Film Production Reel/Pages

IB Standard Level Film
M2019

https://youtu.be/ToHTygdn1UY
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IB Film Production Role #1: Editor
Clip #1: The Broken Puppet (0:00—1:00)

My experimental film, “The Broken Puppet” is about a child who does something wrong and is faced with confronting their abusive parents. I conveyed emotions and concepts within the film through abstract and discontinuous editing. One specific influence that I had was the editing within Christopher Nolan’s film’s Inception and Momento. Both helped me assemble my film in a non-narrative, expositional manner as well as display events from the perspective of the character.

During the pre-production aspect of the project, my primary role was conducting research and planning for the assembly of the film. After learning that most experimental films tend to deviate from the traditional narrative structure I was able to develop my filmmaker intentions. From an editing point of view my filmmaker intention was to visually outline a description of the main character while still maintaining a level of ambiguity. This allows the audience to investigate and draw their own interpretations of the character, creating a thought provoking and immersive film. I was intrigued by this concept from the editing in Christopher Nolan’s films Inception and Momento. Throughout both films the editors use an expositional technique. Using an ambiguous/vague opening shot and subsequently revealing more and more, captivates the audience as they try to piece together the plot from all the information being presented to them. I used these various techniques to create an appropriate tone and mood for my film. Specifically the anxious and hyperbolized mind of a child when they have done something wrong and must confess. Additionally, I wanted to immerse the viewers by putting them in the child’s shoes, switching between fast and slow cutting to create a sense of urgency, tension and fright; all emotions that a child would feel in this particular situation. Furthermore I decided to approach the experimental genre by attempting abstract and discontinuous editing by switching between a child's stream of consciousness and reality. Doing so would not only allow me to meet my filmmaker intention of using the expositional technique and immersing the audience into the child’s point of view, but also allow me to meet the expectations of the genre. Which in this case, are unconventional and risk-taking techniques. During this process I also brainstormed and create a list of the sound effects accompanying the visuals in order to evoke intense and visceral feelings in the audience.
Although my role as an editor primarily lies in the post production process during the production of the film, in order to meet my needs in post production I made sure to set my camera to the correct settings such as picture profile six in order to be able to colour grade more effectively. In terms of sound design all sound within the film was captured on my iphone using the voice memo app. As an editor my job was primarily to bring sight and sound together. During the production of the film, I mainly begin to make mental notes and changes to the assembly of each clip. A big challenge was making sure that I was able to capture enough footage to work and play around with in the post production process. I needed a variety of clips in order to meet my filmmaker intentions. This was solved by experimenting with different ways and angles to capture each shot.

As editor I had to effectively articulate the theme and narrative of the film, while maintaining the appropriate mood and tone throughout. I chose shots that I felt helped fulfill my filmmaker intention of an expository technique which can be seen at the beginning of my film. During the first sequence of the film I used a montage style, disjunctive editing technique, representing the thoughts of the child by mimicking camera shots creating a fast rhythm, thus producing an ominous crime scene like atmosphere. This ominousity would not only disorient and disturb the audience but also allow them to begin contemplating the rest of the film. In another subsequent two shots I attempted a match cut by showing bananas with bruises and then a shot of a child seamlessly playing with a car but with a match cut of a bruise on their arm in the beginning of the clip. This was used to begin conveying the notion of child abuse within the film. Furthermore, later in the film quicker jump cuts were employed to portray the psychological state of the child as they contemplate the different outcomes of telling the parents would cause. Pairing clips with specific sound also helped convey my theme further for example the shot of the child's feet and hands with the sound of parents fighting in the background effectively captured the child's point of view. For the score I asked my brother who is a professional musician to create a ambient and eerie sounding piece, providing various different examples.

Overall, I believe that I fulfilled my filmmaker intentions of creating a captivating immersive film. Additionally I portrayed the experimental genre through employing risk taking techniques which helped develop the film's tone and mood, creating a thought provoking film with layers of meaning. If I were to do something differently I would attempt to use more risky and new editing techniques.

**IB Film Production Role #1: Editor**

**Clip#2: The Chase (1:00—2:00)**
This film depicts a chase sequence between a thief and a vegetable seller. My vision for this film was to create a fast paced and frantic sequence. One of my primary influences for the production was the chase sequence in the film Inception.

