

Independent Project Cliffside Calamity

by Joshua Critchley

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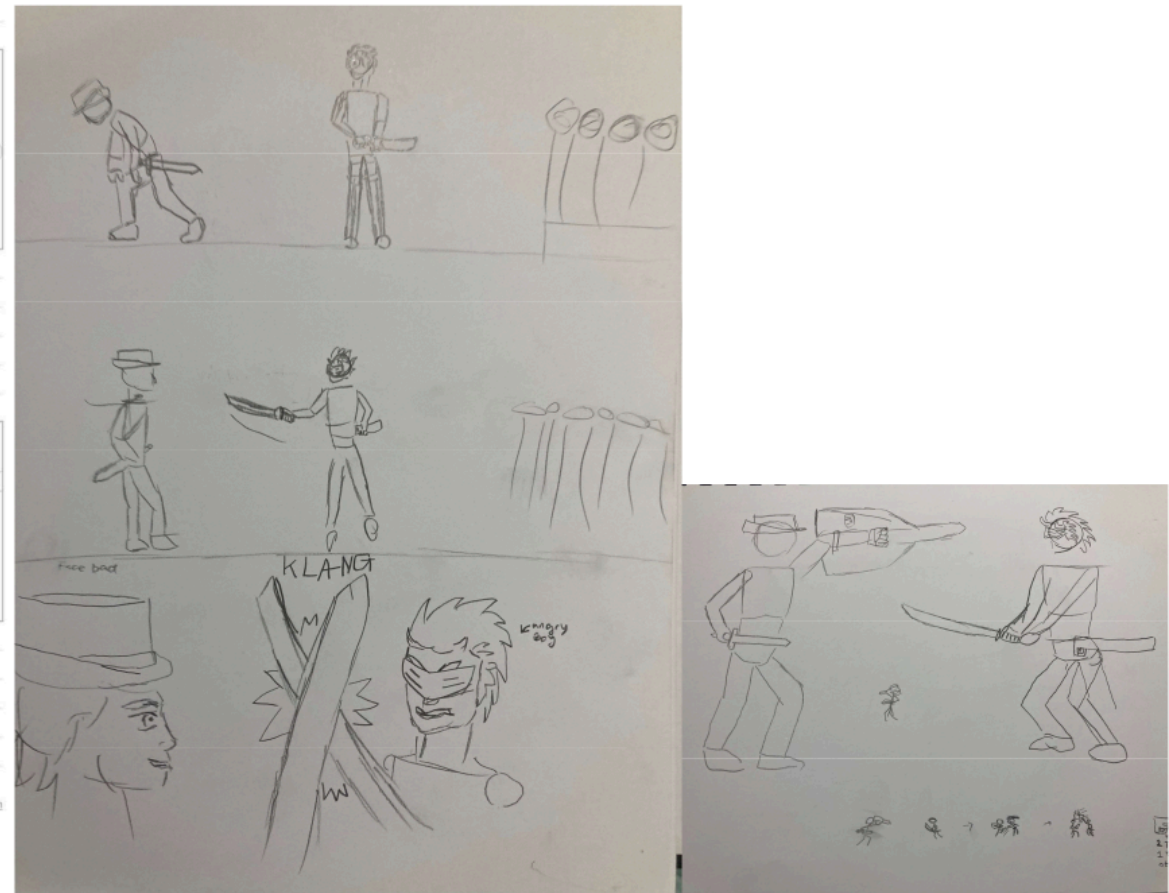
Word count: 1184

Character count: 6427

Independent Project Cliffside Calamity

by Joshua A. Critchley
Animation and Visual FX
Supervisor: Philip Organ or Nabeel Masih

Initial designs/ concept art from key scene to act as a hook



A statement of the problem to be solved together with any background/rationale that might be appropriate.

