

Chapter 17 Paper Assignment: Shooting a scene.

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This is the first time I've gone "all out" for a video project. I've never had to cast actors or use an external monitor/recorder before. And having to stitch together so many shoots was a first as well. Also, I had not needed to use an external audio recorder before too. Despite all the challenges and obstacles, I definitely felt like I was in my element the entire time. While shooting production however, I noticed many famous YouTubers put out similar short videos; one of which was shot by my hero: Rory Kramer. I thought to myself: "What's the point of doing my film if it's not going to look as great as that". I had to remind my self that this is my first short film with an actual team, script, etc. Rory Kramer has been doing professional work for many years and this my first. Even though it's not as cool or awesome as Rory Kramers video, it's not bad at all. It looks like it was meant to be. It looks concise and cohesive. It's a well crafted work of art none-the-less. Everything can always be better.

IN THE BEGINNING

Coming up with an idea for a 1-2 minute short film, that I'd have my heart in, was difficult. I think I'm really good at making things look cool, but I'm not very good at coming up with source material to begin with. I knew that this was going to be a project and that I'd need to have my heart and soul into it or it's not going to even finish. It's never going to see the light of day. That's how I approached the working environment of all the bands I was ever in, that's how I wrote any and all of the music I ever composed, that's how I've always approached anything and everything in my life. Everything else feels like a waste of my existence. At the time, I was going through some weird dating experiences and so I looked to that. Musicians write love songs or of sorrow. So I wrote a film about a confusing relationship that randomly naturally ends for

seemingly no reason. I looked to films like Lost in Translation and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. I also looked at dozens of wedding and couple videos that many of my peer videographers make commercially. I wanted this to have a bit of all those elements. That became my vision and once I had that, everything else started falling into place.

CASTING RIFT OF PANGAEA

I put out a casting call with help from my mentor, Erin Galey of In The Flicker, who made a lot of suggestions and connected me with groups on Facebook. I contacted my friend, Amanda at Runway Concierge Talent and Staffing, and my actress Claire, also helped put the ad out around town. Randy found me via Craigslist. He was the only one who responded to my ad with a resume. I had not made any official casting decisions but I already knew I wanted Claire and Randy was a perfect match for her character in my opinion. There were other actors who would have paired up nicely but not with Claire. I need people who can put up with my attitude, behaviors, and mannerisms. I felt Claire and Randy had a lot of confidence and attitude themselves and also had the maturity and desire to come through on this project till completion. I was going to put my all in and I felt they would be the ones to match commitment.

Randy, was the only actor whom I purposefully didn't give the script or any material to work with. I wanted to see what he would do and how he'd react when I hand him everything in person for the first time on the spot. It didn't phase him one bit. He nailed the audition and asked all the right questions. I gave everyone else the script and materials to work with. But when Randy showed up, it was like I had given him everything already. He had put some thought into the info that I provided on the casting call. He also visually fit with Claire. Claire is a tall woman and I needed a tall male counter-part who would look good standing next to her. There were just so many reasons to run with Randy. He was perfect. There's no one else I could have gone with

who would have done a better job. Randy and Claire both have great personality on set and off. That's huge in my book. When we weren't filming, Randy would make jokes and converse with Claire or Brooke and keep everyone feeling positive while I'm working on the camera or set. Claire would return with the same great personality. That was one of the reasons I felt good about her even before her audition. People love talking with her and she's a lot of fun to talk with. I tried giving her different direction and various approaches to pull out different performances during her casting audition. She gave me exactly what I was looking for and I knew I would be able to work with her really well.

PRODUCTION

I had to organize several shoots for the same project and understand how each shoot ties into the next etc. I purposefully put the easier shoots first so I could get those out of the way but also I could develop a better relationship with my actors before trying to shoot the bridge scene with dialogue (which was something I had not done before). I took to my strengths as a visual artist and had them pose for all the "moments being lost in time" scenes. I'd play them back on my monitor for them to see and they'd be like "wow, that looks really good". I knew I'd keep their enthusiasm if I start strong and they see that I can make this happen.

Murphy's Law states that anything that can go wrong most likely will. A lot of things went wrong on set. The first time we went to The Fields Park, Claire reminded me that she was allergic to grass so we had to post-pone shooting one of the shots I had listed. We came back at a later shoot and I brought a Pendleton blanket for her to lay on instead. Right as we were about to shoot on the pedestrian walking bridge over i5, my HDMI cable broke and the metal parts were stuck in my camera. So we called it a night early and rescheduled. I brought a spare HDMI cable and a tool box with me every shoot after that. The first time we tried to shoot the bridge scene, we learned the audio recorder only takes 32gb SD cards. I only had 64gb SD cards on

hand so we had to reschedule. Then Claire got in a car accident and we had to postpone shooting. There was one shoot where everyone showed up an hour late because I had not communicated enough scheduling for it and also traffic was the worst that day. Brooke mentioned they were doing construction on one of the bridges and it was 5 o'clock traffic in downtown Portland. But we all pulled through. I told everyone that I would be done after about 4 days of shooting and we ended up meeting like almost 8-9 times and it took an entire month. I think the only reason everyone continued to come through was because they saw that progress was being made and that I had my heart and soul into the project and was dedicated. I didn't lose sight of the goal and I tried to keep everyone on the same page.

WHAT'S NEXT

I'm already working on several ideas for another short film. I would like to work more with an actual producer who could help me schedule, cultivate resources, and stitch together the project. I think having an actual producer helping to fill that role on the team would have helped tremendously instead of me doing all of it just by myself. Also, being able to bounce ideas off someone on occasion is really nice. I had people to bounce music ideas off of when I was serious about music. My work always was better because of the people helping me. I would like to develop that for film making.