As an editor, in pre-production my role was to research ways in which I could convey my filmmaker intentions. As stated previously one of my primary influence was Christopher Nolan’s Mombasa sequence from his film Inception. As the main character runs through the crowded streets of Mombasa, the scene is filled with intensity and velocity. The fast, straight cuts in the film paired with a shaky camera, work to create a frantic rhythm. I thought it would be effective to emulate this in my own film since the location of a crowded market was similar my film also. Thus, I used various techniques such as frequent cutting to create a frantic atmosphere. One particular element of the Inception sequence that I recreated in my film was the transitions from a peaceful atmosphere to a more chaotic one. This was done through clear juxtaposition between long cuts, which are seen in the exposition of my film and shorter cuts during the chase sequence.

\[
\text{Exposition} \quad \text{Chase}
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During the production aspect of this project I worked closely with the cinematographer and the director to make sure a variety of angles were shot to convey a sense of fast movement, since getting as much coverage as possible would give me (the editor) more control.

In post, not only did I want to create a chaotic sequence but I also wanted to make sure that my sequence flowed in a fluid manner so that the shots and cuts had a sense of motion to facilitate the progression of events. This was done by making sure that all shots moved in one directional flow so as not to “break the line” with the viewers. Furthermore in between fast paced shots wide shots were used to create a wider sense of what is happening. Additionally, detail within this film in particular need to be precise in order to maintain fluidity. For example, when cutting to a different scene, in a different location, particularly with foot movement, it was important that all movements
matched up correctly so as not to break the illusion of continuity. Overall I was able to achieve my filmmaker intention of creating a frantically paced film, through the utilization of fast cuts and maintaining fluidity to create a chaotic rhythm. If I were to change something in the film it would be to make better use of the soundtrack in creating a fast pace.

**IB Film Production Role #2: Cinematographer**

**Clip#1: Well Done (2:00—3:00)**

For this production I assumed the role of cinematographer, responsible for shot composition and making technical and artistic decisions. My film depicts a dinner sequence between a cannibal and her victim. The use of expressive shot composition (combining elements of German expressionism) and mise en scene helped realize my vision for the scene. Assuming the role of cinematographer I was able to use different shots to easily integrate the characters into the plot, without dialogue.

**Storyboard I made in pre production**

I intended to create an ominous scene with a horrific plot twist. Through the use of harsh lighting, shadows and a moving subjective camera I was able to create suspense. The reveal into the establishing shot is important as it sets the scene and allows the viewer to make inferences about the characters and story, thereby building suspense before the climax when the meat is discovered to be human. Some of my cinematic influences are quite apparent in this scene, as I took inspiration from various horror/thriller scenes I have admired in the past. After watching the film Nosferatu, I was curious about the other films that F.W. Murnau created. I came across The Last Laugh and was inspired by the directors famous “unchained camera” approach in the film and thus decided to incorporate it into my scene. This is evident through the various panning shots that were used within my film which enabled me to further create suspense. Through storyboarding I was able to plan out and compose all of the shots needed as well as organize my ideas so as to make the filming process smoother.

My production process relied heavily on following my story board making sure that I had gotten all shots needed. This helped me manage mine and the actors’ time effectively. During the production of this film I put together the set and collected all the appropriate props in order to create an ominous, malevolent mood as in many horror movies. I soon realized that using candlelight as opposed to artificial light would better contribute to the dark atmosphere, accentuating the big shadows and candlelight flicker which is prominent throughout the film. Additionally, I chose to use primarily red coloured props.
in order to emphasize the imagery of blood (a common image throughout the film). I also encountered problems in the production process as the leg reveal scene was difficult to portray realistically. As a result I was tasked with implementing various camera angles in order to acquire a realistic and clear shot. Furthermore some panning shots were out of focus due to the use of autofocus however I did not realize this until post-production and therefore this impacted my vision for the film as it was slightly distracting during some scenes.

During the post production process of this scene I decided against using a black and white colour scheme as I felt that the colours within my film greatly contributed to the overall suspenseful effect and dark atmosphere. I further executed my role as a cinematographer by stabilizing footage and creating a distorted effect within some scenes to further contribute to the atmosphere. Additionally during this process I realised that many may not understand the leg reveal scene upon first glance and thus, decided to slow down the shot. Other than these minor details the post production went well. Overall I thought that the outcome of the film was to my satisfaction as I was able to get the shots that I wanted through the use of a storyboard. However if I were to redo this scene, I would compile a few extra shots and angles to allow more freedom in post production with regards to changing the storyline or shot composition. This would be a lot easier than having to re-film entire parts of a scene should any changes need to be made. Through this film not only did I learn more about the different aspects of German expressionism as well as how mise en scene can impact a scene but also how pre-planning and having extra footage can be extremely useful in the post production stages.