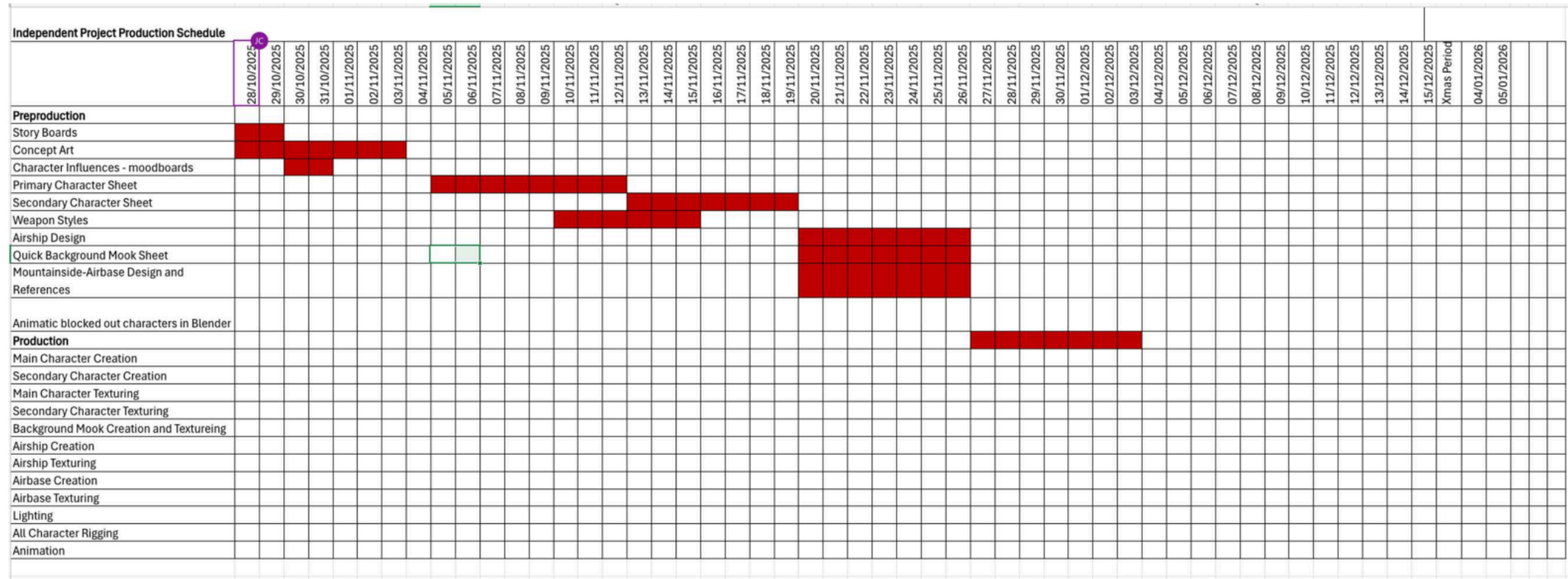
- The sequence is part of a larger story, however this section has been selected to develop my story telling abilities within a limited time frame.
- The main character is an escapee who goes up in an open top freight elevator when it gets to the top, he see a crowd of people that he trapped on an airstrip. After he jumps over them and is confronted by the boss of the airbase which is located on a mountain side, a fight develops. The fight stops when the detonator is seen in the prisoner's hand.
- The target audience; People who like action (and some violence) examples of inspiration have come from Sword Art Online, Cinematography inspiration has come from Studios Trigger and Gainax. Stylistically the animation takes aesthetic influence from the 3D animated Series RWBY which was shown on a YouTube channel.



Aims of the project

- The sequence will be approximately 20 seconds. I intend to utilise Blender for the models then Maya/ Blender for the animating.
- I want to challenge myself to see if I can tell the story through different camera shots which will then be edited together.
- This project will involve making multiple character models and the environment.

Gantt Chart with tasks and subtasks and dates for completion (SMART Targets)



Methods tasks and sub tasks

- I will make the animation's models in Blender and animate it in Blender too.
- The lighting is planned to possibly be done in Maya however, if necessary, will use Blender as a last resort.
- Sound effects may be made by hand but will use online repository if necessary.
- Editing will be done in a suitable software, but if no known software found will use Blender.

Literature Review 6-8 books/ periodicals (500 words) Games etc

- J. Kreng, Fight Choreography – The Art of Non-Verbal Dialogue. United States :Thomas Course Technology, 2008.
- How this will be useful for your project?
The book allows me to better understand the intricacies of fight choreography and how it continues the stories momentum. The book goes over multiple different fighting styles seen in movies and helps build the character's story up and construct the narrative further into the work.

- E. Hooks, *Acting for animators*, Fifth edition. Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, 2023.
- This book *Acting for Animators* gives useful information on how to create empathetic and dynamic character performances in animation and how to make them. Mr. Hooks explains this through the exploration of different interpretations of how it can be portrayed. The proposed research will go through chapters 3 and 4, as those are the most useful to me as each chapter goes over the depiction of Heroes and Villains alongside how to display the different types of gestures.

