

Film Production - Process Workbook

Creating film ideas

In the first week of the course we had been placed into our film groups (mine is Saule, Thess, Benji, Vinny, and Elliot) and we had been given certain tasks to complete i.e. short films analysis in preparation to know what to expect within the module, (which will all be explained further within the workbook), and leading up to our groups discussing various pitch ideas for films, so the name, taglines, story, location, characters, costume, props and others. So myself and my group had been discussing various ideas such as AA meetings, murder mysteries, and others and these are the pitch ideas that myself and my group came up with and presented to our classmates and lecturers:

- 1.) Our first idea was a short film that we called 'Sinners', Tagline 'What happens in church, stays in church', which revolves around a group of teenagers at a Christian Youth Club, where they are being interviewed for a documentary (mockumentary style entailing a genre of comedy), and you start to learn about the different backstories of the characters, why they are there, and to discuss about a disturbing incident that happened involving the group and how it affected each of them. This was a very good idea and myself and my group were keen to produce, because we loved the story, and it had the potential to be performed on campus and online at homes (if covid becomes a problem for meet ups).
- 2.) The second film idea that my group and I came up with was a film called 'Isolated', which focuses on one character (Lenny), who is a fresher at university, during the pandemic of Covid-19, who goes through many struggles with communicating with other people, and finding ways to cope with the stress and suffocation that isolation has caused him. However despite it being a good film idea with a lot of potential in terms of acting wise physically and emotionally it still required a lot of in person interaction, and there could've been certain options to pursue it online, but we felt the only way it would really work if it was in person with proper campus locations suited for our film needs.

Overall the pitch that was most successful and most voted for was pitch 1 'Sinners', because it seemed to intrigue all other group members than the second idea, because of the story overview, the characters involved, the genre of comedy and various opportunities to work both on campus and online. So myself and my group were thrilled to be working on this short film, and how we felt it would be a great project and experience to work on especially building up knowledge for a career within the acting industry.

How to create a film?

We were given tasks by Lloyd to watch certain short films, where we would take note of the filming qualities i.e. transitions, camera angles, physical and emotional responses from characters and others. I watched 5 of the short films, but I found “Work” most intriguing, because it’s about a girl who appears sad, lost and unsure of who she is and is struggling to follow with the moves with the dance group, and we see transitions of her daily life from getting the bus, going to work, seeing her family and how she is the only one who really does anything, and this implements the incentive for her to show the dance choreographer that her skills in dance are truly worth something. This was a great example of a short film production, because it captivates the audience and makes them want to know where the story is going to go and how it will end, and this inspired me to ensure that happens for my groups short film. I also did further research suggested by Kieron to watch a comedy series “This Country” as it’s a mockumentary based series and offers many examples of filming and acting that can be an asset when creating ‘Sinners’, this is found in ‘Appendix 1’.

“*Work*, 2017, Aneil Karia, YouTube,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkqgjsMDYho&t=27s>”

Lloyd also helped us with various techniques in our second session with him in order to act in various positions with a camera, and from different sides of the room to see how it provides effect for an audience, which was the filmmaker crew. So he showed us some exercises of positioning the camera at various angles and portraying certain facial expressions i.e. tilted camera with horror theme, close up and facial expression of intimidation, and various others that imply various genres based around the angle of the camera. He also shared a small monologue piece for us to briefly memorize and to perform different emotions, for example sad, nervous, excited, and others, and he also asked us to perform the physicality in certain ways, for myself he told me to aim my camera at my cupboard so I was in full shot and I was cleaning it like a new car whilst still talking , in order to see how it plays out mixed with emotions in dialogue and action. So these were very useful in understanding what is expected of myself and my group within the acting process of filming.

The sessions that we had with Dan and Brett were very useful and informal in terms of understanding the use of shooting at certain angles, the names of certain **shot types**, for example wide shot, very wide shot, mid shot, medium close up, close up and extreme close up, also included were various **Camera angles**, for example eye level, high angle, low angle, dutch angle (tilted/diagonal position), over the shoulder, birds-eye view, and point of view (first person shooting). So these are all key examples of various shot types and angles to use for films. I also did some further research to fully understand the meaning of these shots and angles and how they

implement effect towards the audience, the information can be found on '**Appendix 2**'.

