

Evaluation by Dillon Daly

While studying level three media at city and Islington college, it has opened my eyes on how easy it is to make a short film in only a matter of 2 weeks. I have learnt so much in the past year and this is my evaluation about everything I have done to achieve where I am today.

Firstly, our final major project was based on anything we wanted it to be and I have a really big passion for film so I decided to go for my favourite genre which is a horror of course. I wanted to show off what I could really do and that's the path I took this year. For my very first year of college I made a movie which I think wasn't as good as I thought it would be. However, in level three I feel like I have done a really good job as a lead director, a camera operator, a Foley artist and an actor.

I got the inspiration from horror films that have come out quite recently, for example 'Happy Death Day' Is a horror film where a girl that goes to university wakes up every day by living the same nightmare as a murder is after her. My film is quite similar to that, it was about a girl that has a dream and comes into reality as the dream chooses her fate. I also looked at some of the codes and conventions that horror films have a whole. How the cameras are set and angled to create tension and suspense, I have also used some of these techniques in my final major project as well. I also got inspiration from the facial expressions that most of the characters do in the movies so I wanted to recreate that in my own film. I also look on how males and females are represented in this genre so I wanted to mix it around a bit. I know that men are shown to be more of a dominant main character but in my film, I changed it to a woman because I think that it doesn't get much credit based on the gender of who they are.

Intentionally, this wasn't my main film description because I had two in case one turned sideways. The final major project was a group project with one of my classmates and as a group we did our best to get everything in order before the day of production. But before we started to film, we had to get all of the pre-production documents out of the way to plan how we are going to achieve this. Such as call sheets, Script, reece on location, mood board, production schedule, treatment, Gantt chart, crew list and risk assessment. Without all of these our film would not be possible and it took us around 3-4 weeks to get all of the written work done. However, I wasn't able to finish most of it because I was more focused on getting the script and treatment done before anything else.

When I sat down with my partner for his project, we thought about a really cliché description of what really makes a good horror which is in our generation. Nowadays its more about the supernatural and violence films so it was a good start. Both of us have a really good interest into the supernatural or ghosts so at first we were heading towards that but then more ideas came in that would be easier for us to achieve. I thought that it would be really difficult to do special effects where objects would move on their own and I don't have the really do knowledge to do that so I went for the better option by merging them together. What I mean by merging together is having a serial killer / supernatural movie where a cult book is in an innocent girl's possession and then eventually she is hunted by a killer in her dream that would come into reality. For the locations of the first film description we had weren't as good as I thought because we are only going to use a house and a street. I know that's where most supernatural film occur but I wanted it to be more realistic by changing it up a bit by using a forest. We did present our idea to the entire class and we spoke to them about the first idea but in advance we have a backup plan in case we didn't want to do it.

I did a numerous of research for the genre of horror films and all of it is on my blogsite such as my secondary research <https://dillondaly.home.blog/2019/05/13/fmp-secondary-research/>. I spoke about the codes and conventions of what you would expect in horror films and how it would help me with my own project. This research took me a really long time to do and If I had the chance to do this again next time, I'll have to do it at the very start where I had more time to do this. I believe that I have done really well so far but I could've done more. I could've wrote more on the secondary research and go into more depth about popular horror novels but also getting more book research that would've helped me have an open mind about horror as a whole. Representation in horror films are still around till this day and it having a big impact on how films are made. I think that most movies get backlash for some of the representations that's shown but it depends on how the creator of the film wants it to play out. I spoke about how age, race and gender is shown in the background of horror. These are the most common aspects of what is included to make a movie successful and I did use some representation in my movie. I made the genders more dominant and fair for the audience to react too. Some people would say that black people die first in horror films and that's what I have in my film. I didn't realise it until I had to change the actors due to the lack of trust. I feel like my actors are really good in my film and that's all that matters.

I did change my plans when I was doing the project and there are reasons for this. I didn't really stick to the entire script because I wanted to add new things to it to make it look interesting for my audience. The first thing I shot for my movie was the forest because I wanted to get it out of the way and I didn't want the weather to change as I was sticking to my reece report. However, while I was looking at the script I got to a point where I had to improvise as it wasn't noted down. So we down scenes where the character walked through the forest. I did change some of the angles for most of the film because once I got to the house and street location it wouldn't have worked for film so I thought it was a good idea to change it and I'm sure that it turned out well. For example, when Georgia and Lucas was talking and there was a knock on the door, I had to do a POV shot of Lucas walking over to the door to see the mysterious box. The reason I had to do this is because the house was quite tight and it was the best option I had. In the forest I added shots where the camera was hiding behind trees and bushes to make it look like that the character is being followed. It is very common in most horror movies to create tension and mystery towards the audience, as they wouldn't know what to expect.

