in mind, she gives me examples of what she wants, and then she also helps me through the creative process afterwards, too,” he said.

With building these connections Ross is laying the groundworks for the future of what Parthenon Pro will be.

“I want it to be like a creative law firm,” she said. “Nobody is all over the place because they're all really focused on what they're doing. I want to be able to have interns underneath that will come in and learn so they can shadow each and every one of them.”

“Mississippi does not have a video production focused agency really. I'm looking to be a video production agency that has marketing. Video first, marketing second. I want to be the go-to for video production across the state and across the South eventually.”

Garret Jones, a University of Mississippi student who collaborates with Parthenon Pro explains how a mutual connection brought Ross and him together.

“I first met Lilly through a mutual connection at the Ole Miss CIE,” Jones said. “It was a discovery meeting of sorts, trying to see how we could work together. She was very interested in learning the scope of my business and what I do before trying to rush into a project.”

Jones expresses how her creativity creates relationships that explains why her customers keep coming back.

“Lilly stays focused. She is creative, and she loves her work,” Jones said. “She doesn’t work for the business, she wants to help her clients get what they need. When you hire Lilly, it’s like she becomes a part of your team.”

As Ross continues her entrepreneurship she also keeps a camera in her back pocket and Bob Dylan in the rearview mirror.

“I’m working on another film right now and it is following Bob Dylan's *Time Out of Mind* in Starkville, Mississippi,” she said.

Dylan in 1997 would perform at the Humphrey Coliseum at Mississippi State University. Bob Dylan’s 1997 album *Time Out of Mind* won three Grammy Awards in 1998 including Album of the year. The next project takes what she learned from her last project and amps up the investigative reporting.

“I'm going back and rebuilding that night and trying to figure out who was there,” she said. “I have a copy of the ticket, I contacted the homecoming queen. I think she thought I was spam or trying to get her credit card information.”

“Learning so much from the first film is going to be just unbelievably helpful in making this film,” Ross said. “I already stumbled, fell and figured out what worked and what didn’t. I know where I'm going earlier than I did when I was making *Tangled up in the South*.”

Lilly Ross is no longer a highschool senior experimenting with the idea of content creation being a side hustle. Ross is now a college senior at Ole Miss with a videography and content creation business, an award winning film and more in the works.