Creating characters

So once my group and I established which film we would be creating we started to get to work on developing our characters, we used various methods to establish personal backgrounds for our characters, for example we used the 'hot seating' method to ask certain questions about each group members characters, there likes and dislikes (once we had established more insight to their backgrounds), and we also used 'Uta Hagen 6 steps' to help define the character in the story, how they act with other people, and what the connections they have to each other and to the story itself, the Uta Hagen 6 steps can be found in '**Appendix 3**'.

I also researched specific Christian facts to understand how devoted religious believers act for themselves and with other people to help portray my character 'Mark'. So I found out various things, for example true Christian believers act to be kind and respectful of other people, to be diligent when serving the lord, to be kind to fellow Christian brothers and sisters as it is a reflection of the love from the lord to his children on Earth, and how they do not seek revenge against anyone who has done ill towards them to show that they regard all manners that are good and don't wish to lose the respect of what they have with the community. So these were all very useful sources of information as they helped highlight the ways devoted Christians treat each other, and the emotional attitudes I needed to build-up at the start of the interview and helped provide me the means to twist some of these sources around to perform the opposite so it appears humorous within the film. "**Growing 4 Life, (2019), How does a true Christian act?**,

<https://growing4life.net/how-does-a-christian-act/#:~:text=%20How%20Does%20a%20True%20Christian%20Act%3F%20,meet%20the%20needs%20of%20their%20fellow...%20More%20>"



Here is my costume choice for my character, so that he appears friendly to the interviewers, physical evidence of being a devoted Christian with the cross, and shows he has made an effort.

Creating the script

My group and I then proceeded to work on our scripts, where we would each develop our own characters interview dialogue as they weren't face to face conversations, but through the development we would always discuss as a group what we had created on the day, and whether it's good or needs further improvement to tie into the story and match the characters personality.

We had many changes to the story when we had originally laid out the plot, as we said that the 'inciting incident' would be the vicar being yelled at by Mark and having a heart attack, and the idea was good but when we disclosed it with Kieron he thought that more had to be included in order to build up to the incident, so he laid out a scenario to do a hot seating of our characters at a village fete and what we would be doing and how it concludes, and that's how we came up with the idea to shift the incident at the village fete and instead of the vicar having a heart attack, he would be punched by Mark out of anger and frustration of seeing him with his mother. This really helped changed the way we proceeded with the story as it offered many things to work with at the fete, for example we discussed how the various incidents would occur, and that's when we thought of the drinks being spiked by Timmy as he would be bored and want some entertainment to emerge, and that helped tie in with the story leading up to the ending when we decided that Thess's character would be in charge of the clubs donated money, and how it went missing after everything happened at the fete, and then Timmy reveals he stole the money and none of the characters would be any the wiser, to play on with the comedy and helps to conclude the story.