- R. Williams, *The animator's survival kit*, Expanded ed. London: Faber and Faber, 2009.
- This book teaches several central concepts to animation, including information on how to utilise good timing key movements and immediately understandable actions. Through this I should be capable of getting a stronger grasp on many of the lessons I've already learnt throughout my time in education.

- Acting Magazine " What are the Stanislavski Techniques?" Acting Magazine. Accessed: Dec, 04, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://actingmagazine.com/2025/01/what-are-the-7-stanislavski-techniques/>

This is helpful for me because using knowledge of Stanislavski acting methods I'll be able to build a believable animation, especially if I utilise techniques shown within his work. Stanislavski is known for 7 methods within acting, these include; Emotional Memory, The Magic IF, Objectives And Super Objectives, Given Circumstances, Subtext, Concentration And Relaxation and Circle Of Attention.

- J. L. Kundert-Gibbs and K. Kundert-Gibbs, *Action! : acting lessons for CG animators*. Indianapolis, Ind: Wiley, 2009.

This will help me emphasise the animation and teach me to better put emotion and purpose behind the characters I'll be animating. The work goes over how examining acting can give better ideas of how to animate a "CG" (computer generated) character. This book also encourages the use of Stanislavski techniques to animated characters.

- J. M. Blain, *The complete guide to blender graphics : computer modelling & animation*, Seventh edition. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2022.
- This is very helpful for my overall work process. This is because while I have some experience in Blender, I have plenty more to learn. This will give me more information on how to build on the skill I currently have and give me more capability to animate more stuff. I will also be able to figure out usages of more 3D animation software tools based on the tools of Blender.

- L. Milic and Y. McConville, *The animation producer's handbook*. Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 2006.
- An all-in-one guide to animation and the processes found within. Essentially essential reading for those seeking a route into the animation industry. The handbook gives helpful advice especially for 3D animation in chapter 9 and thus is the most useful for my end goals of building up an animation as my final project.
- www.cgchannel.com?2023/10/tutorial-animating-a-complex-fight-action-sequence-in-maya/

Literature Review

- Crowbar Collective. Black Mesa. (2020). Crowbar Collective. Accessed: Oct. 22, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.crowbarcollective.com/games/black-mesa>
- It is useful as it sets the scene for the next battle, the music for the next fight begins at the half-way point going up the elevator with the guitar music building into a theme.

What resources will you need?

- Blender
Maya

Reference List

- [1] Studio Trigger, Japan. *BNA, Greedy Bears*, Episode 5 (Jun, 30, 2020) Accessed: Oct, 22, 2025. [Online Video] Available at: <https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/81220429>
- [2] Studio Trigger, Japan. *BNA, Rabbit Town*, Episode 2 (Jun, 30, 2020) Accessed: Oct, 22, 2025. [Online Video] Available at: <https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/81220429>
- [3] Rooster Teeth, USA. *RWBY Volume 5 Weiss Character Short | Rooster Teeth* (July, 17, 2017). Accessed: Oct, 23, 2025. [Online Video] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZAS_rzgCE0&t=64s
- [4] Rooster Teeth, USA. *RWBY Volume 4 Character Short - Premieres Rooster | Teeth* (Oct,03, 2016). Accessed: Oct, 23, 2025. [Online Video] Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0WeiG2-HRQ&t=71s>
- [5] Gainax, Japan. *Grurren Lagann, Let's go Buddy*, Episode 26. (Apr, 01, 2007) Accessed: Oct, 22, 2025.[Online Video] Available at: <https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/70213196>
- [6] A1 Pictures, Japan. *Sword Art Online, Blue Eyed Demon*, Episode 9. (Sep, 01, 2012). Accessed: Oct, 23, 2025. [Online Video] Available: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Sword-Art-Online/dp/B076JD3BZ3>
- [7]A1 Pictures :Pony Canyon, Japan. *Fairy Tail, Gloria*, S7, Episode 14. (Jul, 05, 2014). Accessed: Oct, 23, 2025. [Online Video] Available: <https://tv.apple.com/gb/show/fairy-tail/umc.cmc.h4szsii76l0iakrymxf2a36o>
- [8] Rooster Teeth, USA. *RWBY "Red" Trailer | Rooster Teeth* (Nov, 07, 2012) Accessed: Oct, 25, 2025. [Online Video] Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYW2GmHB5xs>
- [9] Crowbar Collective. *Black Mesa* (2015). Crowbar Collective. Accessed: Oct, 22, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.crowbarcollective.com/games/black-mesa>

