

Film Standard Level

## **Production Portfolio**

### **Director**

Rationale Word Count: 98

Word Count: 1,200

## **Rationale**

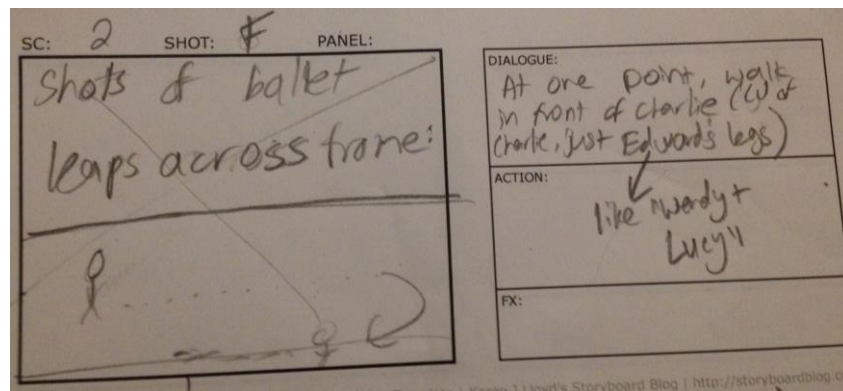
*In Memoriam* is about a ghost named Edward who died in the Victorian era. Since then, he has lived in this house and the story explores his loneliness as a ghost, something he has never truly realized. His only companion is a dog named Charlie and so when a teenage neighbour comes to take care of Charlie while his owner is away again, Edward learns through her words that he will be alone forever. The film explores the isolation of being a ghost, and conveys how having a friend is one of the key things needed to live.

**Words: 98**

## Pre-Production

### Research: Dramatic Comedy Genre

I discovered that comedy gives a place where “repressed tensions can be released in safe manner.”<sup>1</sup> This, along with *Risky Business* and *Home Alone*, inspired the montage scene as though there is a serious message that Edward is alone, there is humor.



In dramatic films, there are realistic characters<sup>2</sup> that the audience is able to relate to.<sup>3</sup> Drama films are all about moving the audience emotionally and showing the heart of the drama is in the character interaction.<sup>4</sup> I watched *Wendy and Lucy*, and noticed

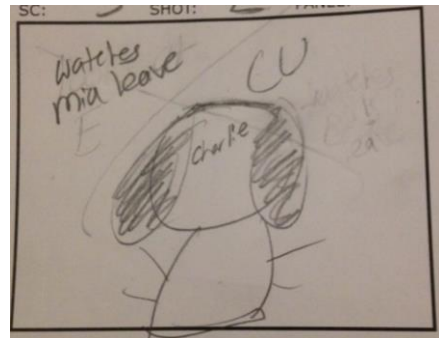
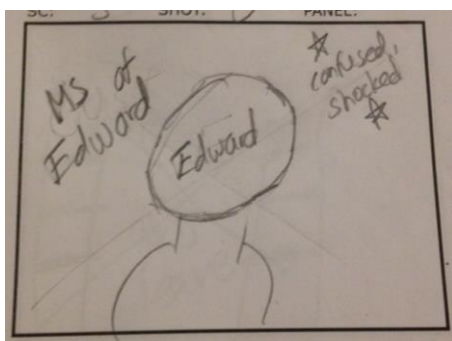
<sup>1</sup> Hayward, Susan. "Comedy." *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. Second ed. London: Routledge, 2000. 73. Print.

<sup>2</sup> FarjanaTahmin. "Conventions of Drama Films." *Conventions of Drama Films*. Slideshare, 22 Oct. 2011. Web. 08 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.slideshare.net/FarjanaTahmin/conventions-of-drama-films>>.

<sup>3</sup> Upton-Dance, Hattie. "Drama as a Genre : Codes and Conventions." *Prezi.com*. Prezi, 4 Oct. 2012. Web. 08 Mar. 2016. <[https://prezi.com/rb5k\\_semwcvg/drama-as-a-genre-codes-and-conventions/](https://prezi.com/rb5k_semwcvg/drama-as-a-genre-codes-and-conventions/)>.

