Today I shot a scene from my script. I never knew so much could go wrong in just a few hours. But at the end of the day the footage was in and that excited me too much to even remember the stress until I had to sit down and write this paper.

We started off early. I got permission to shoot at my work. I figured we’d go in before the place opened for the day and be done by the time customers got there. That would give us over an hour to shoot a few minutes. I set my alarm nice and early and jumped out of bed when it went off. Then I looked at my phone.

One actor said they switched shifts and had to work so she couldn’t help. Another was a hour away so they’d be late. Another decided she didn’t want to be on camera. This was all before my coffee was done brewing. I decided it would be ok, I am good at working with what I have, as long as no one else drops out it should be ok.

I got to my work with my makeup crew and my equipment. The two stars of the scene were there already. My boss let me into the building and we started with the first shot. The lighting was off so I had to find someone to fix it since I didn’t have keys. We shot the first shot. It went well. I did a test shot then a couple real shots. I reviewed all of them right then and realized the microphone on my camera must be very good because it was picking up everything. Music from the lobby, a fly buzzing around, everything. It’s a pretty cheap camera so there was no way to adjust what it picked up. I had to actors speak up and shot it again, figuring to fix the audio in post if it had to be done. We moved on to the next shot. It takes place in a hallway, but my boss hadn’t turned on those lights yet either. I didn’t want to be a nuisance since she was letting me film here but I needed those lights. I tried shooting without them, the scene turned out decent, so I said that’s good for now we can come back later.

I told the two stars to take a break I was gonna check on makeup for the other people. I walk over to the makeup artist and ask him how it’s going. He informs me that no one else has shown up and he doesn’t think he has good enough makeup to proceed anyways. So I start making phone calls to find out where everyone is. Someone overslept and decided not to come, others were just stuck in traffic. I told my makeup artist to do the best he could since this was our only chance to shoot this this week. Then I started grabbing my coworkers who started coming in for the day. They didn’t need makeup and had small shots anyways. They seemed flattered when I asked so I didn’t feel like I was taking advantage of anyone.

The rest of my cast finally showed up and started getting makeup done. I was shooting the scenes in black and white so the makeup was very important, even moreso since the lights were half off everywhere. Then customers started showing up for the day. They gave us lots of strange looks and tried to stay out of the camera’s way as much as possible since they didn’t want to be in my movie. That was fine with me, I didn’t want them in the shots either. Once makeup was done my boss had coincidentally turned on all the lights. It was like the sun had come out and everything ran more smoothly. We did three quarters of the shots in the time it took us to do the first quarter. Things were really clicking and I felt very confident.

The shoot was supposed to take a hour tops because it was a short scene. It took us three hours with all the setbacks and reshoots. But I know if we’d kept going we could have finished half the movie that day, we were on such a role.