**Production Role #2: Cinematographer**

**Clip#2: USB (3:00—4:00)**

This film depicts an exchange scene in which a person switches a USB of classified materials for a hostage. The use of expressive shot composition (to create emotion) and lighting helped me realise my vision for this scene. Assuming the role of cinematographer I was able to use different shots, lighting etc to create suspense and a sense of urgency.
For this production I intended to create a scene that creates suspense and evokes curiosity in the audience. Whilst doing research on and looking through generic spy films such as the James Bond and Bourne trilogies I noticed that the genre was heavily influenced by aspects of thriller. I decided to incorporate some of these elements not only through music but also lighting and camera shots. Some of my cinematic influences I took inspiration from were, as stated before, the bond trilogy but most notably Alfred Hitchcock's *Sabotage* (1936). I took influence from how the director created suspense in the “bomb delivery” scene. The scene opens with a slow zoom into the package, with the time of detonation superimposed overtop, creating a sense of unease by implying that something is off about the package. I attempted to employ this technique in my film with a slow pan onto a USB in order to portray an uneasiness followed by a scene showing the text message, indicating to the audience the malevolent nature of the USB. Additionally through storyboarding I was able to plan out and compose all of the shots needed as well as organize my ideas so as to make the filming process smoother.

In the production aspect of the film, creating *mise en scene* was fairly easy. I gathered all the necessary props for the scene and used the weather to my advantage in order to play with lighting and create a gloomy and dark atmosphere. I decided to open with a shot of a car against the backdrop of a rainy dark sky. Using rain as a symbol of death I was able to foreshadow the events to come. The subsequent *zooming shot* of the girl against the rain from the window was used to convey the character’s discombobulated emotional state, setting the tone of the scene. Lighting from the scene was primarily natural, which contributed to the dark mood and tone of the film as it was low-key. One of the main problems I encountered was staying in focus when creating camera movement as well as noise on the footage due to shooting in low light. Due to the fact that I had encountered grain problems before I easily fixed this by increasing the aperture so that more light would hit the sensor as well as increasing the ISO to a suitable range. Additionally to fix the focus issue I attempted to shoot at a higher aperture as well as the use of manual focus for certain scenes.

During the post production process of this scene I focused heavily on the colours specifically blues and black to add to the tone and atmosphere of the film. I further executed my role as a cinematographer by stabilizing footage and collaborating with a student musician to create melodic music that added to the mood of the genre. Overall the outcome of the film was satisfactory as I was able to get the shots needed through the use of a storyboard and successful planning. However if I were to redo this production, I would spend more time researching in the pre-production aspect of the project taking into consideration common shot compositions or angles used within the
spy film genre. During this production I learnt a lot more about creating and invoking specific emotions in the audience through the use of cinematic techniques.

**IB Film Production Role #3: Director**

**Clip#1: Jane Doe (4:00—6:30)**

The role of the director is generally defined as a person who, “controls a film's artistic and dramatic aspects, and visualizes the script while guiding the technical crew and actors in the fulfillment of that vision.” (film reference)

My film “Jane Doe” is a production that takes the audience through the conscious of a teenager, specifically the trials and tribulations that an ethnic teen may face. My primary intention for the film was to immerse the audience into the mind of the character as the story unfolds. Seamlessly transitioning and sometimes blurring the lines between the consciousness and the teenagers reality. After generating the idea for the film as a director, I decided to convey the concept using an experimental style. Looking back at the experimental section of the course, I remembered that experimental films tend to deviate from the traditional narrative structure and was then able to develop my filmmaker intentions.