For the horror part where the character gets killed for the first time, the angles had to be changed due to the fact that the room was small but in my opinion I came out really good. Overall I believe that I directed my cast really well to create my first proper movie.

There are quite a few successful things that happened while I was in the production stages and this is what they were. At first, I thought that directing a film on my own for the very first time would be difficult because my partner wasn't able to turn up on the day we planned. The forest scene took me around two and a half hours to shot on my own and once I got the hang of it, it was really easy and I enjoyed it. My actors also helped me being the camera operators so it was less trouble for me to handle. Once it got to the house and street filming that's where it got a little challenging as we had to shoot so many things with different angles. My partner turned up to help me and I believe that it got a bit better because everyone was chipping in by helping to get the work done which made this film a success while filming. I also took part in being a Foley artist by creating my own sounds as I wanted the film to be made by scratch. It would be way better if I used my own sounds as many other film productions do the same thing. For example, I hit a tree with a baseball bat for the hitting scene to make it look like the character was actually injured which would make the audience feel empathetic.

On the other hand, there was a few further developments that needed sorting out. What I mean by this is that there were a few issues while shooting our film. The first thing I made a big issue with the wind, there was a continuous flow of wind when we filmed and I didn't want to re-shot the entire thing because there was wind in nearly every clip. I didn't want to waste my time and I wanted to be ahead of schedule. I had no choice but to edit out the wind on premiere pro. I did forget how to get rid of wind on adobe audition so the easiest route was to go to premiere pro where I'm more comfortable of using. Another issue that I had was that there were people in the background walking and talking that I didn't know about until I start editing after the Easter holidays. I had to cut them out which did effect on the clips I wanted to use. The last issue that had was that some of the crew were late or didn't turn up on days that were planned to be shot on. I did effect how I wanted the film to turn out because time was wasted and if it got dark when we were shooting, it would be a disadvantage of the change of lighting and quality.

The types of elements for my project that I believe needed to change is possibly having more time to shoot the film to make it stand out more but I should've started to shoot a bit earlier. Also I think my editing could've been a bit better. Maybe I could have added more sound to my film because when I presented it to my classmates they couldn't hear anything so I think that might need change. Even making the sound higher would be easier. In most of the editing, I had a lot of walking because I wanted to capture her entire journey from the forest to her house. But I eventually realised that if I had too much of it my audience might get bored and lose interest in watching it. So I think that I need to cut out parts that I don't need and make the film a little shorter as its around ten minutes long.

Overall I think that my final project turned out good but it does need a lot of improvements and it could have been better if I put a lot more effort into the editing. If I was to do the editing again I could make it 10x better than the original if I have a chance by the end of the due date. But I really like how I did most of the work on my own and how I directed it because it seems pretty easy to understand and what's happening when you watch it.

Having a chance to film this taught me so many new skills and how easy it is to make a simple short horror film. I learnt how to use a different camera model which was a *canon*, I knew how to put the stabilizer on to make the footage less shaky. I learnt how to work with different people as a team and building stronger connections. Making this film was a new entire experience for me and it would love it if I had another opportunity to do this again.

When I presented my film to the class on the 13th of may I received my feedback towards my film and I learnt what I needed to improve to make the film better. Many of the class rated my film excellent but the sound of the rated 'good or okay' this tells me that the sound of my filmed has to be better. Most of my classmates enjoyed the storyline of the film and the camera work but the length of the film was too long for them. Some of the class liked the effect with the clock that's sped up because it looked really smooth. Some thought that the walking scenes were too long to watch and they got bored of it which was a disadvantage. Some people liked the visual effects with the forest scene where I made it look burly by using an effect called Gaussian blur which makes it stand out. The one main thing that my film needs improving on was adding more music to it as the class was sitting to silence so I'll need re-edit my film and find an appropriate sound for the background. I also need to higher the sound as people couldn't hear it. But overall creating the film was an enjoyable and also having a chance to study on this course is a privilege.

Audience Reaction Results