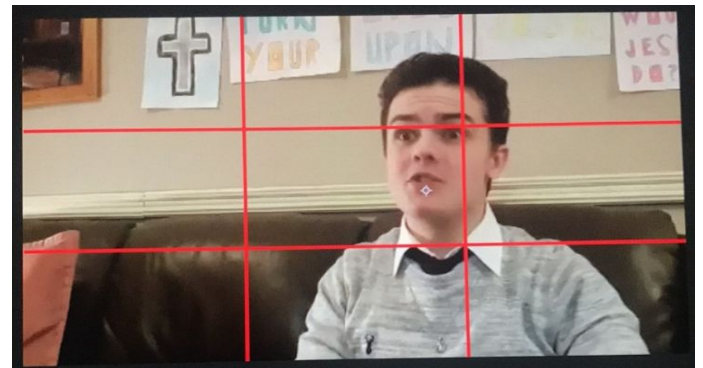
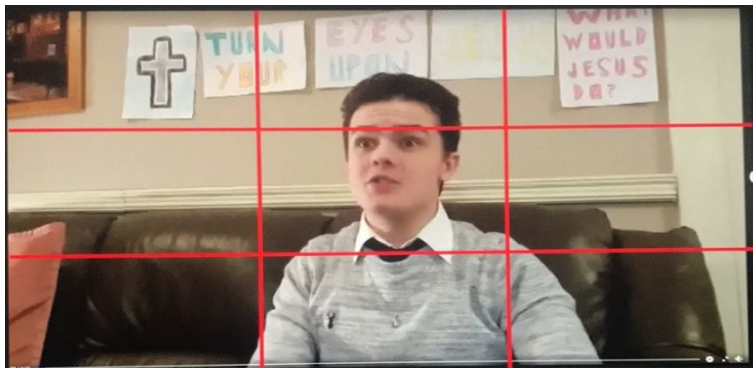
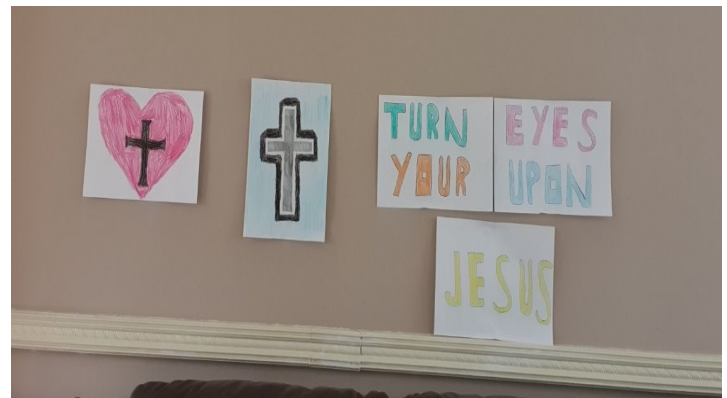
In terms of who took charge for leading the creation of the script it was essentially a whole group collaboration, so each member of the group had a part to play in all aspects of creating the script and helping with the film, for my part I helped contribute to character dialogues and some of the funny lines that could be used, for example Bernice's line "*she's in her 40's she should be in a care home*" and various others, and helped with creating ideas for cutaways and prop effects (Tea, Jammy Dodgers and others) to help build up the story and bring more humour to the film and characters involved. So we as a group worked really well together, and ensured everyone had a part to play in contributing to the film and the many ways to make it better.

Overall, I felt that the dynamic team work of the group was very good, admittedly there were some slow starting points but we all really collaborated once we started brainstorming and bouncing new ideas from one another for story build-up, character dialogues that provided humour, and we were always able to present something new for Kieron to discuss and go further with the work to make it the best it can be by

filming day. I have also done additional research to better understand the key elements to look out for when preparing a script, this can be found in '**Appendix 4**'.

Creating the film

We then proceeded with the filming process of our work. Since our film is based around interviews it made it easier for myself and my group to self tape our scenes without the trouble of back-and-forth dialogue between one another, and the locations for where we would be filming individually was within our own homes in various places (mine is in the living room area shown below) this made it easier for shot choices to experiment with and to incorporate various props and backgrounds of my own design to help go into more depths with the character. During the filming process we had been instructed by both Elliot and Kieron to experiment with various angles and positions in order to make the film look like an authentic interview.



Here are exemplar images of Elliot's 'framing', and this really helped to identify the positioning of my camera in the early stages of practice runs and how the first image shows that I am right in the centre of the camera and below eye level which doesn't tie in with the interview based layout, and the image on the right displays how the camera should position myself more to the right so it's not too central and needs to remove eye shadow by positioning a few inches upwards, and helps to project a clear interview shot of the character from the torso upwards. So this was very useful to help position the angles and shots for my scenes.

So I experimented with various positions both left and right with the improved level in shots and angled my positioning so it wasn't central. However I presented it to Kieron a week before filming day for our scene reviews and he thought it was really good but suggested having the camera 3-6 inches below and covering all blank spaces from the sides and above my head so it covers the dead space whilst still maintaining clear display from the torso upwards, and that's how I came with the shot below.