<sup>4</sup> FarjanaTahmin. "Conventions of Drama Films." *Conventions of Drama Films*. Slideshare, 22 Oct. 2011. Web. 08 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.slideshare.net/FarjanaTahmin/conventions-of-drama-films>>.

how the dog (Lucy) was used to feel like a companion by incorporating her into the frame with Wendy (left below), allowing the audience to form a connection to both characters. There were also moments of heart and emotion (right), something I wanted to capture in my own film (see my shots).



**Visualizing**

I wanted the audience to immediately connect with Edward, which is why I made sure to start the film with him and then refer back to him with close ups or lurking shots (see example below).



## Location Scouting

The main location I struggled to find was Edward's bedroom. I decided on the final one of the options below because of the dark and elegant headboard and old room fit for a ghost.



The location had to have a range of places for all the important scenes to take place in. For example, I wanted a way to see the girls come up the stairs before actually seeing them, giving a voyeuristic feel:



I also had to find a place with a lot of light, as in comedy, the shots tend to have natural light and a bright atmosphere.<sup>5</sup> I found a location that would give me the ability to do this (it had blinds to block the sunlight depending on the mood of the scene).

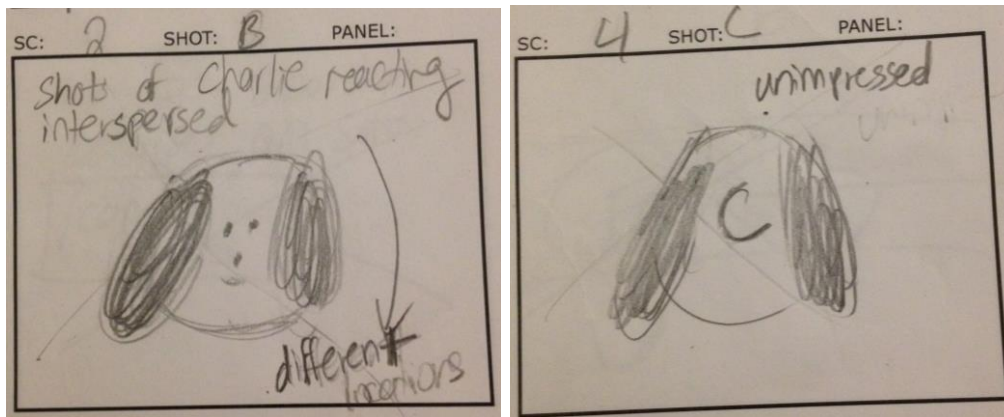
## Casting

In this film, though Edward is the protagonist, Charlie is the heart of the film. The audience needs to identify with Edward but also empathize with Charlie as he is in the same position. I wanted a dog that could show emotion in his/her eyes, was small and seemed like a companion. Joey, the chosen dog, is the picture on the right (making a similar pose that's in the film), while the other two that auditioned are also shown.



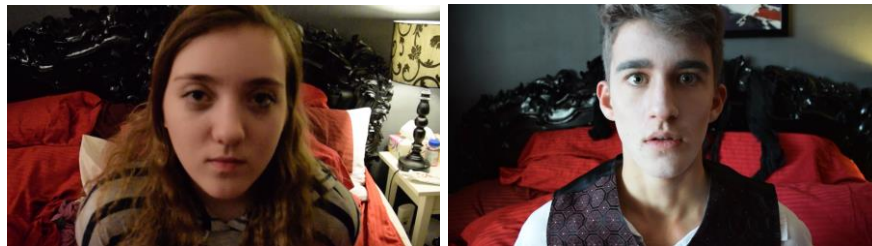
<sup>5</sup> Tobias, Joe. "Genre & Convention of Comedy." Genre & Convention of Comedy. Slideshare, 20 Oct. 2013. Web. 08 Mar. 2016. <[http://www.slideshare.net/tobiaz\\_man/genre-convention-of-comedy](http://www.slideshare.net/tobiaz_man/genre-convention-of-comedy)>.

To have the dog express all of the emotion I wanted was a challenge, but I attempted to do this through Joey's expressions and numerous close-up shots of her (two examples shown below).



### Practice Shots

I practiced most of my shots, especially with my shoulder rig for movement shots. One example is below: the movement of Edward sitting up. The framing of the shot was practiced so that we could make the shoot during production as efficient as possible.