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

53/100

BA (HONS) ANIMATION & VFX – 2025/6		
ACCA6020 - INDEPENDENT PROJECT / #1 / PROJECT PROPOSAL (10%)		
Student: JOSHUA CRITCHLEY		MARK: 53%
INTRO / AIMS & OBJECTIVES (500 WORDS)		
- Project title; - Outline and targeting of specific area of study / project outline to be investigated; - Aims and identifiable SMART objectives; - Justification for project scope and approach; - Statements on the potential deliverables and rationale for success;	20%	50

Project specification details (e.g. shots, running time, pipeline plan).		
RESEARCH & REFERENCES (500 WORDS)		
- Relation and comparative links to Literature Review; - Ethics and values considered in work undertaken in the past ~ and in this new endeavour; - Depth of research findings and case studies (e.g. animators, film knowledge, VFX methods); - Research methods and information sourcing and quotes (beyond online webpages alone); - Visual influences and contributing factors, in undertaking the project, in covering the references, techniques, anticipated process, etc.	30%	60
PROPOSAL PITCH & IMPACT (ORIGINAL IMAGERY)		
- A single – or short series – of initial designs or conceptual art; - To act as a visual hook or promotional piece for this first pitch / proposal; - Portraying a key moment or scene or action ~ from the intended narrative / sequence; - Demonstrating a keen sense of framing, colour scheme, character shaping , etc;	40%	48

Other pre-production elements may be considered, but these will need to feature more prominently in the subsequent INTERIM presentation (to develop for later section and reviews of the portfolio).		
LAYOUT & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS		
SPAG (Spelling, punctuation & grammar); Literacy and structure; Descriptive / analytical insights; Clarity and presentation; Referencing, bibliography and appendices; Adherence to word count.	10%	60
TOTAL	100%	53%
FEEDBACK / COMMENTS: A suitably action-based route for the project, with the aim to integrate narrative design elements (including cause and effect in the <i>escape</i>) with dynamic animated aspects (e.g. athleticism in evading capture). Within the opening sections we had indications, but more is needed on determining the rationale and approach, to justify the reasoning on the intended / expected end product(s). To outline more on ideas of realism vs. stylisation; targeting / defining the visual nature of what		

will be rendered near Easter '26; providing stronger associations or references to how the results will fit to the larger piece stated? etc.

- One of the stronger sections outlined (on the day) with the research and levels of study via Studio Trigger, Gainax, Rwby, etc. You demonstrate a clear passion and appreciation of MANGA / ANIME, with some useful overviews on set pieces and qualities within the small transitions and effects on screen.
- If you are looking to emulate something of this type of visual you will want to scrutinise the frames, to do more in terms of a visual breakdown, on the actions but also on the personnel and their working methods, to learn from some choice clips / significant influences and help in your own practical endeavours.
- Original storyboard panels provided (only), to help to outline the intended animation. The 2:2 mark (which is rated *good*) recognises your efforts there. To gain higher banding there was a need to have more impact, to demonstrate more persuasive manipulation of the design elements and animated appeal.
- Given that you want to model, rig and animate characters, to have an elevator, airfield set (and then to feature planes possibly), to have a working narrative -à> there is *a lot* to do in the time available. We (staff) would want to recommend identifying areas of quality and zoning in on your skillset(s), moreso. Less, sometimes, can equal more. You will want to isolate ways to limit the workload. Not to reduce the vision or ambition, but to more realistic in the scope and what can be achieved from one individual. To develop a heightened sense of what you're really wanting to create and to present next summer (6 months or so), that provides visual indications of your artistic and aesthetic strengths.
- Vocally strong, with some good displays of referencing and citing texts / titles. Good to see links to Williams, Hooks, Stanislavski, etc. Indications of weighing up the comparative merits / relevance of some of these (e.g. discounting *The Animation Producers Handbook*). All clear and in due order.

- To have had more specific links or crossovers through to your own work? It's there, in context (especially with the production examples), but to have stronger - more direct - cross referencing to your own practical endeavours?

PmO / November 2025

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