So this was my definitive camera shot which I have used for filming day, and it has worked very well in displaying clear viewing of myself that helps offer physical actions, for example holding a picture of my father, drinking tea, eating Jammy dodgers, and others, has minimal dead space, and clear view of the backgrounds. So this has really helped me to develop skills of self-directing my own scenes, what to look out for, and various ways to make it look better.

I also did some research about acting for films that have been shared by various acting coaches/authors/directors about specific things to look out for that has helped to perform my role and make it look presentable on film, so it stated many things, for example how 'Specificity is invaluable', and this means that to play the character with full embodiment, we must isolate the qualities of our own persona in order to let the specific qualities of our characters dictate how we play out a scene from the film, so this helped to understand the key element to escape my own mind and thoughts and step into the mind of Mark to understand his world and how he responds to it.

Another is that 'over-enunciation is an enemy', and this states about how as stage actors have to have a loud and clear voice it can be an enemy when filming a scene as the words could come out slurry and not make sense, so it's key to control your voice and to ensure it is clear and easy for audiences to understand the words emerging from your mouth. This was very useful in understanding that projection, diction and clarity in voice must be clear when acting in a film so it's not sloshed and over the top. So all this information was very useful in rehearsing and practicing my lines and to help me portray my character in readiness for filming day.

"Casey Munik, (2017), 7 Need-To-Know Tips For Acting On Camera, <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/need-know-tips-acting-camera-4073>"

Final rush through of the film

So what I felt went really well about the run through is that I thought my character fitted well within the story, in terms of helping with the story build-up when

referencing the vicar and other characters, and shifting between emotions that help show different sides of Mark to make him interesting throughout the story. I also felt the physicality, use of props and certain cutaways worked very well with the film as it added more humour and fitted in well with the story development, for example scoffing down the Jammy dodgers as stress eating, drinking burning hot tea and looking like an idiot on camera, all of these were key assets to providing comedy for the film. I also felt there was good projection in voice and it was clear and fitted in with the frustrated build up towards the end of Mark's dialogue. I also thought that this was a much better scene when I recorded on filming day with the notes and guidance from Kieron, Lloyd, and Elliot, and compared to my previous trial runs this one fitted in with maintaining realism of focusing on the interviewer (and not back-and-forth at the camera), physicality with the tea and how it burns for more humour, and being slower towards the end when staring into the camera so it doesn't seem too rushed, and applies a funny effect to the end of Marks interview.

I did however think that there were certain moments where I could've done better, for example take my time with certain dialogues as they seemed quite rushed i.e. towards the end where Mark talks about hitting the vicar and could've been slower and build up of anger to make it more funny to highlight the overreaction of Mark. I also felt that diction in some areas was a bit flat, because I seemed to rush my words and pronunciation sometimes and it tends to get lost, and also to play around with more facial reactions as some areas seemed limited, for example when talking about Timmy joining the group could've had more of an annoying facial response. So these are the main things to focus on for improvement in the future.

For the group, I thought that each and everyone of there scenes was brilliant, they had great connection to there characters in terms of emotional context i.e. Saule being shifty and emotional, Benji being laid back and chavy, Vinny being full of himself in the hopes of being a rockstar, and Thess with the massive obsession with the vicar and how it shifts as the story develops. They each brought forth a uniqueness to their characters and presented them well on camera including various angles and lighting for better effect, and different backgrounds to show how they are different from each other yet drawn together by the church youth group. The only improvement I would have suggested is to engage more physically, they all did for the majority but for some sections there were moments of stillness that could have been played about with to add onto the emotions used in there scenes, but overall they each played a significant part to their roles, and they were a great group to work with, we each listened to each other with great care and open minds, and always kept finding new things to add on to ensure continuous progression for the success of our film.