## **Production**

### **Acting**

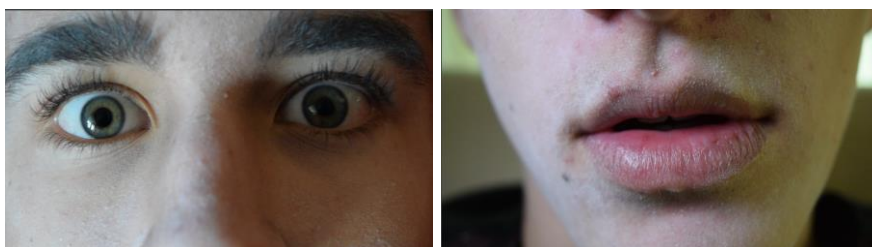
The character of Edward had to be one that the audience was able to relate to. He had to be relaxed, mischievous, and then ultimately pull the audience on his thought process of realizing he will be alone forever (see his character profile in the appendix). To get Adrien to perform this was a challenge and one of the key things I could have done better is trust my actors (especially him) more. For example, Adrien's best performance was largely from his improvisation (see right – that expression was his idea):



### **Cinematography**

There are also a lot of extreme close ups to highlight information and give a feeling of focus for the viewer. The opening eye shot represents that each day is exactly the same; just as boring and usual as the rest. The lip shot highlights the word “forever” for the audience, showing Edward's final realization of his fate.

We start the film with Edward, and then reach the climax with him. Both of these are extreme close ups, showing his character arc as he realizes what he has with Charlie and ultimately, what he will be when he loses him.

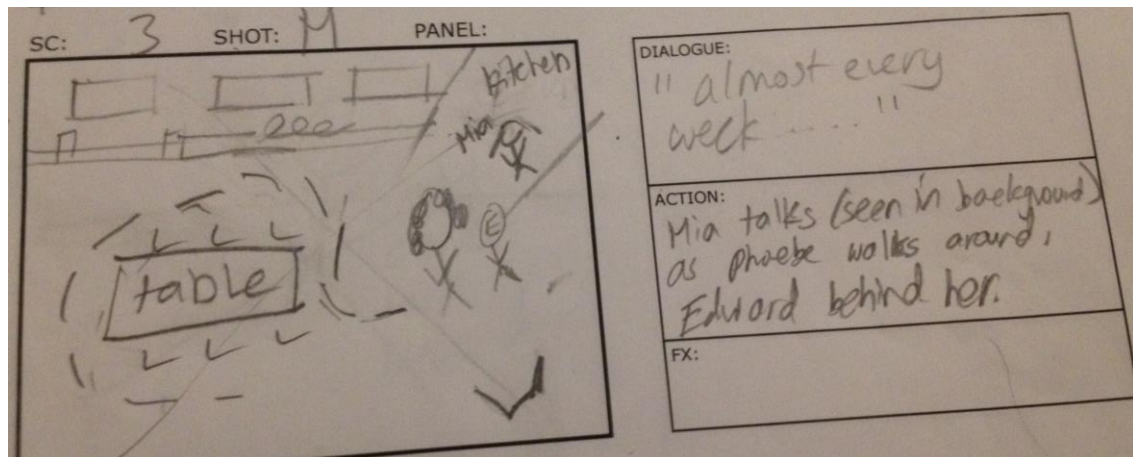


### **Blocking**

There were several things I had to change while filming because of actor blocking and the effect I wanted to create wasn't working.

At one point, I chose a follow shot instead of keeping Mia in the background of the frame, because it was logistically not possible to have a powerful shot where we could see Mia and then Edward lurking behind Phoebe (see appendix for floor plans). I should have planned this better with my set, as I feel that having Mia in the background would have aided the storytelling and reminded us that Edward was lurking. It could have also been intercut with close ups of Edward to ensure the audience was linked with Edward, but unfortunately didn't happen and Mia close ups were intercut instead.

## Storyboard:



## Actual shots:



## Shooting

I shot during two weekends, and did re-shoots of some shots on the second weekend, focusing on Edward and Charlie's scenes. This made it so the other actors and non-essential crew didn't have to come for both weekends, which made it easier for me to focus on the key parts of the film with fewer people to organize (see shot lists and schedule in appendix).



## **Post-Production**

Editing unnecessary parts and adding the fade transition and the shorter clips in the montage made it feel like time was passing fast (by developing a rhythm) but never ending, aiding the story and showing the comedy.