During the pre-production aspect of the project, my primary role was to determine how I was going to visually interpret the screenplay. I wanted to do so in a manner where I was able to introduce the main character as anxious and nervous. I took inspiration from, and was intrigued by how Dan Trachtenberg was able to accomplish this methodology, making sure that tension or emotions felt by the character are visually communicated to the audience. For example, in 10 Cloverfield Lane when the antagonist, pins the protagonist against the wall for disobeying him Trachtenberg brilliantly creates tension through blocking. The blocking of the characters, making them in close proximity to one another paired with the positioning of them in between bars obstructing the frame helps create tension and a strong feeling of claustrophobia. In an effort to portray isolation I attempted to portray this in my own sequence in a shot which positions the character at the edge of the frame leaving a lot of negative space. Doing so allowed me to depict how the character feels isolated and small. Furthermore in the pre-production process I went location scouting to find a room for the opening scene. After looking at many classrooms I decided on a room that had a large window, letting in optimal natural light. This was the only source of light used in order to create a dark atmosphere/mood without seeming too artificial.

During the production process quite a few changes were made in order to satisfy my filmmaker intentions. For example, during the counseling session the main character was initially supposed to have dialogue. However, due to the inexperience of that actor
and in order to reflect the anxious and nervous feelings of the character I decided to show rather than tell. Instead I decided against the dialogue and directed the actor to break eye contact, looking away and getting lost in thought. Furthermore, in terms of technical difficulties the circle of students was supposed to be placed directly in front of the large window. However, this resulted in an extremely overexposed shot and ultimately I decided to position them against the window. The change in the characters positions against the light created less of a dark atmosphere, taking away from the tone of the film.

Additionally, for certain sections of my film, I took great inspiration from the works of David Fincher, specifically his most recent show “Mindhunter.” In which he uses a methodology, through camera movements, music etc. to lock the audience into the behaviour of the characters. My goal was to develop a better understanding of how directors such as Fincher are able to build tension and integrate the audience into their films. I specifically focused on the techniques he uses in “Mindhunter.” When the characters in the show are scared or angry, the camera movement, editing and music are all in synch with these emotions. I wanted to employ this in my own film by making artistic choices and decisions on how other aspects such us cinematography, editing etc. would help fulfill this intention and transform the script from page to screen. From a storytelling perspective this approach is just one way I, as the director, could add to the tension of the narrative. I used these camera techniques to create an appropriate tone and mood for my film. Specifically the anxious mind of a teenager. In the sequence my crew and I attempted to use the “Fincher method” when the character is seen listening to their parents fighting and the camera does a 360 tilt/pan to convey how anxiousness and the distorted nature of the teenagers mind. Furthermore I decided to approach the experimental genre by brainstorming the editing process. I wanted to switch between a teenager’s stream of consciousness and reality. Doing so would not only allow me to meet my filmmaker intention of immersing the audience into the teen’s perspective, but
also meet the expectations of the genre. Which are unconventional and risk-taking techniques.

In order to fulfill the vision for this film many aspects of the film were thoroughly planned out such as actor notes and timings for each scene. Checklists were also made in order to ensure that each scene was shot and what else needed to be done. During this process I also worked with the actors on how I wanted them to help me fulfill the vision of the film this was primarily done through blocking instructions as well as giving them notes on facial expressions. This can be seen through the various close ups within the first segment of the sequence where the actress holds an anxious expression. The actors were able to implement my instructions well, with a few additions such as accentuated breathing patterns during the track scene to convey anxiousness. Small improvisations such as this further added to my filmmaker intentions of conveying distress.

In general the pre-production helped me prepare for the actual production by helping me realise the artistic and logistical aspects of the film. On some occasions I had limited amount of time to shoot and by doing so I limited myself in the amount of footage I was left to reflect the intended meaning and artistic vision of the film. For example during the first part of my film some scenes go out of focus as a result of autofocus, this impacted my filmmaker intentions, distracting the audience from the emotional impact of said scenes. In terms of directing I think I performed well in situations that called for quick thinking such as adapting locations to the scene and to the actors in the scene as well as lighting changes etc. One such example of this was during the various track scenes in my film. I originally planned for the actor to be running alone on the track, however due to complications I had to adapt the scene so that there were people in the background. This took away from my original intention creating isolation however I do think it added to the characters emotional distress, in that, although she is surrounded by people she is still worrying about aspects of her life. Furthermore my “show” rather than “tell” decision taught me that sometimes scenes work better without dialogue as the choice impacted my filmmaker intentions by creating better overall emotional resonance since the silence helped create an atmosphere of tension.

**Copyright statement:** All music was created with the help of my brother and a fellow student. Sound mixing was done by a student in which a recreation and isolation of particular pieces from composer Adam Taylor (violins and piano) was used. All sound effects were created using the voice memo app on an iphone. Donald Trump clip was taken from a public press forum online.
Works Cited