To conclude, this module has been very enjoyable and exciting to work on, I have learned many things in terms of understanding various shot types, how and why they are used, I learned how to be my own director and self tape my performance with

various filming experiments, consistent space, backgrounds and others, I also learned to generate new ideas for cutaways and use of props to implicate more comedy effects that hook the audience and urge them for more. How to generate script ideas, what to look out for, and various methods for improving and adapting the story (hot seating for example), and I had great support from my lecturers and great teamwork with my group, and I know that this course will help me one step further for a career within the acting industry.

Bibliography

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- 'Scarecrow', (2017), *This Country*, Series 1 Episode 1, BBC Iplayer, 12th February, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPSUas961PU>

Appendix 1

So I did a bit of research into 'This Country' and how certain qualities of filming and acting could be a tremendous help with 'Sinners', so I watched a small clip on YouTube, which introduces the two characters, Kerry and Kurtan Mucklowe, and how they are cousins but are more like best friends to one another and they go to explain their likes and dislikes with the simplest of things i.e. chocolates. It also shows various transitions between them and another character, the Revenant, and it shows he is positioned on the right side of the interview and not central down the camera because you see that he doesn't look directly at the camera but at the interviewer, and at an angle it shows clear eye level and facial expressions of the character, so that was useful to know when creating the film, and when he discusses about Kerry and Kurtan he says that they are good people but tend to curse a lot and does a cutaway back-and-forth of the two characters swearing to help tie in with the Revenant's explanation, and I thought this would be good if the characters of Sinners referenced each other and they do exactly what the person who is describing them is doing for cutaways (as an option), to provide a comedic effect within the story. It also showed off screen characters, for example Kerry's mum and how they rant at one another with subtitles for her mum as you can only vaguely hear her, and this helped to provide the means of bringing Marks mother as an Off-set character so it shows

interactions from more than one person and how they play off their responses. So these are very good examples of how to lay out an interview based film, the key aspects of comedy to think about (cutaways), and how to incorporate characters off-set to provide more emotional responses for the main characters and how it develops the story.

‘Scarecrow’, (2017), *This Country*, Series 1 Episode 1, BBC Iplayer, 12th February, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPSUas961PU>

Appendix 2

I did some further research on my own to better understand the use of these shots and angles within other films, so I looked on this website of various camera shots and this helped to better understand the many uses and meanings of them all, for example how it gave power to characters (low shots) or made them feel less (high shots), tension build ups (hip shots), open shots to towns, cities, armies (birds eye view) and various others that were informal and offered many options to work with for the film, and helped to work with various physical and emotional context that is defined from the use of specific shot types during the interview. All of these were very useful to understand the meaning for various shots and angle types, and to produce in the premise of an interview. **“SC Lanom, 2020, *every camera shot explained (shot list, ep 3)***

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/types-of-camera-shot-angles-in-film/>”

Appendix 3: Uta Hagen 6 steps- Mark

Question 1 - Who am I?

- Mark's present state of being within the interview is that he starts out slightly nervous, but tries to maintain a happy face.
- He perceives himself to be an all round kind, considerate, and saint person who has followed Christian beliefs his whole life, and tries to be active, help out when he can, and likes to be in control of things i.e. an organiser or helper. Doesn't like anyone who changes his ways and interferes with his life (referring to the new vicar)
- He is wearing smart clothes as he likes to be presentable and shows he's made an effort. He is quite smart and casual, as he is wearing a blue (slightly striped) jumper with a white shirt underneath, a tie, blue trousers and a necklace of the holy cross.

Question 2 - What are the circumstances?

- The story within the interview takes place around February, on saturday (where Timmy arrives) and the following saturday after (where the village fete commences). Within the interview it's possibly between February and early March, and the weather is light but grey.
- Mark is from England but moved to Wales (Ferryside), a rural area when he was 10, and is currently in his house, in the dining/kitchen area where he is sat on a sofa.