There were two possible end shots, but I decided to end with a shot of Mia to emphasize that Mia and Charlie's lives go on a path. The two photos show the possible ending scene and the actual one. The left ending seemed spooky and lonely, but seemed too unclear and distracting and did not emphasize the fact that life goes on without Edward.



## **Reflection/Evaluation**

I have realized the thing that I have struggled most with during this project is trying to do too many things. I was over ambitious with my shots and music, and wanted to try so many different things, that would've been more powerful if they were simpler. For example, the therapy was much stronger without lots of intercut CUs and MSs.

I should've trusted my actors more, as well and spent more time on the action scene where Phoebe falls, as it looks much more staged than I intended. I also should've tried and found more skilled people at color grading and music, which would've been more effective if someone more skilled had done them.

However, I feel that some of the emotion I wanted to convey was brought across. I also feel that the lead performances, especially Charlie, were better than I had thought they would be.

# **Bibliography**

## **Films:**

- *Home Alone*. Dir. Chris Columbus. 20th Century Fox, 1990. Online.
- *Risky Business*. Dir. Paul Brickman. Warner Bros., 1983. Online.
- *Wendy and Lucy*. Dir. Kelly Reichardt. Oscilloscope Pictures, 2008. Online.

## **Sources:**

- FarjanaTahmin. "Conventions of Drama Films." Conventions of Drama Films. Slideshare, 22 Oct. 2011. Web. 08 Mar. 2016.  
<<http://www.slideshare.net/FarjanaTahmin/conventions-of-drama-films>>.
- Hayward, Susan. "Comedy." Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts. Second ed. London: Routledge, 2000. 73-74. Print.
- Tobias, Joe. "Genre & Convention of Comedy." Genre & Convention of Comedy. Slideshare, 20 Oct. 2013. Web. 08 Mar. 2016.  
<[http://www.slideshare.net/tobiaz\\_man/genre-convention-of-comedy](http://www.slideshare.net/tobiaz_man/genre-convention-of-comedy)>.
- Upton-Dance, Hattie. "Drama as a Genre : Codes and Conventions." Prezi.com. Prezi, 4 Oct. 2012. Web. 08 Mar. 2016.  
<[https://prezi.com/rb5k\\_semwcvg/drama-as-a-genre-codes-and-conventions/](https://prezi.com/rb5k_semwcvg/drama-as-a-genre-codes-and-conventions/)>.

## Appendix

### Character Profile

I based my character profile off a worksheet I found online, asking questions about the character that should be answered. I used the questions to develop a few paragraphs about the character:

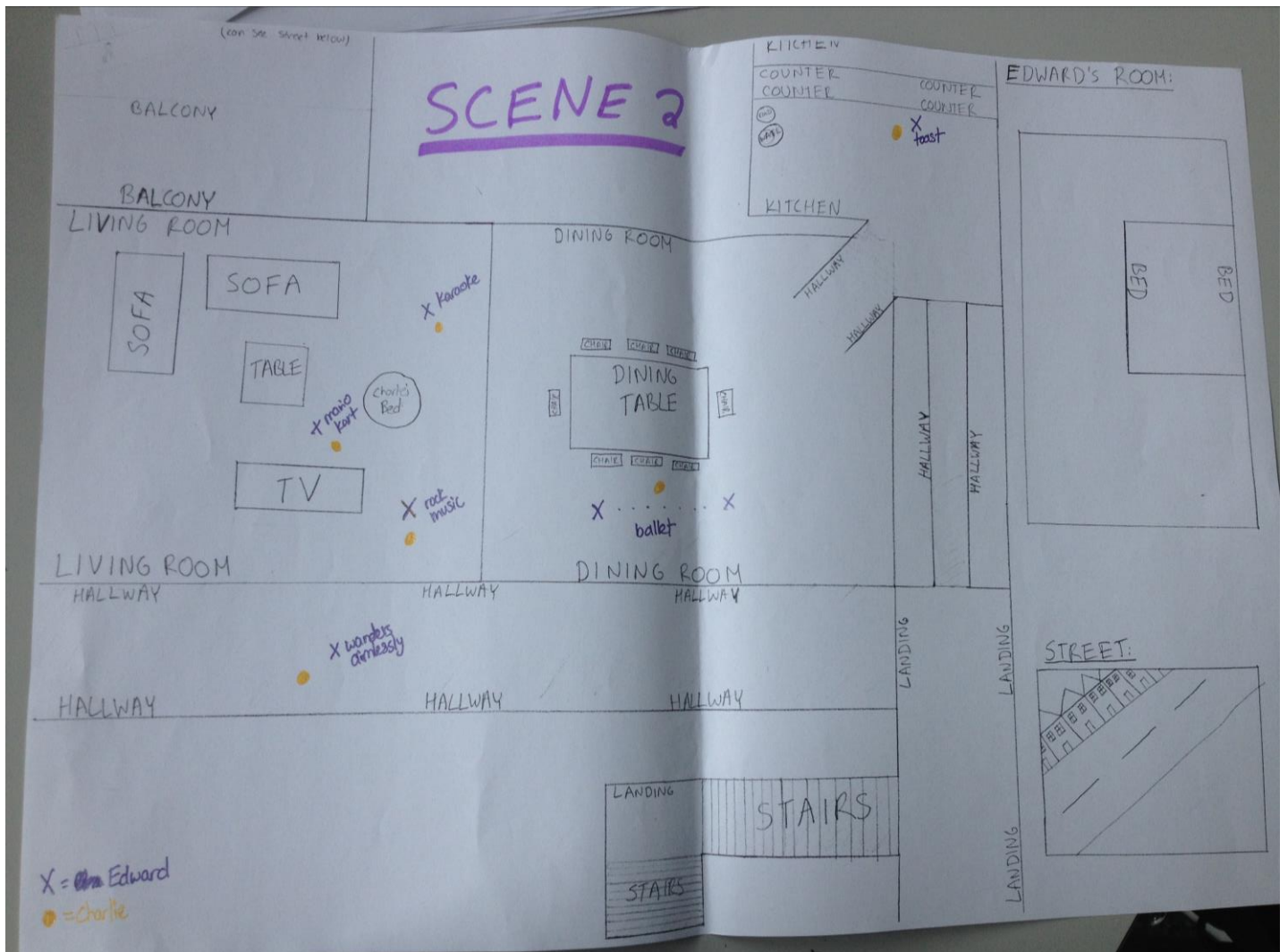
**Edward Oscar Seymour** is a sixteen year old boy who died from the common disease tuberculosis on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1875. He was born in London, before moving outside to a smaller town called Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, in the house that Kurt lives in now. His three sisters all survived the tuberculosis, and when his mother passed away, they all got married, leaving only his father in his house. His father eventually passed away, leaving the house to his brother (Edward's uncle) and his family. As the decades passed, families came in and out, until Kurt came and purchased the house with his family. Eventually, he and his wife divorced and Edward was left alone in the house with Kurt.

When he was a child, Edward was very bright and loved to learn. He enjoyed games primarily, was very spirited and loved playing with his siblings. He was very competitive, but was still a good team player. He loved the arts because of his three sisters, especially music, though he struggled with singing and dancing because of his height. He loves some of the modern technology, including Netflix, Wii and movies. Some of his favorites Wii games are dancing games like *Just Dance* and his favorite movie is *Fight Club*, because of the manipulation, violence and danger in it, all of which he would've been unable to see if his parents were here.

Edward was very religious and spiritual until he decided God didn't exist because He would have saved Edward from his fate after he died. Edward also was very emotional, until he saw his family die and leave and move on without him in front of his eyes. From that point on, he tried to only entertain himself and get from day to day with limited company, but not get too attached to people. This was partly because he was almost certain that there would always be more families. He is still in denial about this, as he he assumes there will always be someone here, but unfortunately, Kurt owns the house and will probably make it into a group of offices to make more money, so there will never be another family here again.

In the film, Edward is going through another day (or so he thinks). He goes through multiple games, movies and other activities before Mia and Phoebe come. He enjoys his company with Charlie, but does not really appreciate him. He loves playing pranks on people who visit the house, which is one of the reasons many of the families before Kurt left. The only person he does not scare is Mia, because she does not fear him, partly because she does not believe in him. When Mia speaks to Charlie, Edward starts to understand exactly what he misses about living and how lonely he is. This leads him to reflect in a therapy session next to Charlie, which eventually makes him realize he will be alone forever.