- What surrounds him are tables, pillows and posters of various religious backgrounds i.e. Words relating to Jesus, Holy cross, and pictures of his mum and dad, cup of tea, and Jammy Dodgers, weather will be a bit dull and grey, the surrounding area is fairly clean.
- So what has happened prior the interview is that Mark and his group introduced a new member to the Christian Youth Club (CYC) Timmy, and discussed how they reacted to him arriving, and sharing their own personal backstories, and discussed embarrassing events that went down at their local village fete.
- What's happening presently is that they are being interviewed by a cameraman and answering questions about themselves and anything in relation to the youth club.
- What happens towards the end is that the donation box that the group raised at the fete for the hair-lip puppy foundation had appeared to be stolen under the watch of Thessa's character Bernice and no-one knows where or who could have taken it, until T-dog/Timmy reveals the donation box at the very end.

Question 3 - What are my Relationships?

- His relationship with his mother is fairly strong, as she is the one he looked up to and respected above anything-else as she helped get him into the youth group and know right from wrong, but when the affair with her and the Vicar happened he disagreed with her on that subject completely.
- His relationship with his father used to be strong and still is at heart but unfortunately he passed away from a tumble down a manhole, but he lives to uphold his fathers beliefs as he is the one who helped him get into the belief of Christian religion, and to follow the tenements and the will of the lord. So it's quite a strong father-and-son relationship.
- For the rest of the group he doesn't have much personal or close relations as he mostly tries to help out with the group and organise their activities, to act like a fully mature adult despite being the same age as they are (17)
- The relationship he has with the new Vicar (Father O'reilly) is not strong, because he is seeing Mark's mother, and it's made him feel uneasy around the new vicar and that he can't be trusted and is trying to replace his father, and also trying to change the way the group usually do there activities to how Mark and the old Vicar used too.
- The relationship with the old Vicar was a lot better, because he looked up to him, and thought he was a great man who was heavily devoted to the group and the religious beliefs provided. Until he left which upset Mark because he thought he was the best vicar and enjoyed the way they both formed the group.

Question 4 - What do I want?

- His super-objective in this film is to explain about his role within the youth group, brief about his past and then explaining from his point of view about the incident that occurred at the village fete and why he did what he did, and

this is where all the characters explain their own viewpoints on what happened and for Mark it involved his mother and the Vicar kissing and then Mark striking the Vicar as he couldn't take seeing them together anymore and wanted him gone.

Question 5 - What is my Obstacle?

- Not really a definitive obstacle for the interview of the character as he is talking in past tense, but in terms of the situation with the Vicar it seems that the obstacle for getting him out of his life is him, because he insists that Mark is overreacting about the subject, and winning his mother over, and calling him son, which irritates Mark, and is the key reason why he can't achieve his objective to get everything back to the way it used to be with the old vicar, where he could have control of what happens in the group.

Question 6 - What do I do to get what I want?

- Mark basically builds up all the anger and frustration that he has bottled away because of his beliefs and that he shouldn't wage conflict with anyone, but after all the Vicar has done to him from Marks perspective, it overwhelms him and he shouts and punches the vicar in the face, which shows Mark shouldn't be messed around with, but his mother still has feelings for the vicar regardless and in the 'where are they now' section' Marks mother and the vicar get married which infuriates Mark, and he leaves the club to form a satanic cult to convince people that Father O'reilly is the devil, so that is how Mark attempts to get what he wants but will never know if he does.

Appendix 4

I researched various ways to create scripts and I found a guide to prepare a functional script for a film based project (some of the work is referenced to the teachings that have already been provided to us, and others are completely different to help get a better outlook on how to layout the script), for example creating an outline for the film i.e. the physical locations and summary of the story to better breakdown the scenes and the dialogue to include. Another is to focus on a single protagonist or event of the story i.e. in Mark's case the Vicar and the village fete where the emotions, physicality and expressions tie in to demonstrate his feelings towards the person and event that helps grasp the attention of the audience so that they want to know how it concludes. So overall this research was very useful to understand how to create a structure for a script, how it helps to highlight the characters actions and what they are expected to do, and how it becomes interesting to the audience that they continue to engage with the story to the very end. **Script Reader Pro, July 1st 2020, *how to write a script for a short film: An 8 step guide*, <https://www.scriptreaderpro.com/how-to-write-a-script-for-a-short-film/>**