**Floor Plans** (one example is shown below)



**Shot List** (the first page is shown below)

SCENE	SHOT	TYPE OF SHOT	ONE LINE DESCRIPTION
1	A	MS	
1	B	ECU	
1	C	MS	SAME
1	D	MS	
1	E	MS	WAA SAME
1	F	WS	↓
1	G	M	↓↓↓↓
1	H	CU	
2	A	CU,MS,WS	ROCK MUSIC
2	B	CU,MS	CHARLIE
2	C	CU,MS	KARAOKE
2	D	CU	MARIO KART
2	E	MS-WS	WANDERS
2	F	WS	BALLET
2	G	MS	TOASTER WATCHED
2	H	CU	POP UP
3	A	WS	
3	B	MS	Edward
3	C	MS	Charlie
3	D	CU	DOOR
3	E	WS	
3	F	MS	E
3	G	MS	E lean
3	H	WS	
3	I	WS→CU	
3	J	MS	
3	K	MS-CU	Follow shot
3	L	CU	

**Shooting Schedule** (the first page is shown below)

# Shooting Schedule

Day/Date you will film	Scene #	Interior/Exterior Day/Night	Location	Shot Description/Summary	Characters/ Cast in the scene	Special Equipment
Monday 2/22	5	Int/Day	Jen's house-kitchen and hallway	Robert arrives home and hears Jen and Sara discussing the robbery	Jen Sara Robert	Briefcase Coffee Cups
Sun 29/11	4X	Ext/Day	Road Outside	Mia walks down the street with Charlie	Joey (Charlie) Emilie (Mia)	—
Sun 29/11	1F	Ext/Day	Road	Kurt walks down the street	Jon (Kurt)	Suitcase
	1G	Ext/Day	Balcony	OTS of Edward watching Kurt walk down the street	Jon (Kurt)	Suitcase
	1H	Ext/Day	Balcony	CU of Edward saying lie about business trip	Adrien	—
	1A	Int/Day	Front Door	CU of door closing	—	—
	3F	Int/Day	Front stairs	Birds eye of girls coming in	Emilie Phoebe (Abby)	—
	3G	Int/Day	Front stairs	MS of Charlie, Mia and Phoebe approach	Joey Emilie Abby	—
	3O	Int/Day	Landing	Mia comes back, cup steals (MS)	Joey Emilie Adrien	—
	3P	Int/Day	Landing	Mia talks to Charlie	Joey Emilie	—
	3Q	Int/Day	Landing	CU of Edward	Adrien	—
	3R	Int/Day	Landing	MS of Charlie leaving Edward (end of scene)	Joey Adrien	—
	3H	Int/Day	Landing	WS of Edward standing behind Phoebe, Mia and Charlie	Joey Abby Emilie	—

## Script Extract

INT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

Thus begins a montage: EDWARD dances to rock music, sings karaoke, plays Mario Kart, and wanders around aimlessly. He attempts to do ballet (pirouettes etc.) before he falls over. He also makes toast (he waits for it to pop up in the toaster). All of these activities are comedic and done with CHARLIE too.

## Pitch

My film is going to explore the idea of loneliness and answer the question what do ghosts do when they aren't scaring people? It will combine the genres of drama and comedy. I would like to be assessed as a director.

The film takes place in a house where a wealthy, workaholic businesswoman lives. She is rarely home and often takes business trips, so leaves her dog, her house and the ghost for days on end. Her teenage neighbor often comes over to walk and feed the dog during these times.

So, my film starts with a shot of the ghost watching the window as the businesswoman leaves. Then begins a montage where we see what the ghost does all day: dances, does karaoke, makes toast, plays video games and wanders around aimlessly, all with the dog. This is the comedic part of the movie.

In the next part of the movie, the teenage neighbor and her friend come over to feed the dog. The ghost gets excited and tries to scare them, but instead of getting scared, they just get annoyed and decide to leave early. Just before they are about to walk out, the neighbor comes back to the dog and pets her. She talks to the dog about how lonely it must be to be here all alone and the ghost gets a realization that everything she is saying to the dog also applies to him.

The girls leave and the dog and the ghost have a therapy session, where the ghost talks about his feelings of loneliness. This is party comedic but turns serious when he starts to understand that his only friend is the dog and when the dog dies, he will be completely alone forever. The neighbor comes back to take the dog for a walk and the movie ends at the same window at the beginning as the ghost watches the dog leave. There will be a dolly out, symbolizing that the ghost will be stuck like this, forever alone.

Shots, acting and the score are going to be key to communicating isolation and loneliness, compared